

Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP)

Mini-Guide to Beer Styles For Home Brew Beer Competitions

Revised 8/9/99

Minor revision 4/7/01

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1. AMERICAN LAGER

1A. Light/Standard/Premium

Aroma: Little to no malt aroma. Hop aroma may range from none to light, flowery hop presence. Slight fruity aromas from yeast and hop varieties used may exist, as well as perceptible levels of green apples due to acetaldehyde. Low levels of "cooked-corn" aroma from DMS may be present. No diacetyl.

Appearance: Very pale straw to pale gold color. White head seldom persists. Very clear.

Flavor: Crisp and dry flavor with some low levels of sweetness. Hop flavor ranges from none to low levels. Hop bitterness at low to medium level. Balance may vary from slightly malty to slightly bitter, but is relatively close to even. High levels of carbonation may provide a slight acidity or dry "sting." No diacetyl. No fruitiness.

Mouthfeel: Very light body from use of a high percentage of adjuncts such as rice or corn. Very well carbonated with slight carbonic bite on the tongue.

Overall Impression: Very refreshing and thirst quenching. "Light" beers will have a lower gravity and less resulting alcohol than the standard. Premium beers tend to have fewer adjuncts or can be all-malt.

1B. Dark

Aroma: Little to no malt aroma. Little or no roast malt aroma since the color is usually derived artificially from the addition of dark caramel brewing syrups. Hop aroma may range from none to light flowery hop presence. Slight fruity aromas may exist from yeast and hop varieties used. Low levels of "cooked-corn" aroma due to DMS may be noticeable. No diacetyl.

Appearance: Deep copper to dark brown with bright clarity. Foam stand may not be long lasting.

Flavor: Crisp with some low levels of sweetness. Roasted malt flavors, very low to none; often the dark color is from dark caramel brewing syrups rather than roasted malts. Hop flavor ranges from none to low levels. Hop bitterness at low to medium levels. No diacetyl. No fruitiness.

Mouthfeel: Light to somewhat medium body. Smooth, although a well-carbonated beer.

Overall Impression: A colored version of lighter American lagers with little or no dark malts used. Somewhat sweeter than its pale cousins with a little more body.

1C. Classic American Pilsner

Aroma: Low to medium clean, grainy and sweet maltiness may be evident. Medium to high hop aroma, often classic noble hops. No fruitiness or diacetyl. Some "cooked-corn" aroma due to DMS may be noticeable.

Appearance: Light to gold color. Substantial, long lasting head. Bright clarity.

Flavor: Medium to high maltiness similar to the Bohemian Pilsners but somewhat lighter due to the use of up to 30% flaked maize (corn) used as an adjunct. Slight grainy sweetness from the use of maize with substantial offsetting hop bitterness. Medium to high hop flavor from noble hops. Medium to high hop bitterness. No fruitiness or diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Medium body and rich, creamy mouthfeel. Medium to high carbonation levels.

Overall Impression: A substantial Pilsner that can stand up to the classic European Pilsners, but exhibiting the native American grains and water available to German brewers who initially brewed it in the USA. Refreshing, but with the underlying malt and hops that stand out when compared to other modern American light lagers. The maize presents a unique grainy sweetness that is indicative of the style.

2. EUROPEAN PALE LAGER

2A. Bohemian Pilsner

Aroma: Rich with a complex malt and a spicy, floral, Saaz hop bouquet. Moderate diacetyl acceptable.

Appearance: Light gold to deep copper-gold, clear, with a dense, creamy white head.

Flavor: Rich, complex maltiness combined with pronounced soft, rounded bitterness and flavor from Saaz hops. Moderate diacetyl acceptable. Bitterness is prominent but never harsh, and does not linger: The aftertaste is balanced between malt and hops. Clean, no fruitiness or esters.

Mouthfeel: Medium-bodied, medium carbonation.

Comments: Saaz hops and low sulfate, low carbonate water provide a distinctively soft, rounded hop profile.

Overall Impression: Crisp, complex and well-rounded yet refreshing.

2B. Northern German Pilsner

Aroma: May feature grain and distinctive, flowery, noble hops. Clean, no fruitiness or esters.

Appearance: Straw to medium gold, clear, with a creamy white head.

Flavor: Crisp, dry and bitter. Maltiness is low, although some grainy flavors and slight sweetness are acceptable. Hop bitterness dominates taste and continues through the finish and lingers into the aftertaste. Hop flavor can range from low to high but should only be derived from German noble hops. Clean, no fruitiness or esters.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium body, medium to high carbonation.

Overall Impression: Crisp, clean, refreshing beer that prominently features noble German hop bitterness accentuated by sulfates in the water.

Comments: Drier than Bohemian Pilsner with a bitterness that tends to linger more in the aftertaste due to higher attenuation and higher sulfate water.

2C. Dortmunder Export

Aroma: Low to medium German or Czech hop aroma. Malt aroma is moderate.

Appearance: Light gold to medium gold, clear with a noticeable white head.

Flavor: Neither malt nor hops are distinctive, but both are in good balance with a touch of sweetness, providing a smooth yet crisply refreshing beer. Balance continues through the finish and the hop bitterness lingers in aftertaste. Clean, no fruitiness or esters.

Mouthfeel: Medium body, medium carbonation.

Overall Impression: Balance is the hallmark of this style.

Comments: Brewed to a slightly higher starting gravity than other light lagers, providing a firm, malty body and underlying maltiness to complement the sulfate-accentuated hop bitterness.

2D. Muenchner Helles

Aroma: Grain and malt aromas predominate. May also have a very light hop aroma.

Appearance: Medium to deep gold, clear, with a creamy white head.

Flavor: Slightly sweet, malty profile. Grain and malt flavors predominate, with just enough hop bitterness to balance. Very slight hop flavor acceptable. Finish and aftertaste remain malty. Clean, no fruitiness or esters.

Mouthfeel: Medium body, medium carbonation, smooth maltiness with no trace of astringency.

Overall Impression: Characterized by rounded maltiness without heaviness.

Comments: Unlike Pilsner but like its cousin, Munchner Dunkel, Helles is a malt-accentuated beer that is not overly sweet, but rather focuses on malt flavor with underlying hop bitterness in a supporting role.

3. LIGHT ALE

3A. Blond Ale

Aroma: Some fruitiness; may have low to medium hop bouquet, principally from American hop varieties. Light maltiness. Low diacetyl OK.

Appearance: Pale straw to deep gold in color. Clear to brilliant. Good head retention.

Flavor: Soft, lightly malty palate, some fruitiness and hop flavor present. Usually balanced with a light to medium bitterness, though the accent tilts towards malt. Hop bitterness low to medium, although some versions are very restrained with hops, making the beer sweet in character. Low levels of diacetyl acceptable.

Mouthfeel: Medium body, though lighter mouthfeel from higher carbonation may be noticed.

Overall Impression: This beer is generally balanced with light hops and malt as an introduction to alternate beer styles for the mass-market beer consumer.

3B. American Wheat

Aroma: Characteristic of wheat with some graininess. Bavarian Weizen's clovey and banana aromas are inappropriate. Hop aroma may be high or low but if present will be from American hop varieties.

Appearance: Usually pale straw to gold. Dark versions approximating Dunkel Weizens are acceptable. Clarity may range from brilliant to hazy with yeast approximating the hefe Weizen style of beer. Big, long-lasting head.

Flavor: Light graininess. Bavarian Weizenbier flavors such as banana esters and clove-like phenols are inappropriate. Hop flavor may be from low to high. Hop bitterness low to medium. Some fruitiness from ale fermentation acceptable; however, the use of a fairly neutral American ale yeast usually results in a clean fermentation. Little to no diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium body. Higher carbonation is appropriate. Mouthfeel will appear lighter than actual body due to higher levels of carbonation.

Overall Impression: A light, refreshing beer that exhibits balanced hop and wheat maltiness.

3C. Cream Ale

Aroma: Low hop aroma may be present. Low levels of DMS acceptable. Low maltiness. Some character from the use of corn as an adjunct may be present.

Appearance: Pale straw to pale gold. Clear to brilliant. Good head retention.

Flavor: Low hop bittering. Low maltiness; however, grainy sweetness from corn may be present. Low levels of fruitiness OK. Balanced, clean fermentation. No diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Light body. Well carbonated. Smooth mouthfeel.

Overall Impression: A light, refreshing, thirst-quenching beer.

4. BITTER AND ENGLISH PALE ALE

4A. Ordinary Bitter

Aroma: Hop aroma can range from moderate to none. Diacetyl and caramel aromas also moderate to none. Should have mild to moderate fruitiness. The best examples have some malt aroma.

Appearance: Medium gold to medium copper-brown. May have very little head due to low carbonation.

Flavor: Medium to high bitterness. May or may not have hop flavor, diacetyl and fruitiness. Crystal malt flavor very common. Balance varies from even to decidedly bitter, although the bitterness should not completely overpower the malt flavor.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium-light body. Carbonation low, although bottled examples can have moderate carbonation.

Overall Impression: Low gravity, low alcohol levels and low carbonation make this an easy-drinking beer. The lightest of the bitters.

4B. Special or Best Bitter

Aroma: Hop aroma can range from high to none. Diacetyl and caramel aroma moderate to none. Moderate fruitiness. The best examples have some malt aroma.

