

MARTIN BERNSTEIN

This Upstate New York cider maker turns jilted fruit into liquid gold.

IF YOU'VE EVER wanted to meet an apple geek, Abandoned Hard Cider's Martin Bernstein is your man. A treasure hunter of sorts, he spends each May driving around the Catskills region searching for blossoms that reveal forgotten orchards. Sometimes he strikes gold. "There are people who have exceptionally good cider apples in their backyards," says Bernstein. "I can't help how excited I get. I get really, really geeky." Foraged apples provide the foundation for every bottle of the company's classic, hopped and barrel-aged styles, but the nature of the varietal presents challenges. "Wild apples are biennial bearers, meaning they produce every other year," Bernstein explains. To supplement, he and his business partner, "Fermentation Guy" Eric Childs, purchase heirloom cider apples from Fishkill Farms, about 70 miles away in Dutchess County. But the Catskills' feral fruit is the true apple of Bernstein's eye. "What excites us about making cider is not so much the cider but the apples," he says. "We know that a blend of wild and abandoned apples can make the most spectacular cider you've ever had in your life. My vision is that no apple should be left behind." — **GINA DECAPRIO VERCESI**



▶ **Scientists** believe that domesticated apples can be traced to a wild variety that grows in the Tian Shan mountains of Kazakhstan.

▶ **Johnny Appleseed**, née John Chapman, planted thousands of cider apple seeds to help 18th- and 19th-century settlers secure land claims on the American frontier.

▶ **Ashrita Furman** and Bipin Larkin hold the Guinness World Record for most apples sliced in one minute while on a pogo stick: 39.

HOW 'BOUT THEM APPLES?

Autumn's favorite fruit shines in festivals, sweets and long fly balls.



1 Virginia's spring **Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival** features parades, pie-baking contests and the crowning of Queen Shenandoah.



2 Buy a Dressed in Pink caramel apple from **Amy's Gourmet Apples** and the company will donate part of the proceeds to fight breast cancer.



3 A replica of the **Home Run Apple**, originally installed at Shea Stadium in 1980, pops up at Citi Field when the New York Mets hit a homer.