

North American Brewers Association®



for **2026**

These style guidelines reflect classic, historical, and well-established styles of beer and cider as well as recognized industry advancements that reflect the current beverage marketplace. This fusion of new and old provides ample categories so brewers can enter their products with confidence that their entries can be fairly evaluated and adjudicated. The guidelines have been organized in a logical manner with a format consistent with the judge comment sheets.

The members of the North American Brewers Association Style Advisory Committee hope that their efforts are useful to you and are well received.

The Committee

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Notes and Updates for the North American Brewers Association® Style Guide© for 2026

Confirm the category and subcategory designators when using this style guide for entry submissions. The alphanumeric designators for categories and subcategories are different from previous style guide versions, and beers that were previously entered under one category/subcategory may be more appropriate for a new or revised category/subcategory.

Style guides for cider and perry entries have been separated from beers, indicated by a different numerical category scheme at the end of the style guide. This numerical category scheme reflects the delineation between the International Beer Awards and the International Cider Awards, and allows brewers and judges to easily locate and use the International Cider Award style guide.

Carefully review all descriptions and notes associated with each subcategory. Many subcategories require the brewer to provide information about the entry such as identifying a base beer style, the use of specialty adjuncts or ingredients, etc. Beer entries not accompanied by this information where requested will not be disqualified from the competition, however, they will be at a disadvantage during judging.

Lager Beer Styles

Category 1: Light Lagers

Subcategory A: American-Style Light (Low-Calorie) Lager

- **Appearance:** Very pale straw to straw. Bright without haze. Head formation is moderate, head retention is frequently weak.
- **Aroma:** Low neutral or grainy malt aroma. Hops range from undetectable to low and are typically spicy, herbal, or floral, if present. Slight apple-like ester is okay, but none is preferred. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Low neutral or grainy malt flavor. It may have a very slight corn-like sweetness from use of brewing adjuncts. Hop flavor and bitterness range from undetectable to low.
- **Mouthfeel:** Very light body, very clean and crisp, High to very high carbonation.
- **Overall:** Very light, nearly flavorless, and refreshing lager with mass market appeal. Aroma/flavor profile is similar to American-Style Standard with a lighter body, lower alcohol content, and fewer calories.

Color: Very Pale Straw to Straw (2 – 3 SRM)

Bitterness: 5 – 15 IBUs

Alcohol: 3.5 – 4.4% ABV

Subcategory B: American-Style Standard or Premium Lager

- **Appearance:** Very pale straw to deep gold. Standard Lagers are typically lighter in color, while Premium Lagers can range into dark gold tones. Usually bright but some chill haze allowed. Head formation is moderate, head retention is frequently weak.
- **Aroma:** Low neutral or grainy malt aroma. Hops range from undetectable to low and are typically spicy, herbal, or floral, if present. Slight apple-like ester is okay, but none is preferred. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Low neutral or grainy malt flavor. It may have a corn-like sweetness from the use of brewing adjuncts. American Premium may have slightly more malt flavor than Standard, but it is still very low. Hop flavor and bitterness range from undetectable to low for both Standard and Premium.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light body, very clean and crisp. High to very high carbonation.
- **Note:** **Brewer must indicate on entry form whether the entry is an American-Style Standard or Premium Lager.**

Color: Very Pale Straw to Deep Gold (2 – 7 SRM)

Bitterness: 7 – 20 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.0 – 5.5% ABV

Subcategory C: Latin American or Tropical-Style Lager or Ale

- **Appearance:** Very pale straw to straw. Bright without haze. Head formation is moderate, head retention is frequently weak.
- **Aroma:** Low neutral, grainy, bready, or slightly toasty malt aroma. Very low hop aroma, typically spicy, herbal, or floral. Slight apple-like ester is okay, but none is preferred. No diacetyl. DMS should be low, if present.
- **Flavor:** Low malt flavor, similar to aroma. Low hop flavor, similar to aroma, and very low to low bitterness. Sugar adjuncts may contribute a slight cidery character to the beer. A very low corn-like note may be present. Ales may have a slight, fruity fermentation character.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light body. Both lagers and ales should be refreshing. Typically high to very-high carbonation.
- **Note:** **The brewer must indicate on the entry form whether the entry is ale or lager.**

Color: Very Pale Straw to Straw (2 – 3 SRM)

Bitterness: 5 – 15 IBUs

Alcohol: 3.6 – 5.3% ABV

Subcategory D. Asian-Style Lager

- **Appearance:** Pale straw to light gold. Clear with no chill haze. Head formation is moderate to high, head retention ranges from low to moderate.
- **Aroma:** Low neutral or grainy malt aroma, possibly with a slight toasty character. Low to medium-low hop aroma, typically spicy, herbal, or floral. Other hop characteristics are acceptable but must not overpower the delicate balance. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Very low to low malt flavor, similar to aroma. Rice is a typical adjunct, sometimes forming the majority of the mash. Unmalted barley is sometimes also used to reduce malt content. Low to medium hop flavor, similar to aroma, always balanced with the overall light, clean character. Low to medium-low bitterness.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium-light body. Well-attenuated. Clean character that is mild and refreshing. Typically high to very-high carbonation.

Color: Very Pale Straw to Light Gold (2 – 5 SRM)

Bitterness: 10 – 20 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.5 – 6.0% ABV

Category 2: European-Style Light Lagers

Subcategory A: Helles Lager

- **Appearance:** Straw to light gold. Bright without haze. Head formation and retention are moderate to high.
- **Aroma:** Low to moderate grainy-sweet aroma, possibly with some low honey, biscuit, bready, or toasted malt character. Low to medium-low floral, spicy, herbal, or earthy hop aroma, clean fermentation character, but a subtle note of sulfur (H₂S) is appropriate. No diacetyl, DMS, or esters.
- **Flavor:** Moderately grainy-sweet, malty flavor, similar to aroma. Typically light honey or toasty notes but no caramel. Low to medium-low hop flavor, similar to aroma. Low to medium-low bitterness, just enough to balance the sweetness of the malt. Clean fermentation; esters should be absent to very low.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium body. Smooth with a soft, dry finish. Moderate carbonation.

