

## The Funky World of Spanish Ciders

*You may have noticed that the cider sections in our price books seem to be getting a little bigger in every new edition. It's true—we've been forging relationships and bringing in new products left and right recently! That's thanks to you—California is getting really thirsty for quality cider, and we're happy to help fill your fridges. But the ciders in our lists are far from redundant—these are beverages that represent a huge range of flavors, traditions, and agricultural regions. Each has its own story and intriguing character. If you're new to cider, we can understand why it would be difficult to approach the many options that are out there, so here at LVEd, we'll be profiling some classic cider styles that you are likely to encounter on our lists and elsewhere. To start, we'll have a look at the ciders of Spain.*

### Where are we really talking about?

When I say Spain, I'm really referring to two main cider-swilling regions in the country and the area around it: Asturias and Basque country. These areas are centered in northern Spain, and are especially cider-soaked--the vast majority of the country's cider production takes place here, including much of what gets exported to the United States. The folks that live in these places drink a *lot* of cider and, over many centuries, have built a rich variety of traditions around the drink that play a significant role in the regions' cultures.

### The cider itself

Alas, the culture remains in Spain, un-importable despite our best efforts. What we can bring you is the cider itself, which is delightful and unusual stuff packaged mostly in green, 750ml bottles.

Unlike many ciders popular in the United States, those from Spain prominently feature fermentation character as a primary driver of flavor, rather than focusing exclusively on flavors born in the orchard.

These ciders are typically fermented to dryness with just the wild yeast present on the apples, lending a potent, musty and tart funk to the finished product that complements a tannic core of apple flavor. It can be a bit shocking to the uninitiated. You can expect to experience vinegary, barnyardy, plasticky, spicy, or earthy aromatics when you pull the cork from one of these bottles. Lovers of sour beer, take note.

The next thing you'll notice as you pour your cider is that it is (almost invariably) a still (uncarbonated), unfiltered beverage—don't expect clarity or sparkling effervescence here. To yield a bit of bubblyness and aid in opening up subtle aromatics, these ciders are classically poured with a huge distance between bottle and glass (check out this guy!

<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2012/feb/24/cider-around-the-world>). This aerates the cider and blows off some of its volatile acidity as it leaves the bottle. If you're afraid of sticky floors, swirling small pours in a wide-mouthed glass has much of the same effect.

The ciders of Asturias and Basque Country are quite unlike those from just about anywhere else, and we're delighted to have them at our fingertips. Grab a bottle and get funky!