

COMPETITION GUIDELINES

By entering a good show, you can establish if your winemaking is as good as it can be, and if not, by discussion with a Judge you can learn where further improvements could be made.

WHICH WINES TO ENTER: Enter all the wines you consider to be good quality, don't just look for one good one to enter.

Select your wines/beers by sight and taste, and not by the name of the recipe used. Many good wines/beers fail to get prizes because they are in the wrong class.

PRESENTATION: Two points are awarded for presentation and everyone should get these two points by:

Using the type of bottle (no screw caps) and cork specified in the schedule.

Leaving the required air space between wine/beer and cork.

Placing the correct label where stated in the schedule.

Ensuring the bottle is clean inside and out. Look for gum smears after fitting the label.

Corks: See Rule 6.

Suit them to the schedule as follows:

APERITIFS: Wines taken before a meal to stimulate the appetite. Aperitifs should have sufficient acid to taste fresh and leave the palate clean. Alcohol should be between 14% and 17%.

TABLE WINE CLASSES: These wines are meant to accompany the enjoyment of food. They can vary from light to strong flavour. Table wines are varied in style and colour and are dealt with under separate headings.

RED TABLE WINE DRY: Colour should be red but tints of purple or black or tawny is acceptable. The wine must be without easily recognisable sweetness. The flavour can be substantial and should remain in the aftertaste. Some astringency from tannins is expected, with mellowness and maturity desirable. The bouquet should be complex and vinous. Acidity should be between 0.45% and 0.65% and the alcohol from 10% to 14%. Examples such as Bordeaux, Burgundy, Rioja.

WHITE TABLE WINE DRY: Pale colour is desirable, there should be no brown or pink tones. The wine should taste dry without easily recognisable sweetness. The flavour should be pleasant with no bitter aftertaste and should give an impression of freshness leaving the mouth clean. Acidity should be between 0.5% to 0.8% and alcohol between 9% and 13%. The bouquet should be clean fragrant and vinous. Examples such as White Burgundies, Alsace and dry Loire wines.

WHITE TABLE WINE MEDIUM DRY: Pale colour is desirable. Often commercially described as off-dry, the wine should have a sweetness that is easily recognisable but does not persist on the palate. Alcohol should be between 8.5% and 13% and acidity between 0.55% and 0.90%. Examples would be German halbrocken wines

WHITE TO GOLDEN TABLE WINE SWEET: Colour can be deeper than for the dry or medium wines ranging up to golden but should not be dark. The flavour can be richer than the other wines with the alcohol up to 14%. The acidity should be between 0.6% and 0.9% sufficient to balance the sweetness and to prevent a cloying finish. The sweetness should not overwhelm the other characteristics. This is a wine that is best drunk with fruit or dessert at the end of a meal. An example would be Sauterne.

ROSE TABLE WINE MEDIUM DRY: Often commercially described as off-dry, the wine should have a sweetness which is clearly recognisable, but does not persist on the palate. The wine should be pink, variations in colour intensity and slight orange or 'onion skin' tints are acceptable. The flavour must be light, fruity and fresh and the bouquet should reflect these points. There should not be excessive astringency. The acidity should be between 0.55% and 0.9% and the alcohol between 10% and 12%.

AFTER-DINNER WINE RED SWEET: The colour should be deep. Mature wines may have tawny characteristics but should display some red colour. The flavour should be rich fruity and vinous, the whole being mellow and mature. Acidity should be between 0.45% and 0.7%. The alcohol should be as high as may be achieved by fermentation. The wine should be as sweet as the other characteristics will permit without it becoming cloying. Although this wine is often called 'Dessert' it is meant for drinking after dinner. Examples would be Mavrodaphne of Patras 15% to Port 22%.

AFTER-DINNER WINE WHITE TO BROWN SWEET: Here a wide range of colours is acceptable with the deeper colours usually providing the best wines but there must be no red colouring. Acidity should be between 0.5% and 0.9%. All other characteristics are as After Dinner Wine Red Sweet. Examples are Madeira, Muscat & sweet Oloroso Sherries.

FORTIFIED WINES - Madeira Type: Wines in this class should emulate the Malmsey type of wine. This is a fortified, luscious, sweet 'After-Dinner' wine. The colour is deep tawny. The wine is full bodied and has a full sweet flavour with caramelised overtones on the farewell. The sweetness is balanced by a fairly high level of acidity. The final Specific Gravity should be from 1.025 to 1.050, alcohol about 18% and the acidity as tartaric acid about 0.6% to 0.7%.

WINES BY INGREDIENT: These wines can range from light dry table to full bodied sweet after-dinner wines. The main criteria are that the wine should be clean and sound and that it is in balance for the particular class in which it is entered. When judging named ingredient classes one can often detect other ingredients and while these may improve the wine, they may blur recognition of the named ingredient. Provided that they do not predominate over the named ingredient the entry is acceptable.

MEAD: Mead is essentially a wine whose character is derived from the use of honey, as the major source of fermentable sugar. Variants with added fruit juice and/or herbs and spices are acceptable. A wide range of colours is acceptable, including red where red fruit juice is added.

