

ENJOYED NATIONAL

Appreciative letter from Mrs. Elaine Berwick, Oakbank Birnam, Dunkeld:

May I on behalf of Maisie Shephard and myself add our appreciation for a most interesting time at the Southport Conference. This was our first National and we thoroughly enjoyed our experience.

We thought the organisation for such a mammoth show was outstanding and it would appear that we can be proud of the organising committee for the hard work and attention to detail.

We were given the opportunity to act as judges' stewards and found this an instructive and rewarding experience.

The speakers were very enjoyable—I'm only sorry the question and answer session had to be fairly short: the "Any Questions?" panel were very able for the questions submitted.

My only grumble is that it can't come north more often—or can it? If it does, we'll be there (D.V.).

Why not use a judges' alphabet?

—a suggestion from Elvin Plant

Dr. Webb at Southport drew attention to the difficulties in getting judges' assessments over to individual competitors. I have evolved for consideration and experimentation a system of shorthand for Judges/Stewards with the following considerations in mind. First, communicating to the exhibitor the judges' assessment of his/her exhibit and secondly, making this process easier by using symbols to communicate ideas.

The Steward/Judge team is already under pressure so that any imposition of further duties will be resisted but if the existing tension can be relieved by using symbols for whole phrases or sentences then this will be a welcome move. Faults detection in an exhibit begins with the column No. 2 in a visual assessment having schedule regulations in mind. Schedule regulations are common factors in three columns, col. 2 "Presentation," col. 3 "Colour/clarity" and col. 5 "taste" etc. (for "wine by use" classes). For example, "R" denotes a marking down through inattention to regulations in col. 2, while "B" calls attention to a bottle fault only. It follows therefore that "R" in col. 2 refers only to cork, wine level and labelling. The alphabet would not allow greater detail. Apart from this, each symbol means one clearly defined fault—or suspicion of fault.

My choice of symbols (I rejected the idea of using the Greek alphabet!) has a pattern which can be used by those familiar with recent literature on winemaking as a mnemonic, i.e., a memory aid. "R" denoting regulations and "H" for suspicion of haze are obvious. "P" is suggested petillant=sparkling, while detritus is a polite word for "muck" culled from *Progressive Winemaking!* "Z" conjures up the zig-zag of recently added sugar syrup—before perfect blending is achieved. "M" is derived from metabisulphite—and so on. In my view any Steward/Judge can learn this Elvin/alphabet in a few minutes and the exhibitor will, in my scheme, be sent a copy for reference with labels, etc.

How will a copy of the Judge's assessment—a deeply personal matter to some exhibitors—reach the exhibitor? This is where the extra work commences but it can be minimised by using a carbon

and having the top copy perforated at intervals *across* the sheet. After judging the top copy will be torn along the perforations and the separate slips sent to the appropriate exhibitor. An envelope, bearing exhibit number and class number only can be previously prepared, filed under the class number, numerically according to exhibitor number and the slips inserted as soon as judging is completed. This is a better system than laying the envelope under the bottle because *additional* stewards can be busy in the office even while a final assessment for the first five places is proceeding. The carbon copy will thus be the Judge's working copy and be kept secret as hitherto

This draft scheme, which I commend to the Guild and all winemakers for earnest consideration, is not intended to tell a competitor his/her relative position in the class judgment list. It is an assessment of faults only—or even an assessment of lack of faults! It is personal and individual and private.

LETTERS FOR EACH COLUMN

Col. 2—Presentation

- B. Bottling fault, bottle type/cleanliness.
- R. Schedule regulations ignored re labelling, corking and wine level.

Col. 3—Colour/clarity

- R. Colour not as schedule regulations.
- D. Detritus or sediment.
- E. "Floaters."
- H. Haze.
- P. Obviously working.
- Z. Last minute blending suspected.

Col. 4—Bouquet

- K. Bouquet—unsatisfactory, foreign to its class.
- L. Bouquet lacking.
- F. Bouquet foul—"mousey" or vinegar.
- M. Sulphite detected.

Col. 5—Taste, balance, etc.

- Ad. Acid deficiency.
- Ae. Acid excess.
- F. Undefinable or other "off" flavour.
- M. Sulphite suggested.
- P. Unstable.
- R. Not true to taste demanded by schedule.
- S. Superfluous alcohol for type.
- T. Tannin deficiency.
- V. Lacks vinosity (alcohol).
- W. Too sweet for proper assessment.
- X. Wrong class—too sweet/dry for its class.
- Y. Lacking maturity.

Certain letters, e.g., C, G and O cannot always be written quickly with clarity. The letters I and J can be mis-read and these letters have not been used. The letter X will have this form only to distinguish it from a quick erasure in the form of a +.