

PARTY HARD (CIDER)

WildCraft celebrates autumn with a harvest party and the Thievery Corporation's Rob Garza

Oregon climate 2.0 may mean short sleeves in October. Nevertheless, it's autumn all up in this place, and 'round these parts, autumn means apples and apples mean cider.

Eugene's WildCraft Cider Works is celebrating apple season with the inaugural Urban Orchard Harvest Party — a celebration of the bounty many in Eugene find falling right in their front yard.

"Urban Orchard Harvest Party is the follow-up to the community apple drive," WildCraft owner and founder Sean Kelly says.

In "late summer and fall, people bring in their apples in trade for cider," he says. "From all the varieties we have falling on the ground every year, with community participation, we can utilize it into something — we're at about 720 gallons."

"The part is really to commemorate everybody that participated," Kelly continues. "If you brought in eight boxes of apples during the course of the drive, you have free admission," adding that "apples are currency."



Kelly calls the harvest party a parking lot festival, which will run from noon to 10 pm. From noon to 6 pm, the party will feature tons of events for kids. "We'll be pressing juice and teaching about how to utilize the fruit and abundances of vegetables," he says.

Kelly says WildCraft's take on hard cider appeals to beer fans. "WildCraft is geared toward beer drinkers in a lot of ways," Kelly says. "It's dry; most of the complaints of beer drinkers is that cider is too sweet."

But Kelly says his cider also pleases the palettes of wine drinkers. "Technically, cider falls into the category of a wine," Kelly explains. "It's fermented from a juice rather than being brewed. The only ingredient in it is fruit."

Along with cider, the harvest party will feature some of Eugene's finest food vendors. Partygoers will be treated to grub from Whiteaker sushi joint Mame and restaurants Party Downtown and Belly Taqueria.

And while enjoying hard cider and tasty vittles, partygoers will hear a DJ set from Rob Garza of Thievery Corporation, live music from rapper Mr. Lif, goofy jazz explorers Bustin Jieber and many more.

"I wanted some 'headline' performers," Kelly says of the lineup, while keeping the musical focus on the local community. ■

WildCraft Cider Works Urban Orchard Harvest Party runs noon to 10 pm Saturday, Oct. 10, at 390 Lincoln Street.

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