

# The Amateur Winemaker

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From the  
Editor's  
Chair . . .



“ . . . Cobwebs are not compulsory, but the bottles' coat of dust accumulates if they are allowed to rest without being moved and is therefore a sign of proper storage.”

From “Wine Cellars” (Italian Booklet)



## NOT LONG NOW!

The National Conference and Show is now only a little over a fortnight ahead and there is every indication that this year it will be a real winner, even bigger than last year. At the time of writing I am judging solely from my personal postbag, and from the comments which many correspondents have made. These indicate that there is greater interest than ever this year, for many Clubs and Circles all over the South and Midlands are getting together quite large parties to attend and several from the north have mentioned that they intend going. All in all, the indications are that the attendance will surpass last year's, and with Brighton as the venue I wouldn't be surprised if it does.

Brighton is certainly “doing us proud.” Not only is the Mayor giving us a civic reception on the Friday night (19th April) but Brighton gives everyone attending the Conference a pass entitling them to the free use of the local swimming baths, deck chairs, golf courses, putting greens, tennis courts and greyhound racing stadium, so there's no lack of anything to do in what “spare” time you have left during the week-end. If you have not already bought your ticket, now's the time to do so. The full Conference costs 10/-, the Saturday (9 a.m.—6.30 p.m.) 5/-, and the Saturday afternoon only (after 2 p.m.) 3/6. The Conference luncheon, which is already posing seating problems, so great has been the demand for tickets, is 12/6 extra.



## ENTRIES

By the same token, let's hope we see an even bigger entry than last year's 1,200 bottles. Sticking my neck right out, I'll venture to wager that we will; I wouldn't be surprised to see 1,500 bottles, for there are several new and quite interesting classes. Last reminder! Don't forget that entries for most classes close on 8th April (the photographic classes are already closed). There are several new trophies to be won, as you will see from the schedule, so now is the time to get busy on your entries. We want to make this the biggest show of its sort ever held in this country and your entries might just turn the balance. Do not be too modest about

“having a go”; any winemaker's entry is welcome, whether he or she is a Circle member or not. If you haven't a schedule, send for one *today*, either to Mr. C. W. Martin, 78 Broomhill Road, Farnborough, Hants, or to Mr. R. C. Lucas, Molburn House, Lone Pine Drive, Ferndown, Wimborne, Dorset, the general secretary, who also handles tickets. Entries for the wine show should go to Mr. E. A. Hawkins, 6 Hollingbury Rise, Brighton 6, and NOT to Mr. Lucas. See you at Brighton!



## CHANCE TO EXHIBIT

Another chance to exhibit this year is in the competition of the Essex Wine Federation, which is to be held in conjunction with the Southend Corporation Show at Southchurch Park on the 17th, 18th and 19th August. Entries are invited from members of wine circles in Essex and adjoining counties and will be accepted at the Show on Thursday evening, 16th August, and up to 10.30 on Friday, the 17th. Full particulars with forms of entry can be obtained from the Federation Show Secretary, R. Lake, Esq., 47 Brendon Way, Westcliff on Sea, Essex. A large part of the horticultural marquee has been allotted by the Corporation for the competition and it is hoped that all wine circles concerned will rally round and make this a bumper year for entries—exceeding by many hundreds the wine entered last year at Chelmsford. Southend Winemakers' Circle are running the Essex Federation Show this year and will have their usual colourful stand. Southend Corporation will also have a wine competition open to anyone.



## WINEMAKER TIES

The idea of a Winemaker's tie that we announced last month has proved very popular; apparently a tie is a popular gift, judging by the number of ladies who have ordered them. Or are they stealing the male prerogative of a tie, having already pinched our trousers? The only adverse comment we have had is that some winemakers do not care for the fermentation lock as an emblem, and would prefer that of a wine glass. All right! We'll try both, and see which is the more popular before deciding. We are having manufactured another tie, of Terylene, a plain wine-coloured (maroon) background with a pattern of tiny golden wine glasses (Paris goblets, as being the glass we use the most). It is most attractive and will be available two or three days after this magazine is in your hands.



## ALL THE YEAR ROUND

All of us, I suppose, welcome the end of the winter and the advent of Spring, in many ways the loveliest season of the year, but this year, after our long, hard winter (which will be something to boast of to our grandchildren!) the appearance of the snowdrops round the edge of the lawn has been doubly rewarding. How good it is to see them. We always take it as a signal that the time has come for a “clear-up” in the winery and a removal of the wine debris of empty bottles, one-gallon jars and so on that the wine-drinking winter evenings round the television, when it is too cold to do much in our winery, always seems to produce. I suppose I am an “old-fashioned” winemaker, for I still tend to think of winemaking as a summer pursuit, and like to think of it as a process of imprisoning some summer

# TWO JUDGING PROBLEMS

By E. A. Roycroft

**A**T SHOWS I have attended as a spectator, competitor or judge I have heard two topics of conversation repeated time and again. In fact, they seemed such dominant subjects that by the end of the season I would have been surprised if they had NOT been mentioned.