Appearance: Medium gold to medium copper-brown. May have very little head due to low carbonation.

Flavor: Diacetyl and fruitiness moderate to none. Malt flavor apparent. Medium to high bitterness. Some crystal malt flavor and a moderate amount of hop flavor are common. Balance varies from even to decidedly bitter, although the bitterness should not completely overpower the malt flavor.

Mouthfeel: Medium-light to medium body. Carbonation low, although bottled examples can have moderate carbonation.

Overall Impression: A flavorful, yet refreshing, session beer. More evident malt flavor than in an ordinary bitter.

4C. Strong Bitter/English Pale Ale

Aroma: Hop aroma high to none. Diacetyl and caramel aroma moderate to none. Moderate fruitiness. Malt aroma apparent.

Appearance: Copper to dark amber-brown. May have very little head.

Flavor: Malt flavors evident. Crystal malt flavor common. Hop flavor ranges from low to strong. Diacetyl and fruitiness moderate to none. Balance varies from even to quite bitter, although malt flavor should not be completely overpowered.

Mouthfeel: Medium to medium-full body. Carbonation low, although bottled pale ales tend to have moderate carbonation. Warming from alcohol may be noticeable, but should not be strong.

Overall Impression: A solidly flavored beer both in terms of malt and hops. More evident malt and hop flavors than in a special bitter.

5. SCOTTISH ALES

5A. Light 60/-

Aroma: Malt is evident; some examples have a low level of hop aroma. Fruitiness low to none. A very faint smoky and/or toasty/roasty characteristic sometimes present. May have some diacetyl.

Appearance: Amber to dark brown. Draught examples often have a creamy, long-lasting head.

Flavor: Malt-dominated flavor, with subdued esters and just enough hop bitterness to prevent the beer from being cloyingly sweet. A very slight toasty, roasty and/or chocolate-like character is sometimes present. Caramel flavor from crystal malt medium to none. May have some diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Creamy, with low carbonation. Body is medium-light, but full for the gravity.

Overall Impression: Cleanly malty, with perhaps a faint touch of smoke and few esters.

Comments: Though similar in gravity to ordinary bitter, the malt-hop balance is decidedly to the malt side. Long, cool fermentation leads to clean malt character (which may include some faint peat or smoke character). Note that the smoky character can be due to the yeast as often as to smoked or peat-kilned malt. Strongly smoky beers should be entered in the Smoked Beer category rather than here.

5B. Heavy 70/-

Aroma: Malt is evident; some examples have a low level of hop aroma. Fruitiness is low to none with a mild smoky character and/or toasty/roasty aroma, which is sometimes present. May have some diacetyl.

Appearance: Amber to dark brown; draught examples often have a creamy, long-lasting head.

Flavor: Malt-dominated flavor, with subdued esters and just enough hop bitterness to prevent the beer from being cloyingly sweet. A very slight toasty/roasty or chocolate-like character is

sometimes present. Caramel flavor from crystal malt medium to none. May have some diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Creamy, with low carbonation. Body is medium to medium-light.

Overall Impression: Cleanly malty, with perhaps a faint touch of smoke and few esters.

Comments: Though similar in gravity to special bitter, the malt-hop balance is decidedly to the malt side. Long, cool fermentation leads to clean malt character (which may include some faint peat or smoke character). Note that the smoky character can be due to the yeast as often as to smoked or peat-kilned malt. Strongly smoky beers should be entered in the Smoked Beer category instead.

5C. Export 80/-

Aroma: Malt is evident; some examples have a low level of hop aroma. Fruitiness is low to none. A mild smoky and/or toasty/roasty character is sometimes present. May have some diacetyl.

Appearance: Amber to dark brown. Draught examples often have a creamy, long-lasting head.

Flavor: Malt-dominated flavor, with subdued esters and just enough hop bitterness to prevent the beer from being cloyingly sweet. A very slight toasty/roasty and/or chocolate-like character is sometimes present. Caramel flavor from crystal malt medium to none. May have some diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Creamy, with low carbonation. Body is medium to medium-full.

Overall Impression: Cleanly malty, with perhaps a faint touch of smoke and few esters.

Comments: Though similar in gravity to strong bitter, the malt-hop balance is decidedly to the malt side. Long, cool fermentation leads to clean malt character (which may include some faint peat or smoke character). Note that the smoky character can be due to the yeast as often as to smoked or peat-kilned malt. Strongly smoky beers should be entered in the Smoked Beer category instead. It is important to note that while the IBUs on some of these beers can be rather high, the low attenuation and solid maltiness results in a balance that is still even at best and more than likely towards malt.

6. AMERICAN PALE ALES

6A. American Pale Ale

Aroma: Usually moderate to strong hop aroma from dry hopping or late kettle additions of American hop varieties. Citrusy hop aroma very common. Esters vary from low to high. Diacetyl moderate to none.

Appearance: Pale golden to amber.

Flavor: Often moderate to high hop flavor. Citrusy hop flavor very common (such as from Cascades), but also other American hop variety flavors are found. Malt flavor moderate relative to aggressive hop flavor and bitterness. Balance towards bitterness. Caramel flavor is usually restrained. Diacetyl moderate to none.

Mouthfeel: Many are rather light, refreshing and more highly carbonated than many other styles, but body can reach medium. Carbonation borders on effervescent in some examples.

Overall Impression: Should be refreshing.

Comments: In the past, this category also covered what is now called American amber ale. American pale ales differ from American amber ales notably by being lighter in color, but also in having less caramel flavor and usually being balanced more towards hop bitterness.

6B. American Amber Ale

Aroma: Often a mild to strong hop aroma from dry hopping or late kettle additions of American hop varieties. Some caramel aroma common. Esters vary from low to high. Diacetyl medium-high to none.

Appearance: Light copper to light brown.

Flavor: Moderate to high hop flavor from American hop varieties. Malt/bitterness balance can be on either side of even and is more likely to be on the malt side, but usually not too far from center. Caramel flavor is moderate to strong. Diacetyl medium-high to none.

Mouthfeel: Body is medium to medium-full. Carbonation typically moderate.

Overall Impression: Caramel usually balances the bitterness.

Comments: In the past, this category used to be part of American pale ale. American amber ales differ from American pale ales not only by being darker in color, but also in having more caramel flavor and usually being balanced more evenly even between malt and bitterness.

6C. California Common Beer

Aroma: May have a pronounced woody or rustic hop aroma (as from Northern Brewer, for example). Restrained fruitiness. May have a moderate toasted malt aroma. Diacetyl low to none.

Appearance: Dark gold to copper to medium amber.

Flavor: Malty, balanced with a pronounced hop bitterness. Rustic/woody (e.g., Northern Brewer) hop flavor medium to none. May have a toasted (not roasted) malt flavor. Balance is generally about even between malt and hops. Diacetyl low to none.

Mouthfeel: Medium-bodied. Medium to medium-high carbonation.

Overall Impression: A beer with solid malt and hop expression, only mildly fruity and having woody/rustic hop character.

Comments: Similar to American pale ale, although typically less fruity. Hop flavor/aroma is woody rather than citrusy, although a slightly citrusy character has been noted by some in a commercial example back in the mid-1980s.

7. INDIA PALE ALE

Aroma: A prominent hop aroma of floral, grassy, or fruity characteristic typical. A caramel-like or toasty malt presence may also be noted, but may be at a low level. Fruitiness, either from esters or hops, may also be detected.

Appearance: Color ranges from medium gold to deep copper, with English versions often darker than American ones. Should be clear, although some haze at cold temperatures is acceptable.

Flavor: Hop flavor is medium to high, with an assertive hop bitterness. Malt flavor should be low to medium, but should be sufficient to support the hop aspect. Despite the substantial hop character typical of these beers, sufficient malt flavor, body and complexity to support the hops will provide the best balance. Very low levels of diacetyl are acceptable, and fruitiness from the fermentation or hops should add to the overall complexity. Some alcohol warming may be sensed in stronger versions.

Mouthfeel: Smooth, medium-bodied mouthfeel without astringency, although it has moderate carbonation combine to render an overall dry sensation in the presence of malt sweetness.

Overall Impression: A decidedly hoppy, moderately strong pale ale.

Commercial Examples: Anchor Liberty Ale, Sierra Nevada Celebration Ale, Brooklyn East India Pale Ale, Tupper's Hop Pocket, Great Lakes Commodore Perry IPA, Samuel Smith's India Ale, Fuller's IPA, Highfalls IPA, Victory Hopdevil, Three Floyds Alpha King.

8. KOELSCH AND ALTBIER

8A. Koelsch-Style Ale

Aroma: Light hop aroma, German noble or Czech Saaz hops, giving a light fruitiness. Maltiness none to low. No diacetyl, as this is a lagered beer resulting in a clean finish with just a hint of fruitiness from primary fermentation at ale temperatures. Low sulfur aroma, similar to that of pale continental lagers, is acceptable, particularly in a young Koelsch.

Appearance: Very pale to light gold. Very clear/brilliant. White head lingers as Belgian lace on the sides of the glass.

Flavor: Soft, rounded palate; light hop fruitiness and a delicate dryness to slight sweetness in the finish. Clean fermentation with just a little residual fruitiness from ale fermentation temperatures. No diacetyl. Medium-low bitterness. Balanced toward bitterness but malt character should not be completely overshadowed.

Mouthfeel: Light side of medium body. Medium carbonation. Smooth, crisp mouthfeel.