Color: Straw to Light Gold (3 – 5 SRM)

Bitterness: 16 – 25 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.8 – 5.3% ABV

Subcategory B: German-Style Pilsner

- **Appearance:** Straw to light gold. Bright without haze. Head formation and retention are moderately-high to high.
- **Aroma:** Low to medium-low grainy, sweet, or doughy malt aroma, possibly with notes of cracker or honey. Medium to medium-high floral, spicy, or herbal hop aroma. Clean fermentation character, but a subtle note of sulfur (H₂S) is appropriate. No diacetyl or esters but low DMS at or below threshold levels is acceptable.
- **Flavor:** Low to medium maltiness, similar to aroma. Medium to medium-high hop flavor, similar to aroma, and medium to high bitterness. Bitter on-balance. Clean fermentation; esters should be absent to very low.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-low to medium body. Well attenuated with a crisp, dry finish. Moderate to high carbonation. May have flinty, minerally “bite” in some examples.

Color: Straw to Light Gold (3 – 5 SRM)

Bitterness: 25 – 40 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.5 – 5.3% ABV

Subcategory C: Bohemian-Style Pilsner

- **Appearance:** Straw to gold. Bright without haze. Head formation and retention are moderately-high to high.
- **Aroma:** Low to medium-low grainy-sweet malt with bready, biscuity, or lightly toasty notes. Low to medium-low floral, spicy, herbal, or earthy hop aroma. Generally clean fermentation, without esters. Low diacetyl and/or DMS at or below threshold levels is acceptable.
- **Flavor:** Low to medium malt flavor, similar to aroma. Low to medium-low hop flavor, similar to aroma, and medium bitterness. Slightly malty on-balance, possibly with very light caramel flavors that enhance the malt profile. Generally clean fermentation, without esters. Low diacetyl and/or DMS at or below threshold levels is acceptable.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium body, smooth. Moderate to high carbonation.

Color: Straw to Gold (3 – 6 SRM)

Bitterness: 25 – 45 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.0 – 5.5% ABV

Subcategory D: Dortmunder/Export

- **Appearance:** Yellow to deep gold. Bright without haze. Head formation and retention are moderate to high.
- **Aroma:** Medium grainy-sweet malt, possibly with toasty, bready, or doughy notes. Medium-low to medium floral, spicy, or herbal hop aroma. Clean fermentation, without diacetyl or esters. Low DMS at or below threshold levels is acceptable.
- **Flavor:** Medium malt flavor, similar to aroma. Low to moderate hop flavor, like aroma. Medium-low to medium-high bitterness. Well-balanced. Clean fermentation character, but a subtle note of sulfur (H₂S) is appropriate.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium body, well-attenuated, and smooth. Moderate carbonation. Slight warmth in stronger versions.

Color: Yellow to Deep Gold (4 – 7 SRM)

Bitterness: 22 – 32 IBUs

Alcohol: 5.0 – 6.0% ABV

Subcategory E: Kellerbier Lager

An unfiltered European style lager with appearance, aroma, flavor, and mouthfeel all varying depending on the base lager style (e.g., Helles, Vienna, Pilsner, Dunkel, etc.).

- **Appearance:** Color varies depending on base style. Clarity ranges from slightly hazy to moderately cloudy. Light yeast haze is acceptable. Head formation and retention may be poor.
- **Aroma:** Variable according to base beer style. May have an additional bready, yeasty character.
- **Flavor:** Variable according to base beer style. May have an additional bready, yeasty character.
- **Mouthfeel:** Mouthfeel is variable according to base beer style; body is often slightly fuller than base style. Typically, Kellerbiers are naturally carbonated and may have slightly lower carbonation than the base beer style.
- **Note:** Brewer may indicate on the bottle whether the yeast should be intentionally roused. The brewer must identify the underlying European lager style. Beers lacking this information will be at a disadvantage during judging.

Color: Variable according to base beer style

Bitterness: Variable according to base beer style

Alcohol: Variable according to base beer style

Subcategory F: Kellerbier Ale

An unfiltered European style ale with appearance, aroma, flavor, and mouthfeel all varying depending on the base lager style.

- **Appearance:** Color varies depending on base style. Clarity ranges from slightly hazy to moderately cloudy. Light yeast haze is acceptable. Head formation and retention may be poor.
- **Aroma:** Variable according to base beer style. May have an additional bready, yeasty character.
- **Flavor:** Variable according to base beer style. May have an additional bready, yeasty character.
- **Mouthfeel:** Mouthfeel is variable according to base beer style; body is often slightly fuller than base style. Typically, Kellerbiers are naturally carbonated and may have slightly lower carbonation than the base beer style.
- **Note:** Brewer may indicate on the bottle whether the yeast should be intentionally roused. The brewer must identify the underlying European ale style. Beers lacking this information will be at a disadvantage during judging.

Color: Variable according to base beer style

Bitterness: Variable according to base beer style

Alcohol: Variable according to base beer style

Category 3: Amber and Dark Lagers

Subcategory A: American-Style Amber Lager /California Common

- **Appearance:** Deep gold to deep amber for California Commons and copper to light brown for Amber Lagers. Bright without haze. Head formation and retention are moderate.
- **Aroma:** Mild malty aromas, typically caramel-like in character. Low levels of floral or citrusy hops are appropriate. California Commons exhibit medium woody or earthy hop aroma and low to medium-low fruity esters. A slight apple-like ester is okay for Amber Lager, but none is preferred. May have low esters. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Floral hops may be evident with low to moderate bitterness for Amber Lager. Medium level of earthy or woody hop flavor is part of the style for California Common. These styles are characterized by balanced low to medium-low fruity esters and caramel & toasted malt flavor. **Light examples should be specified by the brewer.** These will have the same flavor and aroma profile but at lower levels.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium body. Moderate to moderately-high carbonation.

Color: Amber – Copper to Light Brown (6 – 14 SRM)

Bitterness: 18 – 45 IBUs

Alcohol: 3.5 – 5.4% ABV

Subcategory B: Vienna-Style Lager

- **Appearance:** Light amber to copper. Bright without haze. Head formation and retention are moderate to high.
- **Aroma:** Very mild hops direct the emphasis to malt. Noble type hop aromas should be low, crisp and clean. No diacetyl or esters. DMS should be below or near threshold levels.
- **Flavor:** Vienna's toasty-like flavor is a by-product of the malt used. Caramel malt flavors are not appropriate. Slight malt sweetness should be perceived. Noble type hop flavors should be low, crisp and clean.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium body, moderate carbonation.

