

You can taste the work: Narratives of embodied labour in British craft cider

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This paper explores the narratives of work produced and performed by craft-cider producers in Wales and Herefordshire. Unpacking the ways in which ‘hard work’ informs notions of ‘good cider’, I argue that crafters’ embodied labour is critical to their definition of their end-product as ‘craft’ *and* the construction of themselves as ‘crafters’. Such labour is made manifest in crafters’ bodies – and their narratives about their bodies and working lives – and is expressed primarily through physical ailments, such as bad backs. It is further framed as having a positive influence on the quality and taste of the cider produced, whereas technological intervention, especially labour-saving devices, is regarded as detrimental. A number of elements of the production process necessarily involve mechanical intervention, however, and I attend to the ways in which crafters negotiate this necessity while concomitantly constructing themselves as manual workers producing ‘craft’. This paper draws attention, then, to that which is presented and valued in crafting narratives and that which is rendered invisible, as well as reflecting on the social values that shape this practice.