Overall Impression: A delicately balanced beer with just a hint of flavor/aroma hops and fruitiness that finishes dry to slightly sweet with a crisply refreshing bitterness over a base of smooth, rounded Pils malt flavor.

Comments: Brewed at ale temperatures, then cold conditioned to reduce fermentation byproducts.

8B. Duesseldorf Altbier

Aroma: Munich malt aroma, with a restrained fruitiness. Hop aroma may vary from low to moderate.

Appearance: Orange-copper to brown color, with brilliant clarity. Thick, persistent head.

Flavor: Assertively bitter, with intense Munich malt-derived flavor to support. Fruity esters should be restrained; some chocolatey notes are often present. Hop flavor should be low to medium.

Mouthfeel: Medium-bodied, with moderate carbonation. Some commercial examples have a dry finish resulting from a combination of high bitterness, higher attenuation, and moderate sulfate in the water.

Overall Impression: Bitterness is very high, especially in relation to the (moderate) gravity. Munich malt character lends balance, resulting in a bittersweet character. Very smooth from fermentation at the lower end of the temperature range for ales, followed by a period of lagering.

8C. Northern German Altbier

Aroma: Little aroma; malt should dominate to the extent that any aroma is discernible.

Appearance: Copper to brown color; very clear. Good head retention.

Flavor: Assertively bitter yet balanced. Munich malt-derived flavor, along with a chocolate-like malt aspect, supports the bitterness. Esters are restrained, and hop flavor should be low to medium.

Mouthfeel: Medium body, with an overall balanced impression.

Overall Impression: A very clean and relatively bitter beer, balanced by Munich malt character. Less intense than the Duesseldorf version of Altbier.

9. GERMAN AMBER LAGER

9A. Oktoberfest/Maerzen

Aroma: German (Vienna or Munich) malt aroma. A light toasted malt aroma may be present. No fruitiness, diacetyl, or hop aroma.

Appearance: Dark gold to reddish amber color. Bright clarity, with solid foam stand.

Flavor: Distinctive and complex maltiness may include a toasted aspect. Hop bitterness is moderate, and hop flavor is low to none. Balance is toward malt, though the finish is not sweet.

Mouthfeel: Medium body, with a creamy texture and medium carbonation.

Overall Impression: Smooth and rather rich, with a depth of malt character. This is one of the classic malty styles, with a maltiness that is often described as soft, complex, and elegant but never cloying.

9B. Vienna Lager

Aroma: Dark German (Vienna or Munich) malt aroma. A light toasted malt aroma may be present. Similar, though less intense than Oktoberfest.

Appearance: Reddish amber to light brown color. Bright clarity and solid foam stand.

Flavor: Soft, elegant malt complexity is in the forefront, with a firm enough hop presence to provide a balanced finish. Some toasted character from the use of Vienna malt.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium body, with a gentle creaminess. Medium carbonation.

Overall Impression: Characterized by soft, elegant maltiness that dries out in the finish to avoid becoming overly sweet.

10. BROWN ALE

10A. Mild

Aroma: Slight mild malt/brown malt aroma, with some fruitiness. No hop aroma.

Appearance: Medium to dark brown or mahogany color. A

few light brown examples exist. May have very little head due to low carbonation.

Flavor: Malty, though not roasty, with a lightly nutty character. Flavors may include: vinous, licorice, plum or raisin, or chocolate. Usually fairly well balanced, though some are sweetly malt-oriented.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium body. Low carbonation and relatively high residual sweetness contribute to a full mouthfeel relative to the gravity.

Overall Impression: A light-flavored, malt-accented beer that is readily suited to drinking in quantity. Refreshing, yet flavorful.

10B. Northern English Brown Ale

Aroma: Restrained fruitiness; little to no hop aroma. May have a caramel aspect to the malt character.

Appearance: Dark golden to light brown color.

Flavor: Gentle to moderate sweetness, with a nutty character. Balance is nearly even, with hop flavor low to none. Some fruity esters should be present; low diacetyl is acceptable.

Mouthfeel: medium-light to medium body, with a dry finish.

Overall Impression: Drier and more hop-oriented than southern English brown ale, with a nutty character rather than caramel.

10C. Southern English Brown

Aroma: Malty and moderately fruity, with some mild malt, brown malt character common.

Appearance: Dark brown, almost opaque.

Flavor: Gentle, moderate sweetness. Malt dominates the balance, but hop bitterness is sufficient to prevent an overly sweet impression. Hop flavor is low to non-existent. Malt flavor will be present, but sharp or roasty flavors are inappropriate.

Mouthfeel: Low to medium body, with a caramel impression.

Overall Impression: A malt-oriented version of brown ale, with a caramel, dark fruit complexity of malt flavor.

10D. American Brown Ale

Aroma: Hop aroma, often citrusy, is mild to strong. Esters and dark malt aspects are mild to moderate.

Appearance: Dark amber to dark brown color.

Flavor: Hop bitterness and flavor dominate the malty richness that is a characteristic of brown ales. Slightly drier than English versions, with assertive hop presence (bitterness, flavor, and aroma). Although malt flavor plays a supporting role, some toasty malt character (or even restrained roastiness) should be evident.

Mouthfeel: Medium body, with a dry, resinous impression contributed by the high hop bitterness.

Overall Impression: A bigger, hoppier, dryer version of brown ale, typically including the citrus-accented hop presence that is characteristic of American varieties.

11. ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH STRONG ALE

11A. Old Ale

Aroma: Malty, with complex fruity esters. Some oxidative notes are acceptable, akin to those found in port or sherry. Hop aromas not usually present, due to extended age.

Appearance: Medium amber to very dark red-amber color.
Flavor: Malty and usually sweet, with abundant fruity esters. The nutty malt sweetness yields to a finish that may vary from dry to somewhat sweet. Extended aging may contribute oxidative flavors similar to a fine old port or Madiera wine. Alcoholic strength should be evident, though not overwhelming.

Mouthfeel: Medium to full body; alcohol should contribute some warmth.

Overall Impression: An ale of significant alcoholic strength, though usually not as strong or rich as barleywine. Usually tilted toward a sweeter, more malty balance.

11B. Strong Scotch Ale (Wee Heavy)

Aroma: Deeply malty, with caramel apparent. Roasty or even smoky secondary aromas may also be present, adding complexity. Moderate diacetyl character is also acceptable.

Appearance: Dark amber to dark brown color, often with ruby highlights.

Flavor: Intensely malty with kettle caramelization apparent. Hint of roasted malt or smoky flavor may be present, as may some buttery diacetyl or nutty character. Hop flavors are low, so malt impression should be dominant.

Mouthfeel: Full-bodied, with a thick, chewy viscosity. Alcoholic warmth should also be present.

Overall Impression: Rich and malty, reminiscent of a dessert. Complex secondary malt flavors prevent a one-dimensional impression.

12. BARLEYWINE AND IMPERIAL STOUT

12A. English-style Barleywine

Aroma: Moderate to intense fruitiness; presence of hops (English varieties) may range from mild to assertive. A caramel-like aroma is often present.

Appearance: Color may range from rich gold to very dark amber or even brown. Often has ruby highlights. May have low head retention.

Flavor: Fruity, with a great intensity of malt. Hop bitterness may range from just enough for balance to a firm presence; balance therefore ranges from malty to bitter. Some oxidative flavors may be present, and alcohol should be evident.

Mouthfeel: Full-bodied, with a slick, viscous texture. Gentle smooth warmth from alcohol should be present.

Overall Impression: The richest and strongest of the English Ales.

History/Comments: Usually the strongest ale offered by a brewery, and often vintage-dated. Normally aged significantly prior to release. Often associated with the winter or holiday season. Although a hoppy beer, the English Barleywine places less emphasis on hop character than the American Barleywine and features English hops.

12B. American-Style Barleywine

Aroma: Moderate to intense fruitiness; presence of hops (typical American varieties) may range from moderate to dominant. A caramel-like aroma is often present.

Appearance: Color may range from rich gold to very dark amber or even brown. Often has ruby highlights. May have low head retention.

Flavor: Fruity, with a great intensity of malt. Hop bitterness may range from just enough for balance to a firm, resinous dominance; balance therefore ranges from slightly malty to intensely bitter. Some oxidative flavors may be present, and alcohol should be evident.

Mouthfeel: Full-bodied, with a slick, viscous texture. Gentle smooth warmth from alcohol should be present.

Overall Impression: A well-hopped American interpretation of the richest and strongest of the English ales.

History/Comments: Usually the strongest ale offered by a brewery, and often vintage-dated. Normally aged significantly prior to release. Often associated with the winter or holiday season. The American version of the Barleywine tends to have a greater emphasis on hop bitterness, flavor and aroma than the English Barleywine, featuring American hop varieties.

12C. Russian Imperial Stout

Aroma: Fruity esters, reminiscent of dark fruit, merged with intense roastiness and maltiness. Hop aroma is usually also present.

Appearance: Very dark reddish-black color; opaque.

Flavor: Intensely fruity and malty, backed up by balancing roastiness and prominent hop bitterness and flavor. A "burnt currant" character may be present, along with a suggestion of cocoa or strong coffee. Alcoholic strength should be evident, along with a deep, complex malt flavor. The finish can vary from relatively dry to moderately sweet, usually with some lingering roastiness and warming character.