Color: Light Amber to Copper (3 – 17 SRM)

Bitterness: 22 – 30 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.8 – 5.4% ABV

Subcategory C: Märzen-Oktoberfest Lager

- **Appearance:** Pale gold to deep amber. Bright without haze. Head formation and retention are moderate.
 - **Aroma:** Malty aroma. Floral hop aroma can be low to none. No diacetyl or esters. DMS should be below or near threshold levels.
 - **Flavor:** This style of lager has a slightly higher alcohol level than other German-style lagers. Maltiness should dominate slightly over a clean, hop bitterness and should be toasty rather than strongly caramel. Floral hop flavor may be low to none.
 - **Mouth Feel:** Medium body, Moderate carbonation.
- Color: Pale Gold to Deep Amber (4 – 14 SRM)**
Bitterness: 18 – 25 IBUs
Alcohol: 5.0 – 5.9% ABV

Subcategory D: Munich-Style Dark

- **Appearance:** Copper to dark brown. Bright without haze. Head formation and retention are moderate.
 - **Aroma:** A very malty nose. Cocoa-like and caramel character is appropriate. Low floral hops aromas are appropriate. There should be no diacetyl or esters. DMS should be below or near threshold levels.
 - **Flavor:** A distinct toasted, chocolate/cocoa-like or caramel character is appropriate. The accent is on the malt. Low hop flavor and bitterness.
 - **Mouthfeel:** Medium body, Moderate carbonation.
- Color: Copper to Dark Brown (16 – 30 SRM)**
Bitterness: 15 – 25 IBUs
Alcohol: 4.8 – 5.3% ABV

Subcategory E: Schwarzbier (Black Beer)

- **Appearance:** Medium brown to very dark brown with garnet highlights. Bright without haze. Head formation and retention is good.
 - **Aroma:** Medium malt aroma displays a soft mild roast character. Noble type hop aroma should be low to medium. There should be no fruity esters or diacetyl perceived. DMS should be below or near threshold levels.
 - **Flavor:** This dark lager has a clean and mild roasted malt character without the associated bitterness. Malt flavor should run the spectrum of toasty malt, caramel, and cocoa-like notes all in subtle balance. Hop bitterness is low to medium in character and should not linger on the palate. Some slight residual sweetness is acceptable but not required. Noble type hop flavor should be low to medium.
 - **Mouthfeel:** Medium light to medium body, and moderate to moderately high carbonation. Smooth without harshness or astringency, despite the use of dark malts.
- Color: Medium Brown to Dark Brown (20 – 30 SRM)**
Bitterness: 22 – 32 IBUs
Alcohol: 3.8 – 5.0% ABV

Subcategory F: American Black Lager

- **Appearance:** Medium brown to black. Clear with no chill haze. Head retention is moderate to high.
 - **Aroma:** Medium malt aromas; caramel or cocoa-like notes at a modest, balanced level. Hop aroma low to medium high but always well balanced with malt character. Any hop character is acceptable but American is most common. No to very low fruity esters.
 - **Flavor:** Medium malt flavor; notes of caramel and/or cocoa may be present. Clean and mildly roasted flavors are appropriate. Low to medium high hop flavors, usually American but all types of hop character are acceptable. Fruity esters are nonexistent to very low. DMS and diacetyl should not be present.
 - **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium body with moderate to high carbonation. Bitterness is low to medium, always in balance, never harsh and can be derived from dark malts in addition to hops.
 - **Overall:** Dark, clean, and refreshing. Similar to German style Schwarzbier but with an American slant.
- Color: Medium Brown to Black (15 – 30 SRM)**
Bitterness: 22 – 35 IBUs
Alcohol: 4.0 – 6.0% ABV

Subcategory G: Czech Dark Lagers

- **Appearance:** Amber to dark brown. Bright without haze. Head formation is moderate, stability is moderately-low to moderate.
- **Aroma:** Low level mild malty aromas, which may have notes of caramel, chocolate, roast and pale malt. Low levels of floral or herbal/spicy hops are appropriate. No DMS, low levels of diacetyl are ok, low plum or berry fruit esters are ok.
- **Flavor:** Hops are low to very low with low to moderate bitterness that may dissipate quickly. Malt flavors with notes of caramel, chocolate, roast and pale malt; malt character can vary from chocolatey to roasted. These beers are well balanced between malt sweetness and hop bitterness. No DMS, low levels of diacetyl are ok, low plum or berry fruit esters are ok.
- **Mouthfeel:** Low to medium low body, low to moderate carbonation.

Color: Deep Amber to Dark Brown 14 – 25 SRM

Bitterness: 14 – 35 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.0 – 6.0% ABV

Category 4: Strong Lagers

Subcategory A: Helles Bock/Maibock/Traditional Bock

- **Appearance:** Color is straw to gold for Helles and Maibock; Traditional bocks can range from copper to dark brown. Bright without haze. Head formation and retention are moderate.
- **Aroma:** For Helles Bock and Maibock, a malt-forward aroma should showcase the pale base malt: toasty, biscuit-like and/or bready. Noble hop character for these lighter Bocks is low to medium in intensity. For Traditional Bock the malty aroma will have a distinctly deeper toasted malt character with notes of toffee, caramel, cocoa or chocolate. Noble hop character is very low in intensity. There may be low levels of esters. DMS should be below or near threshold levels.
- **Flavor:** While possessing the same general characteristics of Bock, the Helles version does not have the cocoa-like/chocolate character. It has a predominantly malty flavor that is toasty and can have a light caramel character. Traditional bocks have pronounced malty sweetness with just enough hops to balance the malt. Malt character typically includes toasty “Munich” notes, toffee, caramel, and cocoa/chocolate character. Noticeable residual malty sweetness and high alcohol. Hop flavor and bitterness is subdued, but adequate to balance the malt sweetness. Alcohol levels are high.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-full to full bodied. Moderate to moderately-high carbonation.

