

CHoW Group Visits Distillery Lane Ciderworks

By Katy Hayes

Early on Saturday, September 24, nineteen members of CHoW and friends traveled from various parts of the region to Jefferson, MD, on a visit to Distillery Lane Ciderworks. The day proved to be lovely and warm, and even sunny, a welcome change from the gray and water-logged weeks previous.

Rob Miller, owner of Distillery Lane, started out describing his venture and answering questions in one of the outbuildings that sports a pegboard refashioned to show all the apple trees in his orchard. We learned some of the history of apples, that it takes 30 apples to make a gallon of cider, and a bushel makes 3 gallons. Rob answered questions and demonstrated the grafting of new scions. Apples do not grow true from seeds, and all are now grafted onto root stock that is purchased, while the grafted cuttings are from Rob's existing trees.



Next we walked out to see his grafting beds, and then on into the orchard to look, taste, and learn more. We tasted apples like Roxbury Russet, Splendora, Newtown Pippin, and Tremblett's Bitter.



Rob showed us how he tests apples for sugar content using a handheld refractometer (shown here being held by John Rosine). This is the same tool he uses to test the

brix, or sugar content, of his finished cider, and to see if it's finished fermenting and ready to bottle. Again, we asked lots of questions as we walked and tasted and talked.

Now it was time for a quick view of the apple pressing area and description of the process that creates Distillery Lane's great cider (sweet and hard). See the apple cider press at right. Finally, it was off to taste hard cider and buy from his array of products.

Left to right: CHoW President CiCiWilliamson, John Rosine, Beverly Firme, Quentin Looney, Audrey Hong, Rob Miller, Tom Moore (Katy's husband), Shirley, John Kelly (CiCi's husband), Elisabetta, Katy, Claudia, Claire Cassidy, Dianne Hennessy King, Katherine Livingston, Robert (Dianne's husband) and Fusako Ito (guest of Katy). Taking the photo was Katy's guest Susan Langley.



Photos by Katy Hayes and Dianne Hennessy King