First, judges said over and over again that they were expected to judge far too many wines in far too short a time to do justice to the entries (though I suspect Show Secretaries were not forcibly told so). The complaint is justified. To quote an experience of my own which (perhaps extreme) does illustrate the point. After agreeing to judge a show I expressly asked: "How many wines?" "About 40; 45 at the most are expected," I was told in all good faith. By judging time there were 93! There was no other judge available to co-opt and I had two hours in which to "do" them—"Do," not "judge," was the *mot juste*. Other judges have had similar experiences.

Secretaries and organisers do a good job generally but I would plead: "Please spare a thought for the judge!" It is generally agreed that about 30 wines is the ideal maximum a judge should be expected to deal with at one time; after this the palate progressively loses its discrimination; though no judge will complain if the total is 40 or so, and if these are all in one class it is unavoidable. So, in 1963, will show organisers please arrange to have more judges and, if the last-minute rush of entries proves to be a flood, to co-opt others who have been warned to stand by.

The second topic is the constant request of exhibitors for more information or comments on how their wines were judged. This appears to have been strenuously opposed by judges on the grounds of working at high pressure and lack of time to make comments, and the difficulty of describing the subtle differences which accounted for the placings between several wines of almost equal quality. I am certain that these excuses are not entirely valid *particularly if the number of wines they have to judge does not exceed 30*.

When a judge has only five or six wines to judge he can rely on his memory and comparison to pick the best, but for 30 to 40 wines some form of marking sheet has to be used; no person's memory is that good. Why should not this marking be on a points system as normally advocated, the sheet being simple but comprehensive, and *published at the show*. By the marks in each section competitors could see where they had lost points and how near their wines were to the prizewinners. This I tried out and now recommend the following for the future.

1. The National Committee draw up a standard marking sheet and the sheets be made available to all judges from some source. Using these sheets judges would *not have to make comments* to discriminate between wines, etc., because it is all indicated by the marking.
2. Judges to use the sheets and to allow them to be published. After the initial judging the ten (or as decided) wines with the highest points are rejudged and compared (more than once if necessary), to allow for deterioration in the discrimination of the palate between the first and last wines. Also to allow for comparison and reassessment if necessary. The rejudging indicates how close some of the wines are.

3. Show organisers to co-operate by seeing there are sufficient judges available so that the number of wines for each judge does not exceed 30, unless in one class.
4. Judge(s) to start judging as early as possible. There is no need to wait until judging time or until all the wines have been gathered together if the marking sheet is used. The judge can commence judging as soon as he arrives and continue his judging during and after the arrival of the wines provided competitors and others are not allowed near the show benches. Stewards only would bring the wines to the benches.

*Whilst we agree with much that Mr. Roycroft suggests —this "No. 4" would, I am sure, create chaos at any large show, where hundreds of bottles were being received, for entries would tend to arrive later and later. It would also be extremely confusing and distracting for the judge, despite what he says, for judging demands above all, quiet and concentration—Editor*

This may not be entirely what the competitors require but it is a big step towards it. The competitor being the "customer," the "sales staff" should try to give them what they want. Or are judges frightened to publish their markings and to back their opinion?

One other comment from the National and since heard from judges is that "Wines are filtered too much" and therefore "have little body." As I have previously written, some commercial wines just before bottling are without harm, put through filters so fine that even bacteria are removed; very much finer than is practicable for amateurs. Why then the "little body"? In my opinion judges are looking for something that *is not supposed to be there*. Table wine should not be full bodied and as classes do not discriminate between types of wine body should not be taken into consideration unless the type of wine is known—impossible at present.

It has been stated that more wine is drunk with meals than at any other time in this country. The amateur wine-maker today has the knowledge, and certainly those who exhibit have, to know what wine they are going to make right from the must stage, and they make their wines for the table (light and thinnish) wines for dessert (heavy and full-bodied), social wines (medium) etc. To take body into consideration is automatically to exclude for show purposes many wines because they were made for the table and are light and thinnish.

This is one of the arguments supporting what I wrote two years ago, that classes by ingredient only are wrong. Wines should be classified according to purpose and subdivided by ingredients if desired. The National schedule seems to be the only one with any classes by purpose.

Let 1963 be a year of improvement and change wherever necessary.

Mr. Roycroft's suggested marking sheet is given overleaf.

## SPECIMEN MARKING SHEET

Class.....

ENTRY NUMBER .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
WRONG CLASS .....														
CONTAMINATED .....														
UNBALANCED .....														
PRESENTATION (10) (Bottle, label, cork, etc.) .....														
APPEARANCE OF WINE (a) Bottle (10) (C—cloudy, D—deposit, F—floaters) .....														
(b) Glass (10) (C—cloudy; F—floaters) .....														
BOUQUET/AROMA (20) .....														
FLAVOUR: Original (25) .....														
After (25) .....														
TOTAL POINTS .....														

## Notes on Marking

1. Tick against fault for ruled out wines.

Wrong Class: (a) Incorrect ingredient for class.  
(b) Dry wine in sweet class or vice versa.

Contaminated: (a) Off flavours, cheesy, oiliness, vinegary, etc.  
(b) Chemical taints—metal, filter paper, etc.

Unbalanced: (a) Excessively acid, astringent, bitter or sweet.  
(b) Lacking alcohol.

2. After marking all wines the ten with most marks are rejudged. If the points for the four/five with highest marks are within five points rejudge again by comparison.