Color: Straw to Dark Brown (4 – 30 SRM)

Bitterness: 20 – 35 IBUs

Alcohol: 6.3 – 8.0% ABV

Subcategory B: Doppelbock /Eisbock

- **Appearance:** Color is medium amber to dark brown. Bright without haze. Head formation and retention are moderate, but head retention may be compromised in higher alcohol examples.
- **Aroma:** Low hops so that the entire emphasis is on malt. Malt aroma will have “Munich,” toffee/caramel and cocoa/chocolate character like Traditional Bock but intensified. Malt aroma in Eisbock is similar to Doppelbock but even more intensified with evident alcohol. Hop aroma is negligible. Although there should be no diacetyl, there may be low levels of esters. DMS should be below or near threshold levels.
- **Flavor:** This is a stronger version of Bock but not twice as strong. It exhibits the same basic flavor profile and attributes but intensified overall. Malt character typically includes toasty “Munich” notes, toffee, caramel, and cocoa/chocolate character. As with Traditional Bock, hop flavor should be low, and the bitterness just sufficient to balance the malt. Eisbock is very malty and exhibits increased sweetness. Hops are added for balance, but very sparingly relative to the massive malt profile; the emphasis is on the malt. These beers are usually derived from Doppelbocks that have their alcohol level increased by freezing and removing the ice and are therefore similar in taste and aroma, with intensified flavors overall.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-full body to very full bodied and low to medium carbonation.

Color: Medium Amber to Dark Brown (12 – 28 SRM)

Bitterness: 18 – 35 IBUs

Alcohol: 7.0 – 14.0% ABV

Subcategory C: Baltic-Style Porter

- **Appearance:** Dark brown to nearly black, often with red highlights. Bright without haze. Head formation and retention are moderate.
- **Aroma:** Noble or spicy hop aroma may be present but usually low. Clean lager profile overall, but with lager fruitiness not esters from warm fermentation. Caramel malt aromas dominate the aroma with toffee, nutty, licorice and dark fruit notes; complex alcohol aromas may be evident as well. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Baltic Porters have a complex malt profile characterized by caramel and mild to moderate roast components (cocoa, chocolate, and coffee). A licorice-like character is often part of the flavor. Vinous, well-aged characters are also typical but not required. A moderate bitterness provides balance with residual sweetness. Although roasted malts are used to color and flavor this beer, there should be no roast harshness or astringency.
- **Mouthfeel:** Full-bodied, moderate to moderately high carbonation, alcoholic warmth, no astringency.

Color: Dark Brown to Black (24 – 30 SRM)

Bitterness: 20 – 40 IBUs

Alcohol: 5.5 – 9.5% ABV

Category 5: Hoppy Lagers

Subcategory A: Italian-Style Pilsner

Italian-Style Pilsners are typically modeled after German-style pilsners, but they are dry hopped with traditional or modern European varieties.

- **Appearance:** Straw to gold. Bright without haze.
- **Aroma:** Hop aroma is medium to medium high and is typical of Noble or other European hops: floral, spicy, herbal, or lightly fruity. Citrus and tropical fruit aromas should not be present. Malt aroma is low. DMS and diacetyl should not be present.
- **Flavor:** Noticeable European (spicy, floral, herbal, and/or lightly fruity) hop flavor. Malt flavors are low and support the hop profile and are typically cracker-like or slightly bready. Hop bitterness is medium to medium high.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium body; dry and well attenuated.

Color: Straw to Light Gold (3 – 6 SRM)

Bitterness: 25 – 40 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.5 – 5.5% ABV

Subcategory B: West Coast Pilsner

West Coast Pilsners combine the hop intensity of West Coast-Style IPA with the body, alcohol, and drinkability of a Pilsner.

- **Appearance:** Straw to gold. Bright without haze.
- **Aroma:** Hop aroma is high to very high. Hop aroma is characterized by citrus, tropical, resinous, stone fruit, berry, and other notes typical of American and/or Southern Hemisphere hops. Malt aroma is low. DMS and diacetyl should not be present. Fruity esters should be absent to low.
- **Flavor:** Noticeable American and/or Southern Hemisphere hop flavor that may include attributes such as fruity (citrus, tropical, stone fruit, berry, others), piney, resinous, catty, diesel and many others. Some versions may have medium-level floral, spicy or other Noble-type notes, but these are not required. Malt flavors are low, support the hop profile, and are typically cracker-like or bready. Hop bitterness is medium to medium high. Fruity esters should be absent to low.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium body; dry and well attenuated.

Color: Straw to Light Gold (3 – 6 SRM)

Bitterness: 25 – 40 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.5 – 6.0% ABV

Subcategory C: India Pale Lager or Cold IPA

- **Appearance:** Color is straw to dark gold. Bright without haze.
- **Aroma:** Hop aroma is high to very high. Hop aroma is characterized by citrus, tropical, resinous, stone fruit, berry, and other notes typical of American and/or Southern Hemisphere hops. Malt aroma is low. DMS and diacetyl should not be present. Fruity esters should be absent to low.
- **Flavor:** Noticeable American and/or Southern Hemisphere hop flavor that may include attributes such as fruity (citrus, tropical, stone fruit, berry, others), piney, resinous, sulfuric, catty, diesel and many others. Malt flavors are low and support the hop profile and are typically cracker-like or bready. Hop bitterness is medium to medium high. Sulfur-derived compounds may be evident and higher than in 'ale' versions of these beers and may lead to novel expressions of hop aroma and flavor. Fruity esters should be absent to low. No diacetyl.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium full body; dry and well attenuated.
- **Note:** India Pale Lager or Cold IPA covers a large swath of beers. These beers are brewed to the same strength and hop intensity as India pale ales but with lager yeast, resulting in distinctly unique sensory outcomes.

Color: Straw to Dark Gold (3 – 8 SRM)

Bitterness: 30 – 80 IBUs

Alcohol: 6.0 – 7.5% ABV

Subcategory D: Other Hopy Lager

- **Appearance:** Varies with underlying classic base lager style
- **Aroma:** The character of the hop aroma should match the underlying base lager style, but at an elevated level. Note that hop aroma does not need to be 'high,' it just needs to be 'higher than' normal for the underlying style. Other aroma attributes should match the underlying style.
- **Flavor:** The character of hop flavors should match the underlying base lager style, but at an elevated level. Note that hop flavor does not need to be 'high,' it just needs to be 'higher than' normal for the underlying style. Other flavor attributes should match the underlying style.
- **Mouthfeel:** Matches underlying base style.
- **Note:** This category is for interpretations of classic **lager** styles with elevated hop levels or non-traditional hopping treatments. For example, a dry hopped Vienna lager or a modern Oktoberfest with French hops. However, "West Coast" versions of pale lagers should not be entered here, nor should dry-hopped pilsners. *The brewer must identify the underlying classic lager style and hop treatment. Beers lacking this information will be at a disadvantage during judging.*

Color: Variable according to base beer style

Bitterness: Variable according to base beer style

Alcohol: Variable according to base beer style

Ale Beer Styles

Category 6: Light Ales

Subcategory A: Cream Ale

- **Appearance:** Color ranges from straw to pale yellow. Bright without haze. Head formation is moderate, head retention is frequently weak.
- **Aroma:** Hops may be noticeable in low levels but overall, there is little or no hop aroma. A light grainy or pale malt aroma is appropriate. Some fruity aroma may be present. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Low malt flavor and at times a low sulfur character. The style may also have a corn-like sweetness from the use of brewing adjuncts. Hop flavor is very low to low. This style can be thought of as an ale-fermented version of American Standard or Premium Lager. Cream ale traditionally made using a warm fermentation and cold lagering or blending, results in a very smooth, crisp and refreshing brew.
- **Mouthfeel:** This style is light in body with lively effervescence.

