

Letters from readers . . .

# Favoured ingredients

**Comments Mr. Fred Dowling, of Keighley, Yorks:**

The rapid growth of amateur wine-making evidently creates several problems, many letters published in the *AW* point to the necessity for some National and Federation reform, such as classification of wines, numbers of class entries, and the system of trophies, awards, etc.

Winemakers must be aware that it is impossible to introduce rules to satisfy everyone and I notice, for instance, that elderberry and blackberry are accepted in an "ingredient" class, but never damson or other red wines.

I would also like the powers that be to abolish the "Social Wine" gimmick and classify all amateur wines in their order—dessert, fortified, sweet, medium sweet, medium dry, and dry. It must be remembered that many of the great wines of Europe are medium sweet and medium dry.

## N.A.S.—or handbook?

**Reader Charles E. Bates, of Kettering, Northants, brings up the question of how far local shows should be expected to follow "National" guidance:**

Pondering on the report of the City of Leicester Show, at which it was requested that white plastic topped stoppers should be used instead of all cork stoppers, to make for "better presentation", I could not help wondering how many of these ill-informed people there still are in the country who appear not to have bothered to read the introduction in the handbook of the A.W.N.G.J.

This show is the second one I have come across this year in which the rules advocate the use of plastic topped corks.

Whilst it is not compulsory to follow the edicts of the A.W.N.G.J. I think

the organisers of these shows could certainly do their bit for our movement by falling into line with all the other wine shows here in the Midlands.

Otherwise how can the organisers of the City of Leicester show claim that their show (and here I quote a show official) "is going to be recommended as a Grade I competition by the National Judges"—whoever they may be? What is this "grading" that these officials were speaking of with such relish?

I would also like to ask the National Judges who were at this show, how they adjudicated Red, Sweet, and White, Dry, all in the same class as happened at that particular show in about 8 classes?

**The judges at the Bee and Honey Show at the important Shrewsbury Floral Fete, commented:**

"The number of entries reflect increased enthusiasm in amateur wine-making and the standard of exhibits has improved considerably on last year's show particularly in presentation and attention to schedule. The influence of the amateur winemakers circle has played a great part in making and staging home-made wines, noticeably in the correct use of yeast cultures and the presentation of wines to the show bench."

If the organisers of such a world-famous show were not too proud to be guided by winemakers I say that all those who organise wine competitions should follow the beekeepers example and follow the recommendations in the Judges' Handbook.

## Hairspray

**We've heard of beer being used as a hair rinse but this was not what Mrs. D. Woods, of Amesbury, Wilts, had in mind . . .**

I enjoyed Dave Line's article "Crystal bitter on draught" but I feel I must challenge his statement that a pressure barrel puts an end to mess in the kitchen, sticky rings on the floor, etc.

My husband bought me a pressure barrel and CO<sub>2</sub> injector for my birthday and last night we filled it for the first time. He lifted the five gallon dustbin and slopped it causing a tidal wave across the floor.

While filling the barrel the tube slipped and sprayed the walls (they probably needed it!). Having filled and capped the barrel he let a little CO<sub>2</sub> into it to drive out any air and completed his hat-trick by giving the ceiling a final spray. Although the thought was lovely I think I'll go back to perfume and frillies next year.

## Master Winemaker

**Two suggestions from a well-known winemaker, H. E. Bravery, of Westcott, Dorking:**

I have been reading with interest the arguments put forward on how to assess a Master Winemaker.

May I suggest that to be acclaimed a Master Winemaker an exhibitor must win a "first" in every class in which he is eligible to exhibit at the annual National Conference and Show.

I cannot see any other way of doing it, unless it be arranged that anyone wishing to compete for the title should let it be known at the beginning of twelve months before the next National. He would then be required to exhibit at three large regional shows which could be recognised as eliminators for the title. All competitors still in the running would then be required to exhibit at the National to find the "Winemaker of the Lot".

**This letter comes from Dr. R. A. Webb, of Long Ashton, Bristol:**

Your correspondent Mr. Hayden of Leicester appears to have misunderstood the method of calculating points for recognition of the "Master Wine-maker" at a Show. They are not the points awarded by judges during the judging, which have relevance only to the judge awarding them and cannot justifiably be used to compare, or average, results obtained by different judges. The points used are those given for each prize awarded, for instance 9 for a First, 7 for a Second, and so on down to perhaps 1 for Highly commended or Commended.

Averaging award points is not a workable proposition. A person who put in one bottle and got a First would be unbeatable, even by someone who put in 10 bottles and got nine Firsts and a Second.

A solution to the problem, which has been suggested but not tried, is to give the title "Master Winemaker" to the competitor with the most Firsts in the relevant classes. If two or more competitors have the same number of Firsts, whichever one has most Seconds is the winner. If there is still equality resort is had to 3rd, then 4th places. In the event of equality after taking all awards into consideration, as could happen if say, two competitors had each 2 Firsts and a Third, a competitor who entered the least number of Classes involved in the Trophy competition should be the winner. If there was still equality they would have to stay equal!