

GUILD OF JUDGES NOW LAUNCHED

AFTER a great deal of initial spadework by the Committee of the National Conference the Amateur Winemakers' National Guild of Judges was successfully launched at a meeting in London on Sunday, 10th November

The enthusiasm at the meeting, which was attended by virtually all the judges now on the "National's" panel—only three were missing—was infectious, and the newly-appointed treasurer was nearly killed in the rush to pay subscriptions!

Mr. C. J. J. Berry, Chairman of the National Committee, presided at the outset, with the support of Mr. B. C. A. Turner (hon. secretary) and Mr. S. W. Andrews (Convenor of Judges for the National, and Chairman of the Judging Sub-Committee). Mr. Berry explained that it had gradually become evident that some form of organisation which could lay down procedure and standards for judging was necessary, and Mr. Turner had conceived the idea of a Guild of Judges which could perform these functions, and membership of which would be regarded as a high privilege.

Mr. Andrews, as Chairman of the Judging Sub-Committee, had been entrusted with the task of drawing up a judging procedure and code, and this had already been adopted by the committee for use at next year's National Show.

He thanked everyone of the company of forty for attending—many had come long distances—and invited Mr. Andrews to explain the proposals in more detail.

What the Guild will do

Mr. Andrews, doing so, said that the general proposal was that they form a Guild of Judges which would henceforth advise upon and control all judging activities, which would lay down standards acceptable to the majority, devise a set procedure for judges to follow, and, having done that, set up machinery for the training, examination and qualifying of judges.

The first step towards this was the production of a procedure for judges. This had already been done and would be available for discussion later (everyone was given a copy) and the next step would be to embody this, with much other material, in a judge's handbook, which would become the textbook for all would-be judges. Later it might be possible to devise one-day or week-end courses for tyros, and an examination which they could take in order to qualify.

Spreading knowledge

It was hoped that gradually in this way they would set up small "cells" of qualified judges all over the country, all with common standards and knowledge, who in turn would pass on their craft to others.

On one thing they of the National Committee were agreed. All would-be judges *must* have a good practical winemaking background, have won prizes in open competitions, and have stewarded at the National or other important shows under the supervision of a qualified judge. In other words, they must not come completely "raw" to a judge's course, and they should preferably have had fairly wide experience of judging at Circle or other shows before attempting to qualify as a judge at national level. Membership of the Guild was to be regarded as one of the highest honours in winemaking, and not to be lightly won.

It was also intended that the Guild should devise specimen sets of rules and specimen schedules for all sizes and types of wine show, from a Circle show or local flower show right up to twenty and thirty class shows, so that these could be available on request to any show secretary.

Founder membership

One of the difficulties with which the committee had been faced was to know how to obtain a founder membership. Who should be included and where did they draw the line? Finally, it was decided, since they had to start somewhere, that the only fair way of doing this was to send an invitation to all those whom the committee had agreed should judge at the 1964 National

Show to attend that meeting and become founder members—on payment of the subscription. Thereafter admittance to the Guild would be by examination only.

It was also the intention that the Guild should be under the wing of the National Conference.

The meeting obviously approved wholeheartedly of these proposals and after discussing a few minor points agreed that the Guild should be formed, and should be called "The Amateur Winemakers' National Guild of Judges."

Officers

The meeting then proceeded to elect officers. Mr. Andrews was elected Chairman (and then took the chair), Mr. B. C. A. Turner secretary, and Mr. A. Moore, of Marconi (an accountant) treasurer.

There were sixteen nominations for the ten-man committee and, after a ballot, those elected were: R. C. Lucas (Bournemouth), C. J. J. Berry (Andover), E. A. Roycroft (St. Albans), Dr. R. A. Webb (Bristol), G. W. B. Acton (Greenhill), C. Rickman (Harrow), Dr. Paxman, F. Spark (Andover), L. Gilbertson (Cardiff) and Wing Cdr. R. Woodley (Andover), (with the officers).

From this committee there will be chosen sub-committees to compile a handbook, to formulate classes, to discuss ways and means of raising funds, and to discuss judging procedure.

Subscriptions

The meeting agreed that the Guild subscription should be £1/1/- per annum, and that an entrance fee should be payable by anyone wishing to take the examination. (A proposal by Mr. Berry that a membership sub-committee should be set up to deal with the admittance of new members until such time as the examination could become operative—he foresaw a rush of applications to join—was heavily defeated, the meeting insisting that henceforth entrance must be by examination only).

The meeting, with warm thanks to Mr. Andrews, adopted as a basis for discussion the suggested procedure for judges which he had drawn up—it is published elsewhere in this issue—and the next meeting was fixed for 15th December.

All in all, this was an excellent and encouraging meeting, and one felt that it was almost certainly an historic one. There is little doubt that, given the support of Circles, the Guild of Judges will become a real force in winemaking. It will almost certainly be welcomed by the Clubs for, whilst it will in no way trespass upon their autonomy, it will always be there to advise and help.

This will make it possible for all winemakers throughout the country to have at their disposal the best advice on judging, schedules, and the staging of shows and competitions of all sizes, and to use common standards and methods, surely a great advantage.

