Press release 15.08.2023

**Nordic International Cider Awards competition (NICA) and cider festival**

**to take place in Riga, Latvia, September 6-9.**

*The cider-making tradition will be showcased at two international events in Riga: the NICA Cider Competition and the Cider Festival on the first day of the Riga Food exhibition. Diverse cider-related events are scheduled to take place from September 6 to 9.*

**Nordic International Cider Awards competition (NICA)**

The apple takes its victorious march across countries, sparkling with a natural aroma in a glass of cider. This year, 101 cider producers of authentic craft ciders from 17 countries have entered the Nordic International Cider Awards competition with a total of 243 of their best ciders. NICA is held annually in one of the Nordic and Baltic countries. This year, the participants represent Norway, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Germany, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Serbia, Austria, France, the Czech Republic, Belgium, Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. The level of participation is remarkable, and so is the highly competent judging panel, with cider experts representing 15 countries in Europe, the Nordic region, the USA, and Canada. The competition will take place on September 6th at Riga's finest cider bar, and the winners will be awarded on the following day during the opening ceremony of Riga Food, the largest food exhibition in the Baltics.

**Cider Festival and cider seminar at Riga Food exhibition**

The cider festival will take place on September 7, following the opening ceremony of the Riga Food exhibition. It will be a tasting event, hosted at the Latvian Cider Route exhibition stand, providing a unique opportunity to acquaint oneself with apple ciders from 18 Nordic and European countries, as well as the USA. Meat and cheese snacks that pair well with the ciders will be provided by the Latvian Farmers' Parliament.

The seminar "Trends and Challenges of the Cider World" on September 8 will bring together cider professionals to discuss Nordic/Baltic cider trends, challenges, and plans from a global and practical perspective. The seminar will be enriched with an exhibition of Latvian cider apple and pear varieties, as well as tastings of ciders made from the Gravenstein apple variety grown in California and Norway. This allows participants to experience how growing the same apple variety in very different places results in distinct profiles, both in terms of flavor and chemistry. The seminar will also explore how engaging in culinary tourism can open new perspectives for cider.

**Let’s celebrate authentic craft cider in Riga!**

Many people mistakenly think that cider is not a naturally fermented drink, but that sweet, sticky, fortified lemonade which is made from a chemical concentrate and has actually nothing to do with the qualities of authentic cider either in terms of smell, taste, or effect. Craft cider is produced from apple juice that is squezed from carefully selected, freshly picked apples and fermented for several months. Real cider has a low alcohol content and is perfect for enjoying with different foods, bringing out their flavors. With today’s trend for natural and chemical free foods and drinks, authentic craft cider is a great choice.

NICA will showcase the variety of cider traditions – from the well-recognized to the emerging and promising. Latvia, a land of apples and a new cider country, sincerely welcomes the international cider community to enhance contacts and exchange between cider makers in the region, striving towards excellence and growth. Christine Walter Bauman, a cider producer from the USA and one of the NICA judges, says: “Latvia has long been on my list of places I want to visit and I met a couple of lovely Latvian cider makers in Norway last year—and judged their fabulous ciders, so I couldn’t be more excited!”

**All about NICA 2023 online:**

Full programme of the events: <http://countryholidays.lv/NICA>

Follow and share our updates on social networks.

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**Organizers and Contacts**

The event is organized by the Latvian Country Tourism Association in collaboration with Latvian cider makers and the Latvian Association of Winemakers and Winegrowers, Norwegian Rural tourism and local food organization HANEN, CiderWorld Germany. Financially supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Latvian Tourism Board, the Latvian Cooperation Council of Agricultural Organizations, European Union Interreg Baltic Sea Region project BASCIL.

Asnate Ziemele

Chair of the board

Latvian Country Tourism Association

T.: +371 29285756