SPARKLING WINE: This wine must contain carbon dioxide produced by a secondary fermentation in the bottle. Although this wine is usually white both red and rosé may be entered. Even though the wine may be specified as dry a small amount of recognisable sweetness is acceptable. Acidity may range from 0.6% to 0.9% and alcohol from 10% to 12%. The commercial example is Champagne.

LIQUEURS: Home-made liqueurs are strong (usually 25-40% alcohol), sweet, and highly flavoured after-dinner drinks. Many flavours and styles are encountered but they can be divided into four general groups:

Fruit base: e.g., alcohol infusions using various fruits (approx. 25-35% alcohol: 35-40% for orange liqueurs such as Cointreau and Grand Marnier).

Chocolate/Coffee base: e.g., Tia Maria, cacao types etc. (approx. 25-30% alcohol).

Herb/Spice base: e.g., peppermint, aniseed and more complex blends such as Benedictine types (approx. 30-40% alcohol, with Green Chartreuse an exception at 55%).

BEER Definitions:

All beers entered should be bottle matured and should have a firm and light yeast deposit. The beers should be conditioned to give a fine running bead and close-knit head. Head retention should be good although beers high in alcohol may have little head retention. Acidity should not be predominant in any of these beer types. The definitions used in the NGWBJ handbook are fairly broad. Although they are derived in the main from classic English beer styles, there is no implication that beers have to adhere strictly to the use of English hops. Many brewers now use American or other foreign hops, particularly in their pale ales. Provided that the beer conforms to the NGWBJ guidelines for that style (e.g., it is not excessively hoppy for the style), then the use of non-English hops should neither be penalised nor favoured by judges when assessing beers.

DARK MILD: A lightly hopped beer with an O.G. of 35-42. The colour may range from light to dark brown. The flavour will have a delicate blend of malt and roast grains. Alcohol content will range from 3.5 - 4.2%.

BELGIAN GOLDEN STRONG ALE: O.G. 70-90, alcohol content of 7 – 9%. This is a yellow to medium gold strong ale exhibiting a blend of moderate fruity/spicy/hoppy character. It should be well attenuated without any cloying sweetness. A good white head and excellent bead is desirable. Flavour should be a complex blend of fruity esters, some spiciness and overall soft malt character with some mellow warming alcohol present. Hop bitterness should be smooth and complementary – not dominant.

Ingredients are typically Pilsner malt with some type of fermentable sugar to assist with attenuation and a dryish finish. Lager hops and/or Styrian Goldings are typical. A suitable Belgian yeast should be used to ensure appropriate character with fermentation temperature slightly raised.

A good commercial example would be Duvel, often available in some supermarkets.

ENGLISH IPA: This full-bodied premium bitter has an O.G. of 50-60 and a rich golden to deep copper colour. The bouquet should be hoppy and grainy. The flavour should be full malty and grainy with a predominant hop and clean bitter farewell. There should be a little residual sweetness to balance the hop. Alcohol 5-6.5%.

WHEAT BEER: Pale straw to dark gold in colour, with an OG of 45-55. It is typically brewed using up to 50% wheat malt and is often cloudy. It should be highly carbonated with a thick, well retained head. Yeast derived flavours can be fruity and spicy, with phenolic clove and banana. Belgian styles may have a bready/grainy flavour, with coriander and orange peel. Hop bitterness, flavour and aroma should be low, with a soft finish on the palate.

LONDON BROWN ALE: Original gravity of 35-40 giving an alcohol level of 3.5-4%. Colour may vary from light to dark brown. The bouquet is malty backed by caramel. The beer should be sweet on the palate giving a smooth blend of malt and caramel with a low hop flavour.

NEWCASTLE BROWN ALE: The O.G. of 45-50 is reflected in an alcohol level of 4.5-5.0%. The colour should be a light reddish brown and the bouquet a blend of caramel and hop. The flavour should be full-bodied blend of caramelised malt with medium bitterness and noticeable sweetness.

BELGIAN DUBBEL ALE: O.G. 70-80. Alcohol content 7-8%.

This is a dark strong ale exhibiting a blend of rich, toasted, caramel with a fruity essence and with a rocky head. It should be well attenuated without any cloying sweetness.

Dark amber-brown in colour with usually good clarity. Head retention may be adversely affected by alcohol content in stronger versions. A good white head and excellent bead is desirable.

Flavour should be a complex blend of fruity esters, some spiciness and overall soft malt character but no roasted malt aroma with some mellow warming alcohol present. Hop bitterness should be smooth and complementary – not dominant.

Ingredients are typically Pilsner malt with a range of other malts which could include Munich, crystal, cara, roast barley, chocolate and Special "B" and some type of fermentable sugar to assist with attenuation and a dryish finish. Lager hops and/or Styrian Goldings are typical. A suitable Belgian yeast should be used to ensure appropriate character with fermentation temperature slightly raised.

Medium to full body. Warming mouthfeel from alcohol. A dark, rich, malty, moderately strong ale.

A good commercial example would be Chimay Red, La Trappe Dubbel or Grimbergen Dubbel, available in some supermarkets or specialist beer shops.