The Guild is likely to be hard-worked in its early days whilst all the ground-work is being done, but we are sure that all Circles will give it every support and encouragement in their power.

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Judging Procedure

WHAT procedure and system of marking should a judge of country wines adopt? This is a favourite topic of debate with winemakers everywhere, and many different systems have at times been advocated. At the meeting in London this month, which saw the foundation of the Amateur Winemakers' National Guild of Judges, those present agreed upon a suggested procedure to be adopted by all their members, and there is little doubt that in future this will become standard practice, at least within the winemaking movement.

Because of this, and because it will undoubtedly be of interest to all clubs, winemakers, exhibitors, judges and would-be judges, we publish it here in detail so that it can be studied carefully by everyone, and assimilated.

This procedure, set down by Mr. S. W. Andrews, the Convenor of the Judges, will be used at this year's National Conference and Show and, although it may well be amended in detail, will form the basis of a handbook for judges which the Guild intends to produce. All "National" judges will henceforth be expected to conform to it.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE TO BE ADOPTED BY JUDGES

On reaching the show bench

1. Confirm that the show class number on the show bench is the class that was allocated to you by the convenor of judges.
2. Instruct your steward in your method of judging.
3. Make sure that you have all your equipment for judging, i.e.:-
 - (a) Pen or pencil.
 - (b) Glasses for tasting.
 - (c) Marking sheet.
 - (d) Spittoon.
 - (e) Judges' report sheet.
 - (f) Tea towel.
 - (g) Palate refresher: i.e. cheese, biscuit, etc.
 - (h) Water for washing glasses.
 - (i) Corkscrew.
 - (j) SHOW SCHEDULE.

Although many Show Organisers supply the necessary impementa for judging, it is a good plan for a judge to have his own essentials, i.e. a couple of glasses, a tea towel, marking sheet, pen or pencil, and something for cleaning the palate.

It is neither necessary or advisable to take any equipment other than that mentioned in the above list, to the show bench. It is unlikely that the rules for the classes will specify a gravity standard so that there is no point in using a hydrometer. Your palate will tell you whether a wine is sweet or dry.

EXHIBITS

1. Make sure that all the exhibits are in the right class.
2. Make sure that all the exhibits are according to schedule, that the bottles are the right type and that they are correctly labelled, according to the rules governing the show.
(Failure to comply with these two points will result in disqualification.)
3. Starting from the back row of the show bench and working from left to right, take a bottle from the bench.
4. Note the number on the exhibitors label and instruct your steward to write down the number in the first column of the marking sheet.
5. Examine the exhibit for presentation. Remove the cork and examine to make sure that the underside is clean and free from mould. If the cork is obviously dirty or mouldy deduct 1 point. If the bottle is obviously dirty, i.e. label gum smears deduct 1 point. Handling smears, scratches, etc., may have been caused after the bottle left the care of the exhibitor and where there is room for doubt the

exhibitor should be given the benefit of the doubt. Instruct your steward to enter in the appropriate column the number of points awarded.

6. Examine the exhibit for clarity. Exhibits with floaters or flocculent precipitate will score 0 points. A firm sediment that does not lift when the wine is poured into the glass may be allowed, otherwise the score will be 0 points. A red wine that has been in the bottle for a long time often has this firm wedge of sediment, and after all, the show rules do not usually state that the wine must have been recently racked. A wine that is definitely hazy will score 0 points, a clear wine will be allowed 1 point, a bright wine 2 points, and a really brilliant "star bright" wine 3 points. Instruct your steward to enter in the appropriate column the number of points awarded.
7. Replace the bottle in its original position on the show bench.
8. Repeat this process until you have worked through the whole of the class.
9. Now take the marking sheet from your steward.
10. Instruct your steward to give you exhibit No. 1 from the show bench. Check the number of the exhibit with the number in the first column of your marking sheet.

REMOVE ONLY ONE BOTTLE AT A TIME

11. Remove the cork from the bottle, and smell the bottle bouquet. This may save the embarrassment of pouring acidified wine into your tasting glass.
12. If your nose tells you that the wine is healthy, pour a little into your tasting glass, replace the cork into the bottle.
13. Take the glass in your hand and swirl the wine in the glass. Savour the bouquet and award the points.
14. Then taste the wine by holding it in your mouth for a few moments and "chewing it," at this stage—more than any other—you must give the wine your undivided attention.
15. This is the stage where the majority of your marks will be awarded, and the majority of the penalties will be given.

Care must be taken at this point not to mark too high, sufficient margin must be left in case the first exhibit is of low standard in relation to the rest of the class, this is most important as sufficient margin must be left for marking wines of a high standard which may follow.

Deduct marks for:

Acetification.	Instability.
Bitterness.	Over or under acidity.
Bacterial infection, i.e. flowers of wine, etc.	Over or under astringency.
Metallic hazes.	Lack of vinosity.
Excessive sulphite.	Poor flavour.
Mustiness.	Poor colour.
	Excessive sweetness.

