

In the fall of 2006, BlackBird Cider Works founder Scott Donovan purchased a commercial apple orchard in Somerset, Niagara County, New York. He purchased the land from the Bittner family, who operate Bittner Singer Farms, a large grower of apples, pears, and stone fruit in Niagara county.

As they learned the commercial tree fruit business, Scott and co-founder Margaret Glover also began experimenting with blends of apples making small batches of hard cider using a restored 1920's cider press. With the help of a very long-time friend and Finger Lakes winemaker Steve DiFrancisco, early hard cider recipes began to form in 5 glass gallon carboys.

Scott Donovan

Just four years later, in late 2011, the team - now able to competently grow quality apples and pears and produce quality ciders - secured their licenses to produce and sell hard cider. On December 31st, 2011 with very basic bottling equipment, the team pulled off a 150 case New Year's Eve production run, finishing the last case minutes before the New Year rang in. The BlackBird Cider Works tasting room was opened in March of 2012. That year a modest 900 gallons of hard cider was produced and sold. From those humble beginnings, with the help of many folks from far and wide, the company has now grown to a medium size producer of craft hard cider.

BlackBird Cider Works production facility is located on same property as the Donovan orchards. They have 25 acres of orchards (around 14,000 trees) producing 25 varieties of apples, both class American varieties (Empire, Jonagold and Gala, to name a few) and English and American cider apples.