Mouthfeel: Very full-bodied and rich, with intense flavors and perceptible alcohol presence. Carbonation is relatively low.

Overall Impression: An intensely flavorful beer. Roasty, fruity, and bittersweet, with a notable alcohol presence. Dark fruit melds with roasty, burnt, almost tar-like sensations.

History: Said to be popular with the Russian Imperial Court.

13. EUROPEAN DARK LAGER

13A. Munich Dunkel

Aroma: Munich malt aroma, with sweetish notes or hints of chocolate and toffee also acceptable. No fruity esters or diacetyl should be detected, but slight hop aroma is acceptable.

Appearance: Medium amber to dark brown, often with a red or garnet tint. Creamy light tan head, clear.

Flavor: Dominated by the rich and complex flavor of Munich malt. May be slightly sweet from residual extract, but should not have a pronounced crystal or caramel malt flavor. Burnt or bitter flavors from roasted malts should not be perceived. Hop bitterness is low but perceptible, with the balance tipped firmly towards maltiness. Hop flavor should be at the very edge of perception if perceived at all. Aftertaste remains malty, although the hop bitterness may become more apparent in this last phase of flavor perception.

Mouthfeel: Medium to medium-full mouthfeel, providing a firm body without being heavy.

Overall Impression: Characterized by depth and complexity of Munich malt and the accompanying melanoidins.

13B. Schwarzbier (Black Beer)

Aroma: Primarily malty, with low aromatic sweetness and/or hints of roast malt often apparent. Low hop aroma may be perceived. No fruity esters or diacetyl.

Appearance: Deep brown to black in color. Clarity is generally irrelevant in such a dark beer but if the beer is not opaque, it should be quite clear, as the beer is a lager. Head retention should be moderate to good

Flavor: Rich, full malt flavor balanced by moderate bitterness from both hops and roasted malt, providing a bitter-chocolate palate without being particularly dry. Low hop flavor and some residual sweetness are acceptable. Aftertaste tends to dry out slowly and linger, featuring hop bitterness with a complementary subtle roastiness in the background. No fruity esters or diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Low to medium body.

Overall Impression: A beer that balances rich dark malt flavors with a perceptible bitterness from hops and roasted malts.

14. BOCK

14A. Traditional Bock

Aroma: Strong aroma of malt. Virtually no hop aroma. Some alcohol may be noticeable. Diacetyl or esters should be low to none.

Appearance: Deep amber to dark brown color. Lagering should provide good clarity despite the dark color. Head retention may be impaired by higher-than-average alcohol content.

Flavor: Rich and complex maltiness is dominated by the grain and caramel flavors of Munich and Vienna malts. A touch of roasty character may be present but is rare. No hop flavor. Hop bitterness is generally only high enough to balance the malt flavors to allow moderate sweetness in the finish.

Mouthfeel: Medium to full bodied. Low to moderate carbonation.

Overall Impression: A dark, strong, malty lager beer.

14B. Helles Bock/Maibock

Aroma: Moderate to strong malt aroma. Hop aroma should be low to none. Aromas such as diacetyl or fruity esters should be low to none. Some alcohol may be noticeable.

Appearance: Golden to amber in color. Lagering should provide good clarity. Head retention may be impaired by higher-than-average alcohol content.

Flavor: The rich flavor of continental European pale malts dominates. Little or no hop flavor. Hop bitterness is generally only high enough to balance the malt flavors to allow moderate sweetness in the finish. Perception of hops may be more apparent than in darker Bocks.

Mouthfeel: Medium-bodied. Moderate carbonation.

Overall Impression: A relatively pale, strong, malty lager beer.

14C. Doppelbock

Aroma: Intense maltiness. Virtually no hop aroma. While diacetyl or esters should be low to none, a fruity aspect to the aroma often described as prune, plum or grape may be present due to reactions between malt, the boil, and aging. A very slight roasty aroma may be present in darker versions.

Appearance: Gold to dark brown in color. Lagering should provide good clarity. Head retention may be impaired by higher-than-average alcohol content.

Flavor: Very rich and malty, infrequently a touch of roastiness. Invariably there will be an impression of alcoholic strength, but this should be smooth and warming rather than harsh or burning. Presence of higher alcohols (fusel oils) should be very low to none. Little to no hop flavor. Hop bitterness varies from moderate to low but always allows malt to dominate the flavor.

Mouthfeel: Full-bodied. Low carbonation.

Overall Impression: A very strong, rich, lager beer.

14D. Eisbock

Aroma: Dominated by malt. Definite alcohol presence. No hop aroma. No diacetyl or esters.

Appearance: Deep gold to dark brown in color. Lagering should provide good clarity. Head retention may be impaired by higher-than-average alcohol content.

Flavor: Rich malt and concentrated alcohol. No hop flavor. Hop bitterness just balances the malt sweetness to avoid a cloying character. No diacetyl or esters.

Mouthfeel: Full-bodied. Carbonation low.

Overall Impression: An extremely strong lager beer.

15. PORTER

15A. Robust Porter

Aroma: Roast malt or grain aroma, often coffee-like or chocolate-like, should be evident. Hop aroma moderate to low. Fruity esters, and diacetyl, are moderate to none.

Appearance: Dark brown to black color, may be garnet-like. Clarity may be difficult to discern in such a dark beer. Head retention should be moderate to good.

Flavor: Malt flavor usually features coffee-like or chocolate-like roasty dryness. Overall flavor may finish from medium sweet to dry, depending on grist composition, hop bittering level, and attenuation. May have a sharp character from dark roasted grains. Hop flavor varies widely. Diacetyl moderate to none.

Mouthfeel: Medium to medium-full bodied. Low to moderate carbonation.

Overall Impression: A substantial dark ale with complex roasty malt, hop and fermentation characteristics.

15B. Brown Porter

Aroma: Malt aroma with mild roastiness should be evident. Hop aroma may be moderate to low. Esters and diacetyl may be moderate to none.

Appearance: Medium brown to dark brown in color. Clarity and head retention should be fair to good.

Flavor: Malt flavor will include mild to moderate roastiness. Hop flavor low to none. Hop bittering will vary the balance from slightly malty to slightly bitter. Diacetyl, and sourness or sharpness from dark grains, should be low to none.

Mouthfeel: Medium-light to medium bodied. Low to moderate carbonation.

Overall Impression: A fairly substantial dark ale with some roasty characteristics.

Comments: Softer flavors, lower gravities, and usually less alcohol than robust porter. More substance and roast than

brown ale. Some versions are fermented with lager yeast. Balance tends toward malt more than hops.

16. STOUT

16A. Dry Stout

Aroma: Coffee-like roasted barley and roasted malt aromas are prominent. Esters low to medium. Diacetyl moderate to none. Hop aroma low to none.

Appearance: Deep garnet to black in color. Clarity is irrelevant in such a dark beer. A thick, creamy, long-lasting head is characteristic.

Flavor: Moderate acidity/sourness and sharpness from roasted grains, and medium to high hop bitterness, provide a dry finish. Balancing factors may include some creaminess, moderate to low fruitiness, and medium to no diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Medium-light to medium body, with a creamy character. Low to moderate carbonation.

Overall Impression: A very dark, roasty, bitter, creamy ale.

16B. Sweet Stout

Aroma: Mild roasted grain aromas. Fruitiness can be low to high. Diacetyl medium to none. Hop aroma low to none.

Appearance: Very dark amber to black in color, which makes clarity essentially unimportant. Creamy head.

Flavor: Dark roasted grains and malts dominate the flavor as in dry stout, though there is medium to high sweetness.

Hopping is moderate and tends to be lower than in dry stout, emphasizing the malt sweetness.

Mouthfeel: Full-bodied and creamy. Carbonation low to moderate.

Overall Impression: A very dark, sweet, full-bodied, slightly roasty ale.

16C. Oatmeal Stout

Aroma: Mild roasted grain aromas. Fruitiness should be low to medium. Diacetyl medium to none. Hop aroma low to none.

Appearance: Black in color. Thick creamy head. Dark color will likely obscure any clarity.

Flavor: Medium sweet to medium dry, with the complexity of dark roasted grains prominent. Medium hop bitterness with the balance toward malt. Diacetyl low to medium. May have a slight nuttiness.

Mouthfeel: Full bodied, smooth, silky, with an oily or even mealy texture from the oatmeal.

Overall Impression: A very dark, full-bodied, roasty, malty ale.

16D. Foreign Extra Stout

Aroma: Roasted grain aromas prominent. Fruitiness medium to high. Diacetyl low to medium. Hop aroma low to none. Occasionally has the aroma of alcohol.

Appearance: Very deep brown to black in color. Clarity usually obscured by deep color.

Flavor: Can range from sweet to dry, with roasted grain character obvious but not sharp. Fruitiness can be low to high, diacetyl medium to none. Hop bitterness can be medium to high.

Mouthfeel: Medium full body, creamy character. May give a warming impression.

Overall Impression: A very dark, moderately sweet, strong, roasty ale.

17. WHEAT BEER

17A. Bavarian Weizen

Aroma: Vanilla and clove-like phenols and fruity esters of banana are common. Hop aroma ranges from low to none. No diacetyl. Some aroma of wheat may be present.