Color: Straw to Pale Yellow (2 – 5 SRM)

Bitterness: 7 – 22 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.5 – 5.5% ABV

Subcategory B: Blonde Ale

- **Appearance:** Color ranges from straw to yellow/light gold. High clarity, but some examples may exhibit a slight haze. White head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Low to moderate floral hop aroma. May also have herbal or mild sweet citrus notes. Resiny or aggressive hop character is not appropriate. Light bready, grainy malt aroma. Low fruity esters are appropriate. No diacetyl or DMS. Hop and malt aroma should be well-balanced.
- **Flavor:** Some light malt sweetness with low to medium bitterness in the finish. The fruity esters may also contribute to the flavor balance but should not be overpowering. Malt flavors should be showcased without overpowering hop flavor.
- **Mouthfeel:** Crisp, dry, light to medium bodied beer. Moderate to high carbonation with white head.

Color: Straw to Yellow/Light Gold (3 – 8 SRM)

Bitterness: 15 – 25 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.5 – 5.5% ABV

Subcategory C: Golden Ale

Golden and Blonde Ales are very similar beer styles; Golden Ales can be characterized as more full-bodied, malt-forward, and more aggressive hop character when compared to Blonde Ales.

- **Appearance:** Color ranges from straw to deep gold. High clarity, but some examples may exhibit a slight haze. White head formation with good retention.
- **Aroma:** Low to moderate floral hop aroma. May also have spicy or mildly fruity notes. Resiny or aggressive hop character is not appropriate. Light to moderate pale malt aroma, may also have a slight grainy or very light caramel note. Low to moderate fruity esters are appropriate. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Some light malt sweetness with low to medium bitterness in the finish. Hop flavor is more assertive than Blonde Ales, and also exhibit stronger malt flavor.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium bodied beer that has a fuller mouthfeel when compared to Blonde Ales. Typically, well-carbonated.

Color: Straw to Deep Gold (3 – 9 SRM)

Bitterness: 20 – 30 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.5 – 5.5% ABV

Subcategory D: Kölsch

- **Appearance:** Color is typically golden. Bright without haze. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Hop aroma is low and subtle with the use of Noble hops as the standard. Mild fruity character. Pilsner-type malt aromas are appropriate. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Kölsch is characterized by a slightly dry, subtly sweet and low hop flavor. Mild fruitiness is typical for this style, tending towards a subtle white wine-like character. Wheat can be used in brewing, contributing a bread-like character. Fruity esters, while normally part of this style, should be subdued and in balance with the other flavor components. No caramel character.
- **Mouthfeel:** Low to medium body, well-carbonated.

Color: Straw to Gold (3 – 5 SRM)

Bitterness: 20 – 32 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.8 – 5.3% ABV

Subcategory E: English-Style Summer Ale

- **Appearance:** Color is light straw to pale amber colored. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Hop aroma can be floral, noble, or most typically, herbal and earthy. Piney, vegetal, dank, sharp or harsh hop character is not appropriate. Malt aroma is biscuit-like, cracker-like or toasty. Fruity ester characters are acceptable at low to moderate levels. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Medium-low to medium bitterness, and low to medium residual malt sweetness. Malt flavor is typically toasty and biscuit-like. Hop character, flavor and aroma are evident and may or may not be assertive yet always well balanced with malt character. The overall impression is refreshing.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium-light bodied. Mild carbonation is expected in draft versions, and bottled versions are normally lively.

Color: Light Straw to Pale Amber (3 – 10 SRM)

Bitterness: 15 – 30 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.0 – 5.5% ABV

Category 7: American-Style Wheat Ales

These beers have a distinctive wheat profile. Filtered versions can be entered in either of the two “Wheat Ale” categories, according to color, and unfiltered versions can be appropriately entered in either of the “American Hefeweizen” categories, again according to color. Some American Wheat Ales have noticeable hopping, other do not. ***None of the beers in this category should have the phenolic banana/clove aroma of Bavarian wheat beers.***

Subcategory A: American-Style Wheat Ale/ Dark Wheat Ales

- **Appearance:** Color ranges from light gold to deep amber. They should have a long-lasting white head. Bright without haze.
- **Aroma:** A fruity aroma at low to medium levels is typical. Malt aromas are bread-like. Hop aroma ranges from none to moderate. Hop character, if present, can be floral, herbal/spicy or citrus-like but always in balance with the overall beer. Malt aromas of light cocoa and/or caramel are appropriate in dark versions. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** A light to moderately strong grainy wheat flavor should be perceived. Hop rates may be low to medium and can have either a citrus, spicy, or floral noble hop character. A fruity flavor at low to medium levels is typical. In darker examples notes of caramel and mild cocoa are appropriate. Hop rates may be low to medium and can have either a citrus American or a spicy or floral noble hop character.
- **Mouthfeel:** The body should be light to medium. They are generally light, refreshing, balanced and very drinkable. Darker examples should be light to medium with a bit more complexity from the darker malts. Well-carbonated.

