



AMERICAN
CIDER
ASSOCIATION

Porter's Perfection: West of England to the Pacific Northwest

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AGENDA

- 1 Introduction. Why this talk and why Porter's Perfection?
- 2 Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire
- 3 Eve's Cidery, Van Etten, Finger Lakes
- 4 Left Foot Charley, Northern Michigan
- 5 Tieton Ciderworks, Yakima, WA
- 6 Last thoughts and questions



Porter's Perfection: The Basics

Bittersharp apple. Identified as an interesting apple by Charles Porter in Somerset, early 20th Century. Named by Bertie Barker, then Head of Long Ashton Research Station in 1912.

'The cider made from it proved to be of such excellent quality that each year since that time...the fruit has been procured for trial purposes...the results have on the whole been so good that it is justifiable to regard the variety as one of the best kinds yet tested for the production of a medium brisk, light, bottling cider.' (From allintocider.com, Darlene Hayes)

Unmistakeable in the orchard – multiple apples fused together. Seems to be pretty vigorous in its growth of leaves and wood.

Surprisingly quite few single variety examples in the UK ...

...but rather more to be found in the USA.



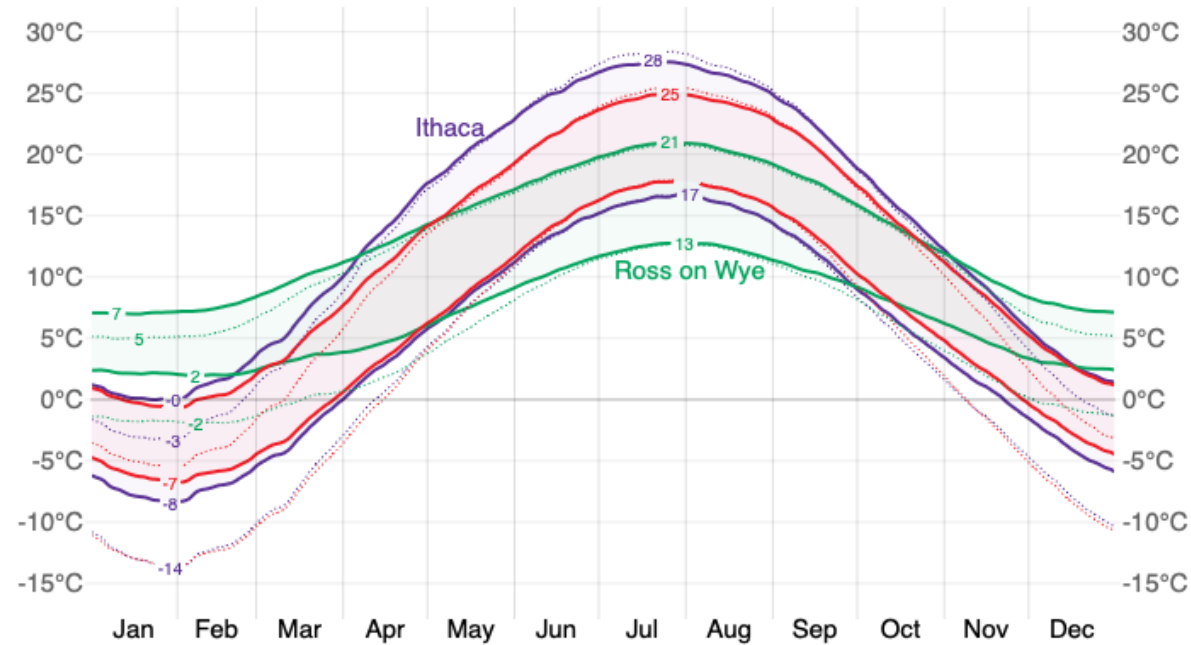
Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire

- South Herefordshire. Old Red Sandstone.
- Two Porter's Trees in 'Bridgewell Orchard'. These are trees planted approximately 13 years ago, on MM106
- Also one row of PP grafted in 2019 (13 trees) and 2021 (another 18 trees approx) in our 'Oak Meadow' orchard.
- 2023 had 1365 sunshine hours and 832mm rainfall. (A rainy, overcast vintage generally – average from 1991-2020 was 1578 sunshine hours and 764mm rainfall).
- Pressed on 14th November 2023 with SG 1.051. (The 2024 vintage pressed 7th November with SG 1.050. Fermented to dry with wild yeasts and bottle conditioned

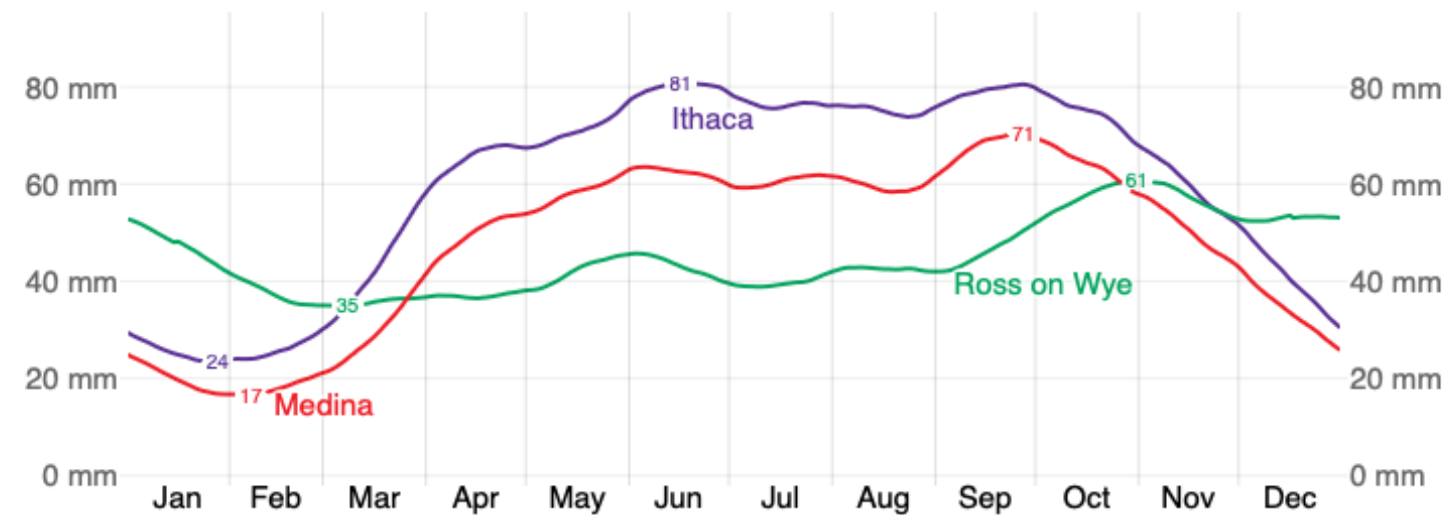


Ross-on-Wye Weather Conditions	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Annual
Sunshine hours													
Average 1991-2020	55	77	119	166	204	201	210	189	144	104	63	47	1578
2022	74	74	166	169	163	226	215	240	121	134	74	58	1714
2023	81	82	73	149	247	210	106	114	122	98	66	17	1365
2024	55	53	77	102	155	161	171	148	91	105	57	26	1201
Rainfall (mm)													
Average 1991-2020	76	55	53	52	57	56	51	64	57	84	80	80	764
2022	16	86	35	16	36	50	22	27	48	95	150	65	646
2023	75	7	128	62	34	25	63	42	48	137	80	131	832
2024	55	116	115	65	89	17	57	31	212	98	101	59	1015

