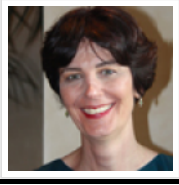


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Millennial Drinkers Enjoy 'Farm Fresh Authenticity' from Emerging \$500M Hard Cider Market

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By **Michal Clements**, September 30, 2015 at 7:00 am

On the strength of Millennials seeking local fare, authentic experiences and connections to the farms that grow their food, hard cider has catapulted from obscurity into a \$500 million market. From 2012-3, cider volume sales increased over 60%. In 2014, sales grew another 49%. This year, growth is projected to continue at a +39% pace.



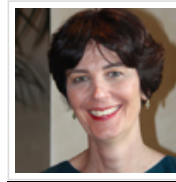
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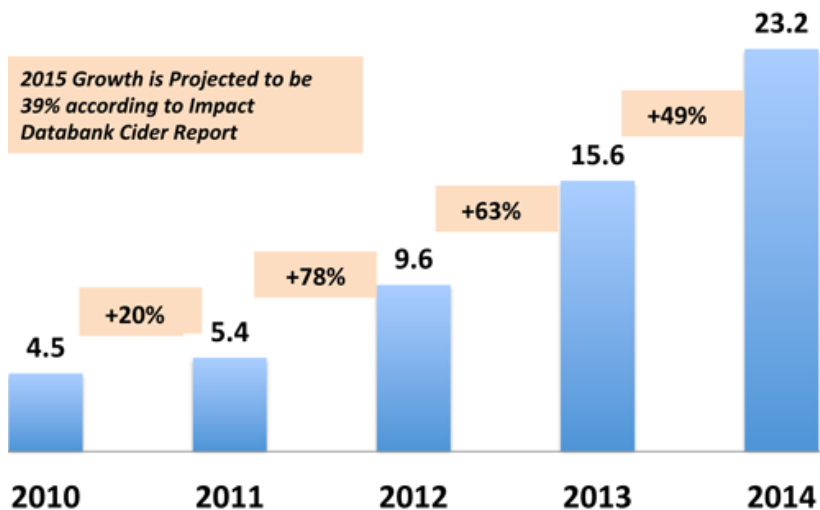


Michal Clements

Michal is co-author of Tuning Into Mom and an experienced consultant. Michal develops winning growth strategies and detailed go to market plans for some of the world's outstanding organizations including McDonald's, Gatorade, Abbott, Barilla, Tylenol, Clorox, Key Bank, Eagle Ottawa, Quaker and the Baker Demonstration School.

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Cider Market Unit Volume Sales (millions of cases)



SOURCE: Statista, Impact Databank

Danelle Kosmal, vice president of the beverage alcohol practice at New York-based Nielsen, provides some [insight](#) into this explosive growth:

“Compared to beer, cider tends to be more gender neutral, and I think there continues to be growth opportunities with females for cider. Additionally, the hard cider drinker tends to be the younger and more affluent legal-drinking-age consumers, similar to the craft [beer] drinker.”

[Gowans Cider and Orchards](#) of Philo, CA recognized the market opportunity and after 139 years of selling apples, overhauled its market strategy to release its first line of hard ciders this year. Gowans ranks high on the “farm fresh authenticity” scale, by using estate-grown, heirloom apples and being the highest-awarded cidery in the 2015 California Cider Competition. Head Cidermaker Sharon Gowan is enthusiastic about her cider’s future:



“America is falling in love with its farmers again, Especially the

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younger group in their 20's and 30's, they want local foods. 'Local,' they say, 'is the new organic.' They are really looking for genuine, and don't want to be misled. They are falling in love with farming, land and craft."

Gowan also describes cider drinkers as beer drinkers who are trading up from mass domestic beer. As the oldest estate-grown cidery in California, wine drinkers are also keen to try Gowans Cider, describing the cider as refreshing and very drinkable.

Beer Players In the Cider Market

Boston Beer Company is an industry leader with its Angry Orchard brand growing over 81% in 2014. In 2015, the brand recently [announced](#) a drier style for "year round appeal," with its Orchard Stone Dry. In 2013, In-Bev [began offering](#) its European style cider, Stella Cidre in the US.

Seeing this market growth, MillerCoors recently launched its own hard cider, [Smith & Forge](#) in 2014. It's described as "a sturdy drink for the hardy gent," and the product's initial press release and packaging highlight its "strength" and lack of overly sweet taste:

"Smith & Forge is a hard cider fermented in the tradition of days gone by. With a rich amber color, 6% alcohol by volume (ABV), a distinct, not-too-sweet taste and a fantastically crisp finish, Smith & Forge is built to refresh."

Vice President of Insights and Innovation David Kroll goes on to say:

"There was a time when more hard cider was consumed in America than beer. Now hard cider is exploding again, but the sweetness of many current ciders can be a turn off to beer drinkers, and some of them are looking instead to spirits and crafts for variety. Smith & Forge is a strong, just-sweet-enough hard cider that encourages guys to discover -- or rediscover -- the world of hard cider."

Will products like Smith & Forge prevent local orchards from success? Gowans doesn't appear to be concerned about market threats from large brands because her orchard has the authenticity Millennials seek out. For over a century, Gowans Orchards has developed apple varieties that focus on flavor, compared to large commercial orchards optimizing for varieties that ripen more quickly or are more aesthetically pleasing.

The apple is certainly having a moment in alcoholic beverage trends.

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Consider my recent article detailing the [market strategy for Redd's Apple Ale](#). The US cider market is segmenting into sub-categories given its growth. Expect to see further radical changes and trends as more Millennials turn 21 and make their beverage preferences known.

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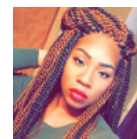
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