DRY STOUT: This beer has an O.G. of 45-50 and an alcohol content of 4.5 - 5.0%. The bouquet should be that of roasted grain. The flavour should be of roasted grains full and dry with a long hard bitter finish. The colour is almost black.

SWEET STOUT: O.G. of 40-55. Colour is dark brown to almost black. Dark malts dominate the bouquet and flavour, bitterness is slight. Alcohol ranges from 4 to 5.5%. "Milk" stouts, sweetened with lactose have a high residual sweetness.

OATMEAL STOUT: OG 45-55. A very dark full bodied, roasty, malty ale with oatmeal flavour. Roasted grain aromas often with coffee like character carry through to the flavour. Low hop aroma. It should have some sweetness but is not as sweet as sweet stouts. An oily mouthfeel from oatmeal is acceptable. The oats used may or may not be malted. A commercial example would be Samuel Smith's Oatmeal Stout.

AMERICAN IPA: O.G. 60-70, alcohol 6– 7.%. The balance of this beer is hop forward, with a clean fermentation profile, dryish finish, with supporting malt allowing the hop character to shine through.

Aroma: Can range from prominent to intense hop aroma featuring characteristics of American or New World hops. A low to medium low clean, grainy-malty aroma may be found in the background.

Colour: Ranges from medium gold to light reddish-amber

Head retention should be medium-sized, white to off-white with good persistence.

Flavour: Hop flavour is medium to very high and should reflect an American or New World hop character. Malt flavour should be low to medium low.

Dry to medium-dry finish; residual sweetness should be low to none. The bitterness and hop flavour may linger into the aftertaste but should not be harsh.

PORTER: This beer has an O.G. of 60-70 and an alcohol content of 5.5 -7%; a colour of dark brown to black, with a predominance of brown and chocolate malts on the bouquet and in the flavour. The flavour should also be full, with some residual sweetness to balance the hop and roast grains.

BARLEY WINE: Colour ranges from golden to brown. O.G. is from 90 upwards. The bouquet should be rich fruity hoppy alcoholic and vinous. The flavour should be full and malty with a smooth and mature blend of sweetness, hop and alcohol. Alcohol content will be 9% or greater.

BITTER: Original gravity should be from 40-50 and the colour from golden to deep copper. The aroma of hops in the bouquet should lead to those of malt and grain. The flavour should be full, malty and grainy with a hoppy bitter farewell and perhaps a little sweetness from residual dextrins. Alcohol content 4-5%.

PALE LAGER: Original gravity (O.G.) should be from 40-50. The beer should be of a light golden colour and the bouquet a delicate blend of hops, malt and DMS (dimethyl sulphide). The flavour should be dry, clean and refreshing, light to medium in malt and hops. Alcohol normally ranges from 4-5.5%.

STRONG LAGER: With an O.G. of 50-65, alcohol content ranges from 5-7%. Colour varies from golden to amber. The bouquet should be malty and grainy with slight DMS and a good hop balance. The beer should be full bodied with a malty flavour, a firm hop background and perceptible alcohol. Some sweetness due to dextrins may be apparent.

Wine and Beer definitions from 2000 NGWBJ Handbook with kind permission.

AMERICAN PALE ALE: OG 1045-1060; alcohol 4.5-6%. This is a pale refreshing beer with a moderate to strong aroma from American or new world hops.

The taste should be clean with a light to moderate mouth feel and a dry finish. Hop flavour and bitterness can linger on the aftertaste but should not be harsh or astringent. Late and/or dry hopping will all add to the hop flavour.

Speciality malts [crystal, amber etc] may be used but should support rather than distract from the clean malt / hop taste.

Colour should be pale to light gold with a large white to off white head and a fast-running head.

A commercial example would be Sierra Nevada Pale Ale which is available in many supermarkets.

SAISON: O.G.50-65 and alcohol content of 5.0-7.0%. Often a distinctive pale orange but may be golden or amber in colour. Fruity aroma, reminiscent of citrus with low to moderate hop, and possibly hints of spice. A refreshing, fruity/spicy ale, highly carbonated, with a dry finish, quenching acidity and moderate hop bitterness.

GUEST BEERS:

2024. FRUIT BEER: OG and alcohol should as the base beer. A harmonious marriage of fruit and beer that is still recognisable as a beer. Aromas and flavour of the declared fruit should be evident. Additional aromas and flavour from the declared base beer should blend well with the fruit. The fruit and base style of the beer are to be declared on the bottle label, e.g. Raspberry Lambic, Cherry Stout.

2025. HELLES BOCK: OG 1.063 -1.072; ABV 6-7.5%; IBU 20-27; Colour 23-35 EBC

A strong, malty German lager with a nicely attenuated finish that enhances drinkability.

Deep gold to light amber in color with good clarity. Large, creamy, persistent, white head.

Sweet malt aroma but a clean fermentation profile. Very low hop aroma.

Moderately strong grainy-sweet, doughy, bready, or lightly toasty malt flavor dominates.

Moderate hop bitterness. Well-attenuated, not cloying, with a moderately-dry finish that may taste of both malt and hops. Medium-bodied. Moderate to moderately-high carbonation. Smooth and clean with no harshness or astringency.