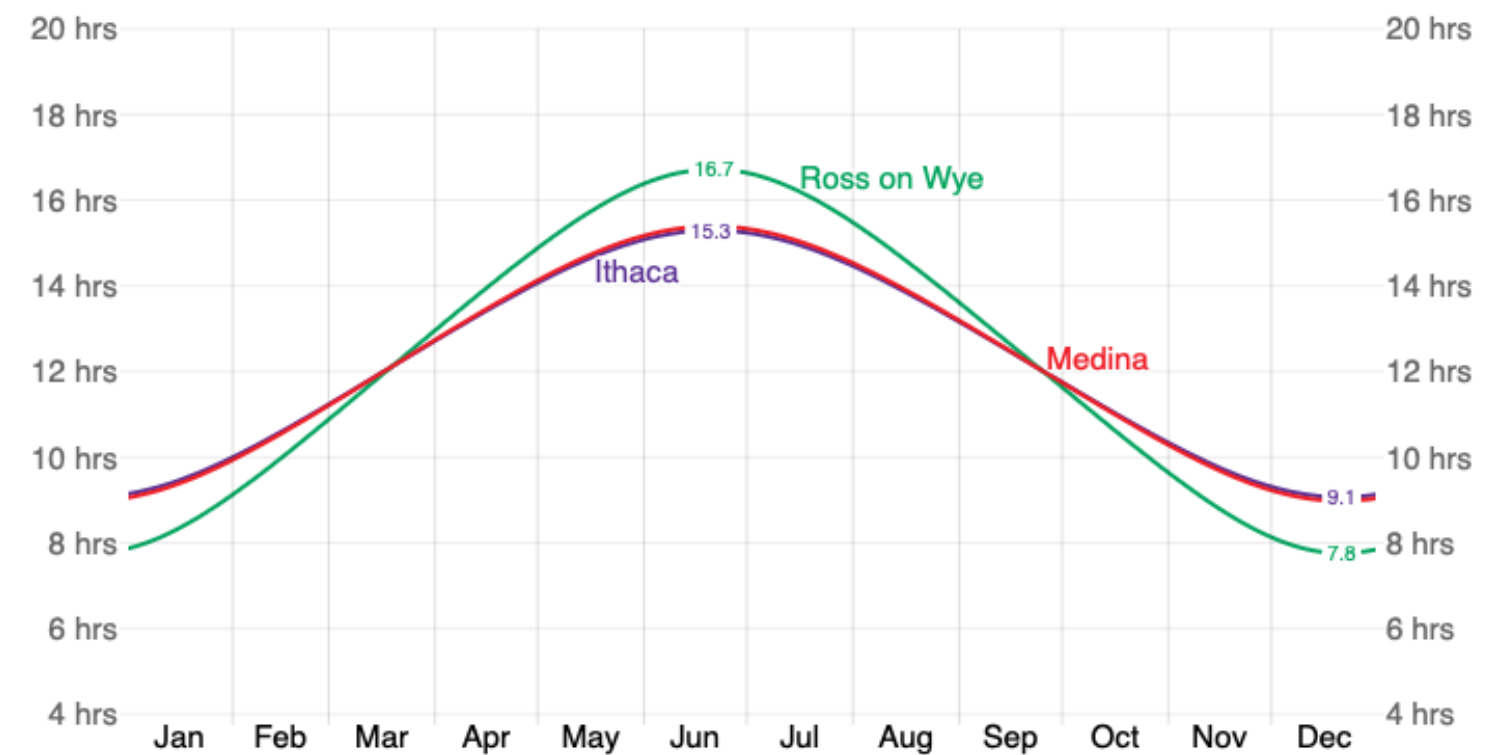
Some comparisons across the Atlantic – with data from © [WeatherSpark.com](https://weatherspark.com)



Average high and low temperatures



Average monthly rainfall



Average hours of daylight

All comparisons taken from <https://weatherspark.com/compare/y/22130~39465~20422/Comparison-of-the-Average-Weather-in-Ithaca-Ross-on-Wye-and-Medina> – data for many more variables on their website.

