

# SPOTLIGHT MEMBER

The Doc's Draft Hard Cider story began in 1989, when two doctors purchased an orchard in Warwick NY and began to learn how to cultivate fruit. Local apple growers and extension agents taught them the basics and contributed to their early success. Doc's first product, in fact our entire business, started as a result of an abundant apple crop that led us to experiment with Hard Cider. We were soon hooked and we applied for and received our farm winery license and cider producer license in 1993. Our doors opened to the public in the fall of 1994.

In the early days, we had three wines and one cider, all of which were a bit unrefined to be completely honest. Our inexperience was as evident as our enthusiasm, and we persevered to create higher quality wines and cider. Every vintage improved as we honed our skills and continued to learn the art and science of wine and cider making. Eventually, hard work paid off, leading us to the development of our critically acclaimed Doc's Draft Hard Apple Cider.

The success of our Doc's Draft Hard Cider is due to our insistence in using the finest fruit available. When not from our own orchard, we purchase only fresh market fruit from local growers with whom we have a personal relationship.

In 2002, along with high school friend of mine Jason Grizzanti (son of founder Doc Grizzanti), we set out to build the Doc's Cider brand. After purchasing our first 6 head used Cimec bottling line and 3 head keg filler, we increased production enough to expand beyond the farm winery tasting room and local farm markets. Every week, we would load up the farm truck and sell the cider door to door in NYC. Soon the cider started to get known for its fresh, natural taste and we quickly added distribution to nearby states. Today, Doc's Hard Cider is available in 25 states, 3 countries and growing.

Certainly one of the most fun and rewarding things about owning this business is the opportunity to mesh the creativity of making something fresh, new, and crafted with the challenges of business. One of the greatest challenges I have faced so far is taking a hard cider product that has proven successful in many markets and introducing that product to Vermont, perhaps one of the most elite and competitive craft beverage markets in the world. It has been extremely gratifying to see the enthusiastic welcome it is receiving from consumers and businesses alike.

- Jeremy Kidde, Owner