Appearance: Pale straw to dark reddish-gold in color. A very thick, long-lasting head is characteristic. High protein content of wheat may impair clarity in an unfiltered beer, and clarity can be deliberately cloudy in a Hefe-Weizen from suspended yeast sediment. The filtered Krystal version is quite clear.

Flavor: The soft, grainy flavor of wheat is essential. Hop flavor is low to none and hop bitterness is very low. A tart character from yeast and high carbonation may be present. Spicy clove phenols and fruity esters, most prominently banana, are often present. No diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: The texture of wheat imparts the sensation of a fluffy, creamy fullness that may progress to a surprisingly light finish. A high carbonation level is typical.

Overall Impression: A pale, spicy, fruity, wheat-based ale.

Comments: These are refreshing, fast-maturing beers that are lightly hopped. The Hefe-Weizen version is served with yeast sediment stirred into it. The Krystal version is filtered for excellent clarity.

17B. Bavarian Dunkelweizen

Aroma: Gentle aroma of Munich malt supported by fruity, notably banana, and clove-spice aromas. No hop aroma. No diacetyl.

Appearance: Light amber to light brown in color. A thick, long-lasting head is characteristic. High protein content of wheat may impair clarity in an unfiltered beer.

Flavor: Melanoidins and caramel character of Munich and Vienna-type malts is prominent, along with some wheat flavor. There may be some spicy, fruity flavor as well. Roasty character is rare and very restrained if present. Low hop bitterness. No hop flavor. No diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: The texture of wheat imparts the sensation of a fluffy, creamy fullness that may progress to a lighter finish. However, the presence of Munich and Vienna-type malts provides its own sense of fullness. A moderate to high carbonation level is typical.

Overall Impression: A dark, malty, spicy, wheat-based ale.

History: A dark version of Bavarian Weizen.

17C. Berliner Weisse

Aroma: Slightly fruity; a sour aspect may be quite noticeable. On occasion a mild *Brettanomyces* yeast aroma may be present. No hop aroma. No diacetyl.

Appearance: Very pale straw in color. Clarity ranges from fair to cloudy. Despite high carbonation, head retention can vary from moussy to low.

Flavor: Lactic sourness dominates and can be quite strong, but some wheat flavor should be noticeable. Hop bitterness is very low. Mild *Brettanomyces* yeast character may be detected occasionally. No hop flavor. No diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Light body. High carbonation.

Overall Impression: A very pale, sour, refreshing, low-alcohol wheat ale.

17D. Weizenbock

Aroma: A powerful aroma of ripe fruit is very common. Aroma of alcohol is also common. Some clove-spice aroma may be present. No hop aroma. No diacetyl.

Appearance: Light amber to dark brown in color. High alcohol level may impair what would otherwise be a thick, long-lasting head. Wheat protein content may impair clarity.

Flavor: Concentrated wheat flavor is dominant. Malty complexity, including smoky or raisin-like essences, may be present in darker versions. A fruity character is common, and some clove-spice flavor may occur. Well-aged examples may show some sherry-like oxidation as a point of complexity. Hop bitterness is well controlled to allow wheat and malt flavors to dominate the balance. No hop flavor. No diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Full-bodied. A creamy sensation is typical, as is the warming sensation of substantial alcohol content. Moderate carbonation.

Overall Impression: A strong, malty, fruity, wheat-based ale.

18. STRONG BELGIAN ALE

18A. Dubbel

Aroma: Rich malt aromas are typical; many dubbels have raisiny and other fruity ester aromas. No roasted malt aroma. Some higher alcohol aromas (peppery, spicy) are common. Mild to moderate clove-spice aromas may be present. Hop aroma is faint to none. No diacetyl.

Appearance: Dark amber-brown in color. Clarity is usually fair to good. Head retention may be adversely affected by alcohol content in stronger versions.

Flavor: Rich malty and fruity flavors bring the balance toward malt throughout. Some commercial examples are malty, yet dry; raisin flavors are common. A slight to moderate clove spiciness may be present. Hop flavor is low to none. No diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Medium-full to full body. Warming mouthfeel from alcohol.

Overall Impression: A dark, rich, malty, moderately strong ale.

18B. Tripel

Aroma: Complex aroma of malt and fruity esters, which may have a “citrus-like” essence, and often a mild to moderate clove-spice character. Hop aroma may be moderate to none. No diacetyl.

Appearance: Pale gold to deep gold in color. Clarity should be fair to good. Head retention may be quite good, or may be adversely affected by alcohol content in some versions.

Flavor: Crisp and moderately fruity. Malty sweetness is balanced by restrained hop bitterness and high carbonation to provide a dry finish to the palate and a sweet aftertaste. Clove-like spiciness is apparent in many examples. The best examples have subtle alcohol undertones, while others may have very noticeable alcohol presence. Hop flavor may be moderate to none. No diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Medium body, although a light impression (thanks to the candi sugar) given the often substantial original gravity. High alcohol content adds a warming sensation.

Carbonation is very high and effervescent in character, yet ideally does not disturb the beer's smoothness.

Overall Impression: A pale, moderately fruity, spicy, very strong ale.

Comments: Alcoholic, but the best examples do not taste strongly of alcohol. By Belgian law, to be called a Trappist ale it must be brewed at a Trappist monastery. Home-brewed and secular equivalents should be called abbey ales.

18C. Belgian Strong Golden Ale

Aroma: Fruity esters are common, and the malt character is light. Some clove-spice character may be present, from either warm fermentation or actual spice additions. A spicy hop aroma is sometimes found. No diacetyl.

Appearance: Pale yellow to golden in color. Good clarity. Long-lasting foam stand resulting in characteristic Belgian lace on the glass.

Flavor: Full of fruity, hoppy, alcoholic complexity, supported by a soft malt character. A slight presence of spices, from either warm ferment or actual spice additions, may be present as a point of complexity. Hop bitterness is typically restrained. Substantial carbonation may lend a dry flavor to the palate despite a sweet aftertaste. No diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Medium body gives a light impression despite the often substantial original gravity and alcohol content. Usually effervescent, yet with a smooth finish.

Overall Impression: A very pale, effervescent, complex, strong ale.

18D. Belgian Strong Dark Ale

Aroma: The intermingling aromas of Munich-type malt, alcohol and fruity esters are typical, along with spicy phenols which may be contributed by warm yeast fermentation and/or actual spice additions. Hop aroma may vary from moderate to none. Typically there is no strong dark(roast) malt aroma. No diacetyl.

Appearance: Deep burgundy to dark brown in color. Clarity may be fair to good. Head retention may be quite good or may be adversely affected by high alcohol content.

Flavor: Ripe fruit flavors, including raisin and plum, are common. Malt usually dominates, but some examples are balanced slightly toward bitterness. Some spicy phenols, from ferment or actual spices, may be present. Hop flavor can range from moderate to none. Some sweetness is contributed by alcohol. No diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Medium to full body, creamy and warming.

Overall Impression: A dark, very rich, complex, very strong ale.

19. BELGIAN AND FRENCH ALE

19A. Belgian Pale Ale

Aroma: Prominent but soft-edged aroma of malt, accented by small amounts of phenols, higher alcohols in some versions, and spices in some versions. Hop aroma low to none. No diacetyl.

Appearance: Golden to copper in color. Clarity is fair to good. Good head retention.

Flavor: Fruity and lightly to moderately spicy, with a soft and smooth malt character. Higher alcohols may contribute complexity in some examples, but not harshness. Hop flavor

is relatively low. Hop bitterness is moderate, though some examples with high bitterness exist.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium in body, with a smooth quality and moderate carbonation.

Overall Impression: A fruity, slightly spicy, smooth, copper-colored ale.

19B. Witbier

Aroma: A sweet and occasionally honey-like character with prominent citrus (notably orange), herbal and spice aromas is characteristic, and is often followed by a mild phenolic aroma. Hop aroma is low to none. No diacetyl.

Appearance: Very pale straw to very light gold in color, and generally cloudy. Head retention should be quite good and of a moussy character.

Flavor: The flavor of unmalted wheat is typically noticeable. Coriander, citrus and mild phenolic flavors contribute to a complex and elegant character. A very slight lactic acidity resulting from a limited *Lactobacillus* fermentation is present in some examples, providing a refreshing quality, and is absent in others. Hop flavor is low to none. Hop bitterness is typically restrained, and some bitterness may also be contributed by bitter orange peel. No diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium body. Effervescent character of high carbonation. Refreshing acidity.

Overall Impression: A refreshing, elegant, complex, wheat-based ale.

19C. Biere de Garde

Aroma: Malt is prominent in the aroma, which is otherwise complex with a slight level of fruity esters, little or no hop aroma, and often a musty/woody character. Higher alcohols may be detected. Diacetyl low to none.

Appearance: Color can vary from full gold, to copper-colored (most common), to a dark reddish-brown. Clarity and head retention are generally good.

Flavor: A medium to high malt flavor often characterized by toffee or caramel aspects is typical. A slight musty or woody character may be present. Hop bitterness is often modest, though subtle and restrained hop flavors may occur. Diacetyl low to none.

Mouthfeel: Medium body, which in the best examples has a very smooth, silky character to it. Alcohol level is medium to strong and gives a warming sensation. Moderate carbonation.

Overall Impression: A rich, complex, malty, moderately strong ale.

19D. Saison

Aroma: Fruity esters dominate the aroma. Complexity is often contributed by hop aroma, complex higher alcohols, herbs and spices, and phenols. Generally the malt aroma is low. No diacetyl.