Eve's Cidery, Van Etten, Finger Lakes

- Bedrock of shale, result of glacial activity. Home orchards is on steep slope, with Lordstown Silt Loam.
- Orchard that the 2023 came from is based in Medina. Again glacially influenced, but on sandstone soil and heavily influenced by Lake Ontario.
- Most Home Orchard Porters on g30 and trained to vertical axe, planted between 2010 and 2016. Also Porter's planted from 2016 on b118 that are just starting to come on. All is Certified Organic.
- Lynoaken farms is a conventional IPM grower. The trees are between 23 and 14 years old. Rootstocks and spacing 6'x 12' (G30 and G16)(single stake), 4'x 12' (G41 and Bud9)(trellised).
- 2023 (Medina) SG 1.060. From Home Orchard (Van Etten), 2019 and 2024 both 1.056, 2021 was 1.049.
- Fermented to dry with spontaneous wild yeast fermentation in neutral oak. Racked and bottled with champagne yeast and 12g/l sugar. Disgorged.



Eve's North Orchard in Van Etten, NY



LynOaken Farms in Medina, New York

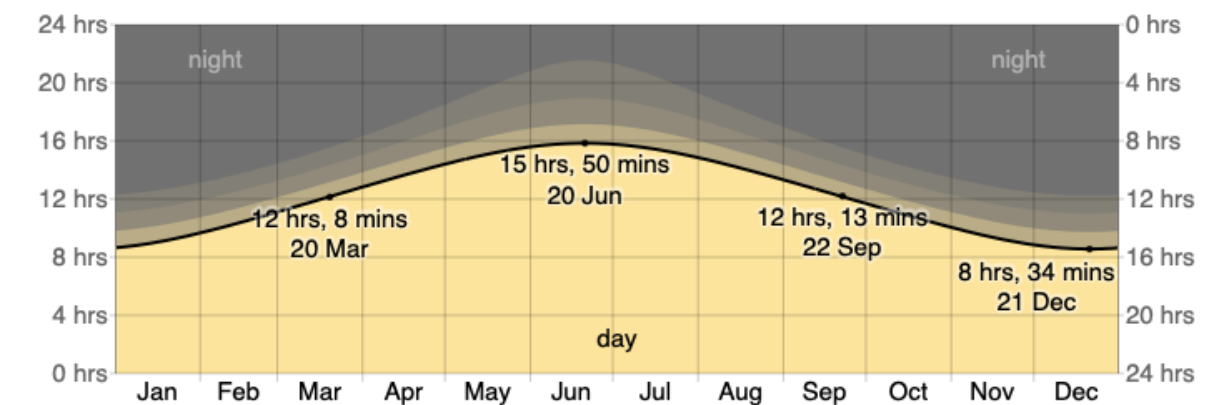
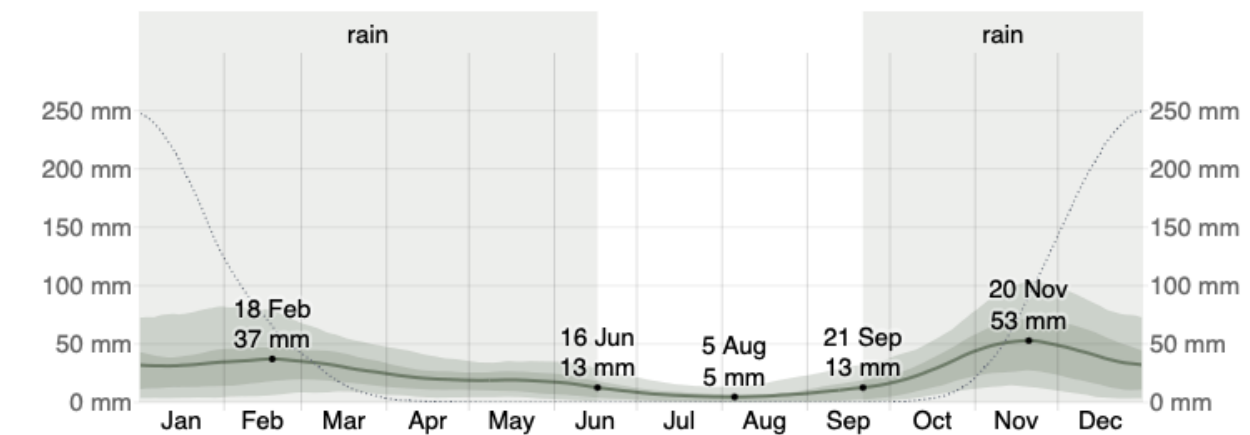
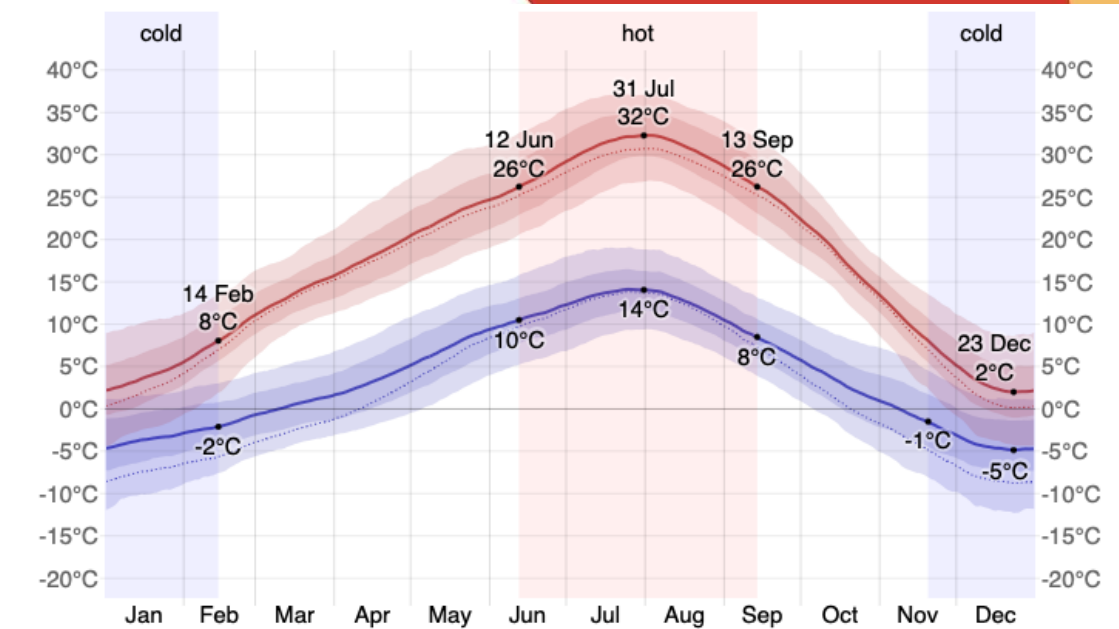
Left Foot Charley, Northern Michigan

