



## *Niko, artisan cider maker*

Rob: Niko, I understand that you transform your apples into cider. Where, where do you get your apples from? Do you grow them?

Niko: We grow a part of them, and the rest we get from people. Neighbours or other people in the surroundings in Huelgoat and Locmaria Berrien, and so on. We rent some land as well for our sheep, and in some, some field we have apples trees very, very old apple trees specific for cider.

Rob: And do you make your own cider right here?

Niko: Yeah, in some barrels.

Rob: Using an old method?

Niko: Yeah, exactly. It is with oak wood barrels that people use for wine.

Rob: Is cider difficult to make? What do you have to do?

Niko: Alright, so you have to press it at the right time, this is the first thing, but it's, the process is completely natural. It's like wine, if you press you will find some, I don't know, levure, you know.

Rob: Yeast?

Niko: Yah, yeast. Natural and natural yeast on the fruit, and when you press it, then afterwards it will start to, to, to work on their own. So you don't have to add anything. In Brittany sometimes we have really, really grey summer without sun, so sometimes the apples, they don't have enough sugar and some people can add some sugar in the process but normally you don't have to do anything. You press it, put in the barrel and then it will work.

Rob: And you just leave it in the barrel?

Niko: Well, it is not, it's not so simple, you have to follow the process. You have a kind of meter to see the sugar degree and at some point you have to put in the butter because if not it would be too dry, we would say in French, and the cider will be a bit tough to drink. That's it.

Rob: Now I notice, you showed me your barrels, and the bottles, you have got a lot of stock. Is that all for you?

Niko: Mainly for me. Last year it was only for us, and for friends, family as well. But from next year on we will start to sell some.

Rob: And where will you sell it?

Niko: At the local people here. We have sheep as well and for everything it is the same we want to sell it directly to the local people, because we have for everything we have a small production.

Rob: What else do you do with your apple juice?

Niko: With the apples we make four things. Cider. We make as well, some juice for us, that's very good. And then with the cider we can do two other things. So there is the lambic.

Rob: You make lambic, which is like distilled, a distillation of ... How does that work because you haven't got a still on your farm?

Niko: No. The fact is we don't have the right to do it on our own, so we have to go by a professional, so he has a kind of, I don't know the name in English.

Rob: A mobile still.

Niko: A still. Right, which is working like for whisky. It is the same, the same process anyway, and is moving everywhere in the, in the land and so you go there, bring your cider, he is making it, and you pay the state. It is like about three euros per liter for the state and the same for the man doing the, doing the lambic, and it takes a few hours to do it. It's quite f..... it's quite fast and then you get it back. If you are a professional you need a license to sell it, if you are just a particulier ...

Rob: An individual.

Niko: ... then you are allowed to have 1000 degree of alcohol which means more or less 20 liters of lambic, 50% per year.

Rob: That is a lot of strong spirits, isn't it?

Niko: Yeah. We don't drink it, just the part but then you can do a lot of other things with that.

Rob: Such as?

Niko: Liqueur, like I did last year with blackberries, or the coing.

Rob: The coing. Quince. You have them here?

Niko: At the arboretum in Huelgoat I have some and we could take some and then you don't need so much to make a liqueur. So you can do this, you can be used as medicine, you know when you have a mal a la gorge.

Rob: When you've got a sore throat.

Niko: Yes.

Rob: For a grog?

Niko: A grog, with honey or things like that, or lemon. It's, it's working quite well.

Rob: You can cook with lambic?

Niko: Yeah, of course you can cook it.

Rob: To do what?

Niko: I cook a lot of things. It is mainly to make sauce, and mainly with some meat. Yes. You can cook with some sausages in it for example, yes, it is working well. But cider as well for chicken, for example, or any sauce.

Rob: OK, so you make apple juice, you make lambic. What else do you manufacture with your apples?

Niko: Yes, the last point is vinegar. Cider vinegar. It is quite easy to do, it's as well a natural process.

Rob: And it is just simply juice that is turned into vinegar?

Niko: In fact it is juice which turn into cider, and then, yes, from cider it's..... you can make vinegar very easily.

Rob: You showed me your outhouses here, I didn't see a cider press. How do you process your apples?

Niko: Yes, so for our produce and cider we press it by Pressing mobile, which is a small company. A man who is moving with a mobile press everywhere in Brittany. You can bring your apples there, you press it for the cider, we just... we we put it directly in a barrel. And for apple juice is making some pasteurisation.

Rob: Yes, he pasteurises the apple juice. So you can't use that for making cider?

Niko: No, exactly.

Rob: So you have both. You have non-pasteurised and pasteurised. It must be a great machine. I think I must go and find this man.

Niko: Yeah, probably.

Rob: OK, Niko. It has been great talking to you. I am hoping that maybe you are going to let me taste some of your cider now.

Niko: Yeah, of course.

Rob: Thank you very much indeed.