Appearance: Distinctive pale orange color with a dense, rocky head. Clarity is generally good.

Flavor: Bitter but not assertively so, providing a refreshing character. The hoppy, fruity flavors typical of this style may include citric notes, and often the addition of several spices and herbs. Hop bitterness is moderate, and hop flavor may be moderate to high but should not overwhelm fruity esters, spices, and malt. Malt character is light but provides sufficient structure for the other complex flavors which may include a quenching tartness. No diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium body. Very high carbonation with an effervescent quality. Alcohol level can be medium to high.

Overall Impression: A fruity, hoppy, highly carbonated, moderately strong, refreshing ale.

19E. Belgian Specialty Ale

Aroma: Most exhibit varying amounts of fruity esters, spicy phenols, and other yeast-borne aromatics; some may include very slight aromas of *Brettanomyces* and other microflora. Hop aroma may be low to moderate. Malt aroma may be low to high and may include essences of grains other than barley, such as wheat or rye. No diacetyl.

Appearance: Color varies considerably, from pale gold to medium amber. Clarity may be poor to good. Head retention is usually good.

Flavor: A great variety of flavor is found in these beers. Maltiness may be light to quite rich, hop flavor and bitterness generally increase along with the depth of malt quality, and spicy flavors may be imparted by yeast and/or actual spice additions.

Mouthfeel: Most are well-attenuated, thus fairly light-bodied (for their original gravity), and well-carbonated. A warming sensation from alcohol may be present in stronger examples.

Overall Impression: This category encompasses a wide variety of Belgian-style ales that typify the imaginative products often necessary to attract customers in the world's most competitive beer market, Belgium.

Comments: A category for the myriad unusual and distinctive Belgian ales which don't fit into any of the other style descriptions for Belgian-style beers contained in these guidelines. These beers run the gamut of aromas, flavors, colors, mouthfeel and alcohol content and are often fermented with unusual and distinctive yeasts and ingredients. Brewer should specify commercial equivalent for entry, if appropriate.

20. LAMBIC AND BELGIAN SOUR ALE

20A. Straight (Unblended) Lambic-Style Ale

Aroma: The aroma of these beers is a complex blend from a wide variety of microbiota, often described in the following terms: horsey, horse blanket, sweaty, oaky, hay, and sour. Other aromas that are found in small quantities are: enteric, vinegary and barnyard. Lambics can also be very fruity, and a corky or woody character may also be detected on occasion. Typically, no hop aroma or diacetyl are perceived.

Appearance: May be cloudy. Head retention is not expected to be very good. Yellow to gold color.

Flavor: Young examples are intensely sour from lactic acid and at times some acetic acid. When aged, the sourness is more in balance with the malt and wheat character. Fruit flavors are simpler in young lambics and more complex in the older examples. Some oak or wood flavor is sometimes noticeable. Hop bitterness is low to none. Hop flavor is absent. Typically, no diacetyl is perceived.

Mouthfeel: Medium to light in body. Bottled lambic ales vary from well-carbonated to not carbonated, and draft lambic is virtually flat.

Overall Impression: Complex, sour, pale, wheat-based ales fermented with a variety of microflora.

20B. Gueuze/Geuze-Style Ale

Aroma: The aroma of these beers is a complex blend of aromas from a wide variety of microbiota. These aromas include: horsey, horse blanket, sweaty, oaky, hay, and sour. Other aromas that may be found in small quantities are: enteric, vinegary, and barnyard. There can be a very fruity aroma, and some mustiness may be detected. Typically, no hop aroma or diacetyl are perceived.

Appearance: Gold to medium amber color. May be slightly cloudy. Head retention is not expected to be very good.

Flavor: Young examples are intensely sour from lactic acid and at times some acetic acid; when aged, the sourness is more in balance with the malt and wheat character. Fruit flavors from esters are simpler in young Gueuze and more complex in the older examples. A slight oak, cork or wood flavor is sometimes noticeable. Typically, no hop flavor or diacetyl are perceived.

Mouthfeel: Younger bottles (less than five years old) tend to be sparkling, but older vintages are at times less carbonated. Light to medium-light body. A very faint astringency is often present, like wine, but no more than a well-aged red wine.

Overall Impression: Intensely refreshing, fruity, complex, sour, pale wheat-based ales fermented with a variety of microflora.

20C. Fruit Lambic-Style Ale

Aroma: In younger vintages, the fruit with which the beer has been flavored should be the dominant aroma. In old bottles, the fruit aroma typically has faded and other aromas are more noticeable: horsey, horse blanket, sweaty, oaky, hay and sour. Other aromas that maybe found in small quantities are: enteric, vinegary and barnyard. Lambics can be very fruity from esters as well. Typically, no hop aroma or diacetyl are perceived.

Appearance: May be slightly cloudy. Head retention is not expected to be very good. The variety of fruit determines the color.

Flavor: Young examples are intensely sour from lactic acid and at times some acetic acid; when aged, the sourness is more in balance with the fruit, malt and wheat character. Fruit flavors are simpler and more one-dimensional in young lambics (the fruit added being dominant) and more complex in the older examples. A slight oak, cork or wood flavor is sometimes noticeable. Typically, no hop flavor or diacetyl are perceived.

Mouthfeel: Younger bottles (less than five years) tend to be sparkling, older vintages are sometimes less carbonated. Light to medium-light body. A very faint astringency is acceptable, like wine, but no more than a well-aged red wine.

Overall Impression: Intensely refreshing, fruit-flavored, complex, sour, pale, wheat-based ales fermented with a variety of microflora.

Comments: Entrant must specify the type of fruit used in making the entry.

20D. Oud Bruin

Aroma: Deep complexity of fruity esters and Munich-type malt, including notes of raisins and sherry wine in well-aged examples. A slight sour aroma may be present. Hop aroma is very low to none. Diacetyl is typically medium-low to none.

Appearance: Dark reddish-brown to brown color. Good clarity. Average to good head retention.

Flavor: Malty, with fruity complexity and some caramelization character. A slight sourness may become more pronounced in well-aged examples, along with some sherry-like character, producing a "sweet-and-sour" profile. Hop flavor is low to none. Hop bitterness is restrained. Diacetyl is medium-low to none.

Mouthfeel: Medium body. Some oak character may be present but not to the point of high astringency. The astringency should be like that of a wine, but no more than a well-aged red wine.

Overall Impression: A malty, complex, aged, sour brown ale.

20E. Flanders Red Ale

Aroma: Deep complexity of fruitiness and malt. Sour or vinegary aroma may be present and there is often an oak aroma. No hop aroma. Diacetyl aroma moderately-low to none.

Appearance: Deep red to reddish-brown in color. Good clarity. Average to good head retention.

Flavor: Malty, with fruity complexity and balanced toward complex sourness/acidity. Hop flavor is low to none. Hop bitterness is restrained. Diacetyl low to none.

Mouthfeel: Medium body. Some oak character is typical but not to the point of high astringency. The astringency should be like that of wine, but no more than a well-aged red wine.

Overall Impression: A complex, sour, wine-like red ale.

21. FRUIT BEER

Aroma: The character of the particular fruit(s) should be distinctive in the aroma. Overall the aroma should be a balanced combination of malt, hops and the featured fruit(s) as appropriate to the specific type of beer being presented. If the base beer is an ale then general fruitiness and other fermentation byproducts such as diacetyl may be present as appropriate for the warmer fermentation. If the base beer is a lager, then overall less fermentation byproducts would be appropriate. Some malt aroma preferable, especially in dark styles; hop aroma absent or balanced with fruit, depending on the style. The overall aroma should be balanced and harmonious.

Appearance: Appearance should be appropriate to the base beer being presented and will vary depending on the base beer. For lighter beers with fruits that exhibit distinctive colors, the color should be noticeable.

Flavor: The character of the particular fruit(s) should be distinctive in the flavor profile. Hop bitterness, flavor, malt flavors, alcohol content and fermentation byproducts, such as diacetyl, should be appropriate to the base beer and harmonious and balanced with the distinctive fruit flavors present.

Mouthfeel: Mouthfeel may vary depending on the base beer selected and as appropriate to that base beer. Body and carbonation levels should be appropriate to the base beer style being presented.

Overall Impression: A harmonious marriage of fruit and beer.

Comments: Overall balance is the key to presenting a well-made fruit beer. The fruit should complement the original style and not overwhelm it. The brewer should recognize that some combinations of base beer styles and fruits work well together while others do not make for harmonious

combinations. The entrant must specify the underlying beer style as well as the type of fruit(s) used. If the base beer is a classic style, the original style should come through in aroma and flavor. Judges should remember that many fruits dry out classic styles.

22. SPICE/HERB/VEGETABLE BEER

Aroma: The character of the particular spices, herbs and/or vegetables (SHV) should be distinctive in the aroma. Overall the aroma should be a balanced combination of malt, hops and the featured SHV(s) as appropriate to the specific type of beer being presented. If the base beer is an ale then general fruitiness and other fermentation byproducts such as diacetyl may be present as appropriate for the warmer fermentation. If the base beer is a lager, then overall less fermentation byproducts would be appropriate. Some malt aroma preferable, especially in dark styles; hop aroma absent or balanced with the SHVs used, depending on style. The overall aroma should be balanced and harmonious.