Color: Light Gold to Deep Amber (3 – 15 SRM)

Bitterness: 15 – 30 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.5 – 5.5% ABV

Subcategory B: American-Style Hefeweizen/ Dark Hefeweizen

- **Appearance:** Typically served with yeast, it will appear hazy to very cloudy. Color is usually straw to deep amber. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Yeast aroma should be low to medium but not overpowering the balance and character of malt and hops. A fruity aroma at low to medium levels is typical. Malt aromas are bread-like. Malt aromas of light cocoa and/or caramel are appropriate in darker versions. Hop aroma ranges from none to moderate. Hop character, if present, can be floral, herbal/spicy or citrus-like but always in balance with the overall beer. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** This beer can be made using either ale or lager yeast but is essentially an unfiltered version of American-Style Wheat Ale or American-Style Dark Wheat Ale. Darker beers exhibit roasted malt flavor with a low level of roast malt astringency balanced with malt sweetness and a cocoa/chocolate or caramel character. Yeast flavor should be low to medium. Hop rates may be low to medium and can have either a citrus, spicy, or floral noble hop character but not overpowering the balance and character of malt and hops. There is a higher perceived bitterness than in other wheat beers. Diacetyl should not be perceived.
- **Mouthfeel:** The body should be light to medium but should have slightly more texture than American Wheat or Dark Wheat Ales due to the suspended yeast. A small amount of yeast bite/astringency is expected when in balance with the rest of the beer. Well-carbonated.

Color: Straw to Deep Amber (3 – 15 SRM)

Bitterness: 10 – 35 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.5 – 5.5% ABV

Category 8: Pale Ales

Subcategory A: American-Style Pale Ale

- **Appearance:** Gold to copper. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation and retention are moderate.
- **Aroma:** Hop aroma is evident and characterized by citrus, fruity, tropical, floral, resin, or sweet pine typically from American varietal hops. Moderate esters are appropriate. A low malt aroma of base malt is typical; there may also be a subtle light caramel note. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** American Pale Ale features the generous use of American style hops. Medium to high hopping rates are evident. It may also have some residual sweetness and caramel notes, but the main malt flavor of this style is the base malt itself. Moderate to strong fruity flavors are appropriate. Bitterness is assertive without being harsh or dominating.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium body. Moderate to moderately-high carbonation.

Color: Gold to Copper (5 – 14 SRM)

Bitterness: 35 – 50 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.0 – 5.5% ABV

Subcategory B: English-Style Pale Ale

- **Appearance:** Gold to deep copper. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation and retention are moderate.
- **Aroma:** The hop aroma should exhibit classic English character: floral, earthy, herbal, fruity, and even spicy. A biscuit-like malt aroma with a low caramel character may be present with fruity esters that are moderate to strong. Diacetyl should be below or near threshold levels; no DMS.
- **Flavor:** Hoppy and well attenuated with a dry, biscuit-like malt character at low to moderate levels. Low caramel character may be present with fruity ester flavors and aromas that are moderate to strong. Medium to high hopping rates are evident. Bitterness is assertive without being harsh or dominating.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-bodied, with low to moderate carbonation levels.

Color: Gold to Deep Copper (5 – 14 SRM)

Bitterness: 30 – 45 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.0 – 5.5% ABV

Subcategory C: American-Style Strong Pale Ale

- **Appearance:** Gold to deep copper. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation and retention are moderate.
- **Aroma:** The hop aroma is assertive, characterized by citrus, floral, resin, or sweet pine and typically derived from American-varietal hops. Aroma combines big hops with fruity esters. Malt aroma is in the background, and may have slight caramel notes. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** American Strong Pale Ale is an offshoot of the American Pale Ale style but follows the American axiom “some is good, more is better”. It is a category to fill the gap between American Pale Ale and American IPA, and many examples of this style are actually marketed as IPAs. Flavor profile exhibits low maltiness and low caramel with moderate to strong fruity esters and higher alcoholic strength. Assertive hop bitterness and flavor and are well-attenuated.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium body. Moderate to moderately-high carbonation.

Color: Gold to Deep Copper (5 – 16 SRM)

Bitterness: 45 – 60 IBUs

Alcohol: 5.5 – 6.5% ABV

Subcategory D: New Zealand- or Australian-Style Pale Ale

- **Appearance:** Straw to medium amber. Yeast chill or hop haze may be present at low levels but are not required.
- **Aroma:** Hop aroma is medium to very high, exhibiting attributes of Southern Hemisphere hops, including any mix of tropical fruit, passionfruit, stone fruit, grass, sulfur, diesel, rhubarb, and citrus. Malt aroma is very low to medium and may present as cracker-like, bready, or toasty. DMS and diacetyl should not be present. Fruity esters may be present at low to medium-low levels.
- **Flavor:** Noticeable Southern Hemisphere hop flavor that may include any mix of tropical fruit, passionfruit, guava, mango, stone fruit, grass, sulfur, diesel, rhubarb, and citrus. Malt flavors are low and support the hop profile and are typically cracker-like or bready. Hop bitterness ranges from medium-low to high. Fruity esters may be present at low to medium-low levels. Diacetyl and DMS should not be present.
- **Mouthfeel:** Low to medium body. Moderate carbonation. Dry and well attenuated. Hazier versions may show more residual sweetness and body and less bitterness.
- **Overall:** A well-integrated and easy drinking pale ale that showcases attributes associated with New Zealand or Australian hops. Note that hops from other origins, including North America or Europe, may also be used in the production of these beers, but Southern Hemisphere-like attributes should be prominent.

Color: Straw to Medium Amber (3 – 12 SRM)

Bitterness: 15 – 40 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.0 – 6.0% ABV

Category 9: India Pale Ales

Subcategory A: Session India Pale Ale

- **Appearance:** Pale gold to copper. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation and retention are moderate.
- **Aroma:** Very low to low neutral malt, sometimes with bready, toasty, or light caramel notes. Moderately-high to high hop aroma characterized by citrus, floral, resin, melon, or sweet pine. Although American hops are typical, other hop varieties are acceptable. Low to moderate fruity esters. Hop aroma should dominate in the balance. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Malt and hop flavors similar to aroma in intensity and character with hop flavor being the dominant element of this beer. Moderately-low to high hop bitterness but the best examples have supportive base malt character. Low to moderate fruity esters. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium-light body. Moderate to moderately-high carbonation. Well-attenuated, dry, and crisp. No harsh astringency.