- Northern Michigan is a composite of glacial till – sand, granite, limestone, clay, silt. The orchard is on sandy loam, 780 feet above sea level.
- Planted in 2012. 600 trees on G41. Grown on drumlins to take advantage of cold air drainage.
- Grand Traverse Bay on Lake Michigan moderates winter temperatures and spring frost windows.
- 2020 was 16.9 Brix (1.069sg). pH 3.24 at pressing on 16th November.
- Fermented with Fresco yeast and some light secondary fermentation in the bottle.



Tieton Cider Works, Yakima, WA

- Harmony Orchards in Yakima Valley, 55 acres of cider apples and perry pears.
- Hot summers, short winters. Greater diurnal range than Ross or Ithaca during growing season and higher average temperature.
- Far lower rainfall too, especially during growing months.
- Daylight hours curve similar to Ithaca and Medina – not as steep as Ross



General questions

- Challenges in growing and making?
- In terms of flavour, how does Porter's seem to differ from vintage to vintage, orchard to orchard? Or is it quite consistent? How have we found it to respond to differing regions and climates? What do we think it likes?
- Ageing? How has anyone seen it develop with time?
- Any theories on why it might be very popular with US cidermakers but fewer English single varieties?
- How is climate change affecting it? Will it continue to be a good variety to choose for growing/drinking?