Appearance: Appearance should be appropriate to the base beer being presented and will vary depending on the base beer. For lighter beers with spices, herbs or vegetables that exhibit distinctive colors, the colors should be noticeable.

Flavor: The character of the particular SHV(s) should be distinctive in the flavor profile. Hop bitterness, flavor, malt flavors, alcohol content, and fermentation byproducts, such as diacetyl, should be appropriate to the base beer and harmonious and balanced with the distinctive SHV flavors present.

Mouthfeel: Mouthfeel may vary depending on the base beer selected and as appropriate to that base beer. Body and carbonation levels should be appropriate to the base beer style being presented.

Overall Impression: A harmonious marriage of spices, herbs and/or vegetables and beer.

Comments: Overall balance is the key to presenting a well-made spice, herb or vegetable (SHV) beer. The SHV should complement the original style and not overwhelm it. The brewer should recognize that some combinations of base beer styles and SHVs work well together while others do not make for harmonious combinations. The entrant must specify the underlying beer style as well as the type of SHV(s) used. If the base beer is a classic style, the original style should come through in aroma and flavor. Additionally, whenever multiple spices, herbs or vegetables are used each should be distinctive in their own way.

23. SMOKE-FLAVORED BEER

23A. Classic Rauchbier

Aroma: Smoky aroma may range from faint to assertive. Some malt should be evident in the low- to moderately-smoked examples. Note that the smoke character can vary even among beechwood-smoked malts. Hop aroma should be negligible to very low. This beer is a lager; there should be no diacetyl or fruity aromas. The malt character from the underlying Maerzen/Oktobertfest style should be evident.

Appearance: This should be a very clear beer, with a rich creamy head. The color should be amber, copper to dark brown.

Flavor: Sweetish, maltiness from the underlying Maerzen/Oktobertfest style of beer with smoke flavors ranging from low to high, but balanced with the malt and hop bitterness. The smoke flavor from beechwood kilning tends to be somewhat drier and neutral in character, although it can vary among maltsters, blending well with the sweetness of the malt. This beer will exhibit low to medium hop bitterness, low to no hop flavor, and the clean characteristics of a lager with no fruitiness or diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Medium body with a good, medium level of carbonation. Smooth finish due to lagering.

Overall Impression: Maerzen/Oktobertfest-style (see Oktoberfest) beer with a sweet, smoky aroma and flavor.

23B. Other Smoked Beer

Aroma: The aroma should be a balance between the expected aroma of the base beer (e.g., robust porter) and the smokiness imparted by the use of smoked malts. Smokiness may vary from low to assertive; however, balance in the overall presentation is the key to well-made examples.

Appearance: Varies with the base beer style.

Flavor: As with aroma, there should be a balance between smokiness and the expected flavor characteristics of the base beer style. Smokiness may vary from low to assertive. Smoky flavors may range from woody to slightly bacony depending on the type of malts used.

Mouthfeel: Varies with the base beer style.

Overall Impression: This is any beer that is exhibiting smoke as a principle flavor and aroma characteristic other than the Bamberg-style Rauchbier. Balance in the use of smoke, hops and malt character is exhibited by the better examples. If this beer is based on a classic style (e.g., smoked robust porter), then the specific classic style (e.g., robust porter) must be identified. In this case the beer will be judged on its merits as the classic style and how well that smoke flavor and aroma integrate with the beer and are exhibited.

24. SPECIALTY, EXPERIMENTAL, HISTORICAL

Any ale or lager beer brewed using unusual techniques (hot rocks, etc.), unique fermentables (such as maple syrup, honey, etc.), unique adjuncts (oats, rye, potatoes, etc.), low alcohol, combinations of fruits and spices/herbs/vegetables, or historical beers (Entire, IPA with *Brettanomyces*, Louvain Peeterman, etc.). Experimental beers that do not otherwise meet the other established style categories may be entered here.

Aroma: The character of the stated uniqueness should be distinctive in the aroma. Overall the aroma should be a balanced combination of malt, hops and the featured uniqueness as appropriate to the specific type of beer being presented. If the base beer is an ale then general fruitiness and other fermentation byproducts such as diacetyl may be present as appropriate for the warmer fermentation. If the base beer is a lager, then overall less fermentation byproducts would be appropriate. The overall aroma should be balanced and harmonious.

Appearance: Appearance should be appropriate to the base beer being presented and will vary depending on the base beer.

Flavor: The character of the particular ingredient or technique should be distinctive in the flavor profile. Hop bitterness and

flavor, malt flavors, alcohol content and fermentation byproducts, such as diacetyl, should be appropriate to the base beer and harmonious and balanced with the distinctive nature of flavors present.

Mouthfeel: Mouthfeel may vary depending on the base beer selected and as appropriate to that base beer. Body and carbonation levels should be appropriate to the base beer style being presented.

Comments: Overall balance is the key to presenting a well-made specialty beer. The distinctive nature of the stated specialty should complement the original style and not overwhelm it. The brewer should recognize that some combinations of base beer styles and ingredients or techniques work well together while others do not make for harmonious combinations. The brewer must specify the underlying beer style as well as the type of unique ingredients used, process utilized or historical beer style being brewed. If the base beer is a classic style, the original style should come through in aroma and flavor. Additionally, whenever multiple fruits, spices, herbs or vegetables are used each should be distinctive in their own way. For historical styles that may not be known to all beer judges, the brewer may provide a copy of the text of references to these beers as an aid to the judges.

25. MEAD

25A. Traditional Mead

Aroma: Honey aroma should dominate, which may be sweet and may express the aroma of flower nectar. Aromas produced during fermentation, such as fruity esters and alcohol, may also be present.

Appearance: Clarity may be good to brilliant. Carbonated examples will show active evidence of dissolved gas but no head is expected. Color may range from pale straw to deep amber.

Flavor: The flavor of honey should be featured and may include residual sweetness. Any additives, such as acidity or tannin, should enhance the honey flavor and lend balance to the overall character of the mead.

Mouthfeel: Smooth texture. Most will be wine-like, with the warming presence of alcohol and sense of medium body. Sensations of a cloying or astringent character should be avoided.

Comments: A mead made primarily from honey, water and yeast. Meads which feature the character of a blended honey or a blend of honeys. For meads made from a single variety of honey see below "B, Varietal Honey Traditional Mead." While some oxidation of mead is OK and can actually lend useful complexity to the mead, over oxidation as exhibited by sherry-like aroma and/or taste should be avoided. Phenols produced by high temperature fermentation are also to be avoided. Entrants must specify whether the entry is still or sparkling mead. Entrants must also indicate whether the mead is dry, semi-sweet or sweet.

25B. Varietal Honey Traditional Mead

Aroma: Honey aroma should dominate, which may be sweet and may express the aroma of flower nectar. Aromas produced during fermentation, such as fruity esters and alcohol, may also be present. The particular Varietal honey

aroma (such as orange blossoms for orange blossom honey) should be evident.

Appearance: Clarity may be good to brilliant. Carbonated examples will show active evidence of dissolved gas but no head is expected. Color may range from pale straw to deep amber.

Flavor: The flavor of honey should be featured and may include residual sweetness. The distinctive taste of the Varietal honey should be showcased. Any additives, such as acidity or tannin, should enhance the honey flavor and lend balance to the overall character of the mead.

Mouthfeel: Smooth texture. Most will be wine-like, with the warming presence of alcohol and sense of medium body. Sensations of a cloying or astringent character should be avoided.

Comments: Mead made from honey from a particular flower source. The brewer must name the varietal honey. Note that the character of a varietal honey will be identifiable as distinct to the source, but may not resemble the source. Orange-blossom honey has the character of orange blossoms, not oranges. Blackberry honey is only distantly like blackberries, although it is an identifiable character. While some oxidation of mead is OK and can actually lend useful complexity to the mead, over oxidation as exhibited by sherry-like aroma and/or taste should be avoided. Phenols produced by high temperature fermentation are also to be avoided. Entrants must specify whether the entry is still or sparkling mead. Entrants must also specify whether the entry is dry, semi-sweet or sweet.

25C. Cyser (Apple Melomel)

A mead made with the addition of apples or apple juice. Traditionally, cysers are made by the addition of honey to apple juice without additional water.

Aroma: Should have distinct apple character with a pronounced honey aroma, which may be sweet and may express the aroma of flower nectar. Aromas produced during fermentation, such as fruity esters, low levels of sulfur and alcohol, may also be present.

Appearance: Clarity may be good to brilliant. Carbonated examples will show active evidence of dissolved gas but no head is expected. Color may range from pale straw to deep amber.

Flavor: Should have distinct apple character but should also have a balanced honey character. The Apple character may supply tart acidity to cut the honey sweetness, so one may notice tart acidity first and residual sweetness thereafter. Any additives, such as acidity or tannin, should enhance the honey flavor and lend balance to the overall character of the cyser. In well made examples of the style, the fruit is both distinctive and well-incorporated into the sugar-acid balance of the mead. Some of the best examples have the taste and aroma of an aged Calvados (apple brandy from northern France).

Mouthfeel: Smooth texture. Most will be wine-like, with the warming presence of alcohol and sense of medium body. Sensations of a cloying or astringent character should be avoided.

Comments: There should be an appealing blend of the fruit and honey character but not necessarily an even balance. Generally a good tannin-sweetness balance is desired, though very dry and very sweet examples do exist. Entrants must specify whether the entry is still or sparkling cyser. Entrants

must also specify whether the entry is dry, semi-sweet or sweet.

25D. Pyment (Grape Melomel)

A mead made with the addition of grapes or grape juice. Alternatively, the pyment may be a grape wine sweetened with honey, a mixture of grape juice and honey that is fermented or a mixture of grape wine and mead mixed after fermentation.

Aroma: Should have distinct grape or grape-wine character with a pronounced honey aroma, which may be sweet and may express the aroma of flower nectar. Aromas produced during fermentation, such as fruity esters and alcohol, may also be present.

Appearance: Clarity will be good to brilliant. Carbonated examples will show active evidence of dissolved gas but no head is expected. Color would reflect the grape source, whether white, red or other.

Flavor: Should have distinct grape wine character, manifested in acidity, tannin and other grape characteristics, but the honey character should balance the fruit flavors. Grassy white wine character or buttery(diacetyl) Chardonnay character is appropriate in pyment only. In well made examples of the style, the fruit is both distinctive and well-incorporated into the sugar-acid balance of the pyment.

Mouthfeel: Smooth texture. Most will be wine-like, with the warming presence of alcohol and sense of medium body. Sensations of a cloying or astringent character should be avoided.

Comments: There should be an appealing blend of the fruit and honey character but not necessarily an even balance. Generally a good tannin-sweetness balance is desired, though very dry and very sweet examples do exist. Entrants must specify whether the entry is still or sparkling pyment. Entrants must also specify whether the entry is dry, semi-sweet, or sweet.

25E. Other Fruit Melomel

A mead made with the addition of other fruit or fruit juices. There should be an appealing blend of the fruit and honey character but not necessarily an even balance.

Aroma: Should exhibit the aroma of the fruit(s) present in the mead. In a melomel with a blend of fruits, one fruit may dominate the aroma profile.

Appearance: Clarity will be good to brilliant. Carbonated examples will show active evidence of dissolved gas but no head is expected. The particular fruit(s) used may or may not impart color to the mead.

Flavor: Fruit flavor contributions to the mead range from subtle acidic notes to intense, instantly recognizable fruit flavors. In a melomel with a blend of fruits, one fruit may dominate the flavor profile. There should be a balanced honey character as well. Some fruits will lend a cloying sweetness to the mead while others add a drying character. In well-made examples of the style, the fruit is both distinctive and well-incorporated into the sugar-acid balance of the mead.

Mouthfeel: Smooth texture. Most will be wine-like, with the warming presence of alcohol and sense of medium body. Sensations of a cloying or astringent character should be avoided.

Comments: Generally a good tannin-sweetness balance is desired, though very dry and very sweet examples do exist.

Some fruits, notably darker ones like Blackberries, may contribute a tannin presence not unlike dark pyments. Some oxidative properties may be appropriate in certain fruit meads, giving them a sherry or port wine character. Entrants must specify whether the entry is still or sparkling mead. Entrants must also specify whether the mead is dry, semi-sweet or sweet.

25F. Metheglin

A mead made with the addition of spices or herbs.

Aroma: The spices/herbs may be expressed in the aroma. Honey characters should appear in the aroma but will vary in intensity depending on the spices/herbs used. Metheglins containing more than one spice should have a good balance among the different spices/herbs, though some spices/herbs will tend to dominate the aroma profile.

Appearance: Clarity may be good to brilliant. Carbonated examples will show active evidence of dissolved gas but no head is expected. Color may range from pale straw to deep amber; the color usually won't be affected by the spices or herbs.

Flavor: The spices/herbs should be expressed in the flavor but the honey character is still the backbone of the mead and should appear in the flavor but will vary in intensity depending on the spices/herbs used. The spices/herbs should be expressed in the flavor as a distinctive enhancement to the honey flavor, whether harmoniously or by contrast, and should achieve a pleasant balance when a blend of spices/herbs is used. Metheglins containing more than one spice should have a good balance among the different spices/herbs, though some spices/herbs will tend to dominate the flavor profile.

Mouthfeel: Smooth texture. Most will be wine-like, with the warming presence of alcohol and sense of medium body. Sensations of a cloying or astringent character should be avoided; however, some spices or herbs may affect mouthfeel particularly by adding astringency.

Comments: Often, a blend of spices may give a character greater than the sum of its parts. The better examples of this style use spices/herbs subtly and when more than one are used, they are carefully selected so that they blend harmoniously. Entrants must specify whether the entry is still or sparkling mead. Entrants must also specify whether the mead is dry, semi-sweet or sweet.

25G. Braggot

Meads made with both honey and malt providing flavor and fermentable extract. Originally, and alternatively, a mixture of mead and ale.

Aroma: Aroma of both honey and malt should be apparent and in balance. Hop aroma may be present but is not required.

Appearance: Straw to dark brown depending on the type of malt and honey used. Some head retention is expected. Clear, although some chill haze may be present at low temperatures.

Flavor: There should be some balance between the beer aspect and the mead aspect of a braggot, especially with regard to maltiness and bitterness versus honey character. Malt character ranges from light pale malt-type flavors to rich caramel flavors, depending on the malt used. Hop bitterness and flavor may be present but are not required.

Mouthfeel: Body may vary from light to medium. Smooth mouthfeel without astringency. Carbonation may vary from light to very lively.

Comments: The fermentable sugars should come from a balance of malt and honey, otherwise the beverage might better be entered as a Specialty Beer with the addition of honey. As a rule of thumb, the fermentables should consist of no less than 1/3 malt and no more than 2/3 honey. Hopped examples of this style should exhibit the hops distinctly and should have at least 15 IBUs.

25H. Mixed Category Mead

A mead that combines ingredients from two or more of the other mead sub-categories.

Aroma, appearance, flavor and other characteristics may vary and be combinations of the respective elements of the various sub-categories used in this style.

Comments: This mead should exhibit the character of all of the ingredients in varying degrees, and should show a good blending or balance between the various flavor elements.

26. CIDER

26A. Standard Cider and Perry

Aroma: Apples (pears, if a perry) should be distinctive and dominate. There may be some fermentation byproducts such as esters, alcohols and low levels of sulfur.

Appearance: Pale yellow to amber in color. Clear and brilliant. Carbonation may vary from absolutely still to very vigorous, as follows, Entrant must specify still or carbonated (level of carbonation optional):

- Still: No carbonation visible or in the mouthfeel.
- Petillant: Very lightly sparkling, visibly and in the mouth.
- Sparkling: Clearly but not heavily carbonated.
- Spuming or Spumante: Heavily and vigorously carbonated, bordering on gushing, with tight, fine bubbles, champagne-like.

Flavor: Crisp apple (pear) flavor should be present and distinctive. May be dry to sweet. Some noticeable alcohol character may be present at the upper end of the range (7%). There should be a balance in the acidic character and the residual sweetness.

Mouthfeel: Light body. No astringency. No carbonic bite from CO₂.

Comments: Sugar adjuncts may be used. May be fermented by wine, Champagne, ale, lager or wild yeast. The entrant must also specify whether the entry is a cider or perry; dry, semi-dry or sweet; still or carbonated. If both apple and pear juice are used the entry must be entered as a special cider. Artificial carbonation is allowed. The method of carbonation need not be specified.

26B. New England-Style Cider

Aroma: Strong, pronounced apple aroma. The higher level of alcohol, 8-14%, will be more noticeable in the aroma. Other fermentation byproducts may also be present.

Appearance: Pale to medium yellow. Still or sparkling. Carbonation must be natural. Clear and brilliant.

Flavor: Strong apple flavor. Usually dry. No hot alcohol taste. New England-Style cider is distinguished from other styles by its robust and sometimes unsophisticated taste. It is a rustic, homemade product, typically more forceful than delicate. Nevertheless, complexity and structure are often present.

Mouthfeel: Medium to full-bodied with some tannins.

Comments: Adjuncts may include white and brown sugars, molasses, honey (very sparingly), and/or raisins. Should use wild or wine yeast only. Entrants must specify whether still or sparkling and whether dry, semi-sweet or sweet.

26C. Specialty Cider And Perry

Aroma: Apples (pears) should be distinctive and dominate. There may be some fermentation byproducts such as esters, alcohols and low levels of sulfur. Aromas from identified fruits and spices should also be noticeable as well.

Appearance: Carbonation may vary from absolutely still to very vigorous. Pale yellow in color, except where adjuncts such as spices or fruit may introduce a deeper shade or another color. Clear and brilliant.

Flavor: Crisp apple (pear) flavor should be present and distinctive. Declared adjuncts must be present in the taste and integrate well with the base cider. May be dry to sweet. Some noticeable alcohol character may be present but the emphasis should be on alcoholic warming, not the taste or harsh bite of alcohol in the mouth. There should be a balance in the acidic character and the residual sweetness.

Mouthfeel: Light to full body.

Comments: Sugar adjuncts may be used. May be fermented by wine, Champagne, ale, lager or wild yeast. There may be optional ingredients such as fruits and spices in which case the entrant must identify these. The entrant must also specify whether the entry is; dry, semi-dry or sweet; still or carbonated. Artificial carbonation is allowed. The method of carbonation need not be specified. The entrant must be careful in the use of honey as an adjunct; if the honey is the dominant fermentable the entry is a Cyser and must be entered in the Mead competition and not as a cider.