Color: Pale Gold to Copper (4 –16 SRM)

Bitterness: 25 – 50 IBUs

Alcohol: 5% ABV or below

Subcategory B: English-Style India Pale Ale

- **Appearance:** Gold to deep amber. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation and retention are moderate.
- **Aroma:** Medium-low to medium bready or biscuity malt, sometimes with toasty or light caramel notes. Moderate to moderately-high hop aroma showcasing classic English hops which are typically characterized as floral, earthy, herbal, fruity, citrusy, or spicy. Moderate to high fruity esters. Hop aroma should be more prominent than malt. Low diacetyl near threshold levels is acceptable. No DMS.
- **Flavor:** Malt and hop flavors similar to aroma in intensity and character with hop flavor more prominent in the balance but with very noticeable supporting malt and fruity esters. Medium to high hop bitterness. Light minerality or sulfur notes in some examples, contributing to a dry, bitter, lingering finish. Clean alcohol in stronger versions. No DMS.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body. Moderate carbonation. Well-attenuated and crisp. No harsh astringency. Optional light warming.

Color: Deep Gold to Deep Amber (6 – 15 SRM)

Bitterness: 50 – 70 IBUs

Alcohol: 6.0 – 7.5% ABV

Subcategory C: American-Style India Pale Ale

- **Appearance:** Light gold to deep copper. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation and retention are moderate.
- **Aroma:** Low to medium-low neutral malt, sometimes with bready, toasty, or light caramel notes. Moderately-high to very high hop aroma showcasing American varieties typically characterized by citrus, berry, floral, resin, or sweet pine. Moderate to high fruity esters. Hop aroma should dominate but supporting malt and fruity esters are appropriate. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Malt and hop flavors similar to aroma in intensity and character with hop flavor dominating in the balance but with supporting malt and fruity esters noticeable. Moderately-high to very high hop bitterness. Moderate to very high fruity esters. Dry, bitter finish. Clean alcohol in stronger versions. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body. Moderate to moderately-high carbonation. Well-attenuated and crisp. No harsh astringency. Optional light warming.

Color: Light Gold to Deep Copper (4 – 15 SRM)

Bitterness: 60 – 85 IBUs

Alcohol: 6.0 – 7.5% ABV

Subcategory D: West Coast India Pale Ale

These beers are highly attenuated with assertive hop character and a dry, crisp finish. Unlike its predecessor, the American-Style IPA, the malt bill is primarily composed of very lightly kilned malts and the style is almost “lager-like” in drinkability. Darker versions of this beer should be entered elsewhere.

- **Appearance:** Light straw to pale gold. Chill haze is acceptable at low levels. Head formation and retention are moderate.
- **Aroma:** Very-low to low neutral malt; notable character malt is not acceptable. High to very-high hop aroma typically showcasing American varieties characterized by berry, citrus, floral, herbal, melon, catty, or resinous but New Zealand and Australian varieties characterized by tropical fruit, white wine, or diesel/sulfur are also acceptable. Low to moderately-low fruity esters. Hop aroma should dominate. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Malt and hop flavors similar to aroma in intensity and character with intense hop flavor dominating over background malt in the balance. Medium-high to high hop bitterness. Low to moderately-low fruity esters. Lingering dry, bitter finish. Clean alcohol in stronger versions. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body. Moderate to moderately-high carbonation. No harsh astringency. Optional light warming

Color: Light straw to pale gold (2 – 6 SRM)

Bitterness: 50 – 70 IBUs

Alcohol: 6.4 – 7.5% ABV

Subcategory E: New Zealand- or Australian-Style India Pale Ale

Similar to a modern American-Style or West Coast IPA that prominently features attributes associated with New Zealand and/or Australian hops. Note that hops from other origins, including North America or Europe, may also be used in the production of these beers, but Southern Hemisphere-like attributes should be prominent.

- **Appearance:** Straw to amber. Hop haze may be present at low levels but is not required.
- **Aroma:** Very low to medium neutral, cracker-like, or bready malt. High to very high/intense hop aromas, showcasing Southern Hemisphere varieties characterized by any mix of tropical fruit, mango, guava, passionfruit, stone fruit, grass, diesel/sulfur, white wine, rhubarb, and citrus. Low to medium-low fruity esters. Hop aroma should be more prominent than malt in the balance. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Malt and hop flavors similar to aroma in intensity and character with dominant, intense hop expression. Medium-high to high hop bitterness. Low to medium-low fruity esters. Hop flavor and bitterness should dominate but malt character should be present. Clean alcohol in stronger versions. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body. Moderate carbonation. Well-attenuated. No harsh astringency. Optional light warming.

Color: Straw to Amber (3 – 9 SRM)

Bitterness: 35 – 70 IBUs

Alcohol: 6.0 – 7.5% ABV

Subcategory F: Double or Imperial India Pale Ale

- **Appearance:** Gold to deep copper. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation and retention are moderate.
- **Aroma:** Low to medium-low neutral or grainy malt; can have toasty or light caramel notes. Moderately-high to very high hop aroma with American varieties typically characterized by citrus, berry, floral, resin, or sweet pine. High to very high fruity esters. Hop aroma should dominate. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Malt and hop flavors similar to aroma in intensity and character with hop flavor dominating in the balance. High to very high hop bitterness. High fruity esters. The high hop intensity should be balanced with malt character and complex, clean alcohol flavors. No complex oxidation character should be present. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium-full body. Moderate to moderately-high carbonation. No harsh astringency. Restrained, smooth warming is acceptable.

Color: Gold to Deep Copper (6 – 18 SRM)

Bitterness: 75 – 100 IBUs

Alcohol: 8.0 – 11.0% ABV

Subcategory G: Flavored, Specialty, or Experimental India Pale Ale

- **Appearance:** Variable, depending on the specialty or experimental style and ingredients. May be clear to hazy. Head formation and retention may vary.
- **Aroma:** Very-low to medium malt aroma, exhibiting character of any stated malts, adjuncts, or specialty ingredients. Medium to very high hop aroma, any character. Low to high aroma from flavoring or specialty ingredients. Very low to moderately-high fruity esters. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Malt and hop flavors similar to aroma in intensity and character but hop flavor and bitterness should dominate in the balance. Moderately to very high bitterness. Flavors of malts, adjuncts, or specialty ingredients should be evident and in balance with the other elements of the beer. Brettanomyces may be present. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Mouthfeel:** Low to medium-full body and moderately-low to very high carbonation, depending on specialty or experimental style and ingredients. No harsh astringency. Optional warming.

NOTE: Brewers must list experimental/specialty style (if well-known) or the ingredients and/or flavorings used. Entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging.