Unsuitability for purpose (in "wines by use class").

Oxidisation, if it has caused the wine to carry bad flavour or has upset the balance, an unpleasant "after flavour" on the palate.

In short, the wine that will score the most points is one that is healthy, stable, well balanced in all respects, brilliant, a good colour with a deep robe in the case of a red wine, a good bouquet and flavour, the two latter need not necessarily be of the original ingredients.

16. Reject the wine into the spittoon and award your marks for aroma, colour, flavour and general impression.
17. Make a note in the remarks column of your marking sheet of any particular penalties that have resulted in loss of points, i.e. lack of balance, poor flavour, etc.
18. If the exhibit has been disqualified note the reason on your marking sheet and affix a sticker to the bottle to say why.
19. Instruct your steward to replace exhibit No. 1 on the show bench, and to hand you exhibit No. 2.
20. Clear your palate if necessary with a piece of cheese or bread, etc.
21. Repeat the procedure as for No. 1, and so on until the class is finished.
22. Now total your points. If the margin between the first five or six exhibits is low, rejudge those exhibits and place the first four in order of merit according to the qualities of the wines, and **NOT ACCORDING TO YOUR OWN LIKES AND DISLIKES**. This is done by palate only, and not by use of marks.
23. Make sure that you replace the corks correctly into their respective bottles. Instruct your steward to replace the exhibits on the show bench, in their right places.
24. Complete your result sheet, making sure that you sign it, then give it to your steward to take to the entries secretary.
25. Complete your judges report (where required) and, if your steward is trainee judge, complete the confidential report and take both forms to the convenor of judges.
26. **MAKE SURE THAT YOU LEAVE YOUR SECTION OF THE SHOW BENCH IN A CLEAN AND TIDY CONDITION.**

NOTES FOR JUDGES

A judge must at all times try to divorce his own likes and dislikes from his judging. The fact that he dislikes a certain variety must not prevent him from giving a fair and unbiased verdict on the exhibit.

It is very important for the judge to read and assimilate the rules governing the show, and to have a copy of the rules handy in case it is necessary to refer to them during the judging session.

Unless the exhibit is disqualified for the two reasons stated, it should be tasted, unless of course it is acetified or diseased; this will be apparent when the bouquet is being savoured. The fact that the wine has minor faults in presentation is no reason for it not being tasted.

If his dislike is so strong that he feels unable to do this he should:

- (a) Refrain from judging.
- (b) Ask to be given another class.

At all times a judge must be impeccably discreet and tactful. The mere fact of acting in the capacity of a judge leaves one open to criticism, and a judge must be prepared to meet this with equanimity.

It is emphasised that a judge allocates marks only for his own guidance in selecting a short list of wines in a class. These marks are at all times confidential, and should not be left lying around, otherwise misunderstandings and unnecessary controversy may occur.

A judge should at all times be conscious of the honour conferred upon him by being asked to judge the efforts of others, and should approach his task with humility. Judges and stewards should refrain from smoking in the judging hall whilst judging is in progress.

REASONS FOR DISQUALIFYING

In the past there have been many disqualifications for numerous reasons, i.e. a few floaters, foreign bodies, sediment, etc. This may have been all right in the earlier days when a standard was being set for presentation.

That standard having become normal practice, the time has come to devote more attention to the wine itself, and less to the way in which it is presented. Nevertheless, there would be no point in having rules for show if they were not enforced, and an exhibit must comply with the rules or suffer the penalty. There can be no excuse for an exhibit being "N.A.S." (not according to schedule).

ALL OTHER FAULTS WILL RESULT IN LOSS OF POINTS AND NOT IN DISQUALIFICATION.

Faults

Acetification needs no explanation. Bacterial infection can cause a bad odour and thick ropy condition.

Mycoderma infection can cause white film on the surface of the wine, also various moulds.

Metallic hazes may be present if the wine has been contaminated, copper and brass may cause a blue haze to be present in the wine, and iron an oxidised or brown haze.

Excessive sulphite will cause an unpleasant smell and also an unpleasant flavour.

Mustiness is self-explanatory and is usually caused by insufficient racking.

By instability, is meant the presence of C.O.₂ gas in a still wine; this may be due to the wine still fermenting, or to a residual content of gas in a wine which has recently finished fermenting.

Foreign bodies may consist of pieces of cork, asbestos pulp or other extraneous matter.

Bouquet

The bouquet should be pleasant and attractive, it should stimulate a desire to proceed with the tasting. It is from the bouquet that one forms the first diagnosis.

Flavour

The majority of the marks are given for flavour, aroma (which is really an integral part of the flavour), colour and general impression.

Some wines carry the flavour of the original ingredients for many years, others lose it after a few years maturing. Provided the flavour is well balanced and wholesome it will neither gain nor lose marks for tasting of the original ingredients.

The wine should have an alcohol content compatible with its intended use.

A SUGGESTED MARKING SHEET

Exhibitor's No.	Presentation	Clarity	Bouquet	Flavour Aroma. Colour. Quality. General Impression	Total	Remarks
	3	3	4	30		