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: 30 – 100 IBUs

Alcohol: 6.0 – 11.0% ABV

Category 10: Hazy Pale Ales and Hazy IPAs

Subcategory A: Hazy Pale Ale/Hazy Session IPA

- **Appearance:** Light gold to amber. May be low to very hazy.
- **Aroma:** Hop aroma can be medium to very high with any hop character. Malt aroma can be low to medium from base malt; there may also be a subtle light caramel note. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Malt flavor is low to medium. Hop flavor may be medium to high with the use of any variety of hops. Low to medium bitterness is soft and well-integrated into the overall balance. Bitterness perception may differ from the measured IBUs. Moderate to strong fruity flavors are appropriate.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-low to medium-high body. Silky or full Mouthfeel may contribute to the flavor.

Color: Light Gold to Amber (3 – 10 SRM)

Bitterness: 20 – 40 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.0 – 6.0% ABV

Subcategory B: Hazy or Juicy Strong Pale Ale

- **Appearance:** Gold to copper. A hazy appearance is typical for this style, whether from suspended yeast, unconverted starch, chill haze or other sources. Head formation and retention is moderate.
- **Aroma:** Bright, fruity, “juicy” hop aroma is high to very high. Moderate to high fruity ester aromas are distinguishing traits of this beer style. The assertive hop aroma is characterized by fruity, tropical, bright and juicy characteristics using hops from a variety of origins. Aroma intensity should be high. Background malt aromas are appropriate. Low to medium-low malt aroma may be present. Classic “C hop” aroma--citrus, evergreen, pine--is acceptable, but is not common in these beers and should be secondary to more tropical or fruity hop character.
- **Flavor:** Hazy or Juicy Strong Pale ale has a pronounced hop aroma and flavor, but the hop bitterness should be moderate, especially compared to Hazy or Juicy IPA. Fruity and tropical hop flavor should be high. Fruity ester flavors are moderate to high. Low to Medium maltiness provides balance to the aromatic hop character.
- **Mouthfeel:** Soft mouthfeel that may be described as “creamy” or “silky”. A light hop-derived astringency is acceptable; however, this should never come across as harsh. Moderate to moderately high carbonation levels.

Color: Gold to Copper (5 – 16 SRM)

Bitterness: 20 – 45 IBUs

Alcohol: 5.5 – 6.5% ABV

Subcategory C: Hazy or Juicy India Pale Ale

- **Appearance:** Pale gold to pale amber/orange. A hazy appearance is typical for this style, whether from suspended yeast, unconverted starch, chill haze or other sources. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Bright, fruity, “juicy” hop aroma is high to very high. Moderate to very strong fruity ester aromas are distinguishing traits of this beer style. The assertive hop aroma is characterized by fruity, tropical, bright and juicy characteristics using hops from a variety of origins. Aroma intensity should be high. Background malt aromas are appropriate. Mild grainy character or subtle yeastiness is okay. No diacetyl, DMS or autolysis. Classic “C hop” aroma--citrus, evergreen, pine--is acceptable, but is not common in these beers and should be secondary to more tropical or fruity hop character.
- **Flavor:** While this version of IPA has a pronounced hop aroma and flavor, the hop bitterness is moderate, especially compared to classic American IPA. Fruity and tropical hop flavor should be high. Malt flavor leans toward toasty base malt with bread-like flavors. These beers often use wheat or oats to assist in the development of malt/grain flavor and visual haziness. Fruity ester flavors are strong to very strong. Medium maltiness provides balance to the aromatic hop character. Moderate to well-attenuated residual extract leads to a characteristic softness in the finish which may or may not have evident bitterness.
- **Mouthfeel:** Soft, rounded mouthfeel can also be described as creamy. The use of high protein malts is common in these beers, giving them a medium-full to full mouthfeel even when malt flavor is subdued. Should not have a chalky or mineral-like character. A light hop-derived astringency is acceptable; however, this should never come across as harsh. Moderate to moderately high carbonation levels.

Color: Pale Gold to Pale Amber/Orange (3 – 10 SRM)

Bitterness: 45 – 80 IBUs

Alcohol: 6.0 – 7.5% ABV

Subcategory D: Hazy or Juicy Imperial or Double India Pale Ale

- **Appearance:** Straw to pale gold. Haze is low to very high, whether from suspended yeast, unconverted starch, chill haze or other sources. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Bright, fruity, “juicy” hop aroma and moderate to very strong fruity ester aromas are distinguishing traits of this beer style. The assertive hop aroma is characterized by fruity, tropical, bright and juicy characteristics using hops from a variety of origins. Hop aroma intensity should be high. Background malt aromas are low to high. Mild grainy character or subtle yeastiness is okay. No diacetyl, DMS or autolysis. Classic “C hop” aroma--citrus, evergreen, pine--is acceptable, but is not common in these beers and should be secondary to more tropical or fruity hop character.
- **Flavor:** While this version of IPA has a pronounced hop aroma and flavor, the hop bitterness is moderate, especially compared to classic American IPA. Fruity and tropical hop flavor should be high. Malt flavor leans toward toasty base malt with bread-like flavors. These beers often use wheat or oats to assist in the development of malt/grain flavor and visual haziness. Fruity ester flavors are strong to very strong. Medium maltiness provides balance to the aromatic hop character. Moderate to well-attenuated residual extract leads to a characteristic softness in the finish which may or may not have evident bitterness.
- **Mouthfeel:** Soft, rounded mouthfeel can also be described as creamy. The use of high protein malts is common in these beers, giving them a medium-full to full mouthfeel even when malt flavor is subdued. Should not have a chalky or mineral-like character. A light hop-derived astringency is acceptable; however, this should never come across as harsh. Moderate to moderately high carbonation levels.

Color: Straw to Pale Gold (4 – 9 SRM)

Bitterness: 65 – 100 IBUs

Alcohol: 7.5 – 11.0% ABV

Category 11: Amber Ales

Subcategory A: American-Style Amber Ale

- **Appearance:** Copper to medium brown. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Medium hop aroma is characterized by citrus, floral, resin, or sweet pine typically from American varietal hops. Caramel malt aromas should be evident as well. Fruity esters are moderate. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** American hops - citrus, floral, resin, or sweet pine - emerge in the bitterness, and flavor, particularly in the bitterness. Medium to high maltiness is evident with a distinct caramel character. Finish has a balance of hop bitterness and caramel character.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-bodied with moderate carbonation.

Color: Copper to Medium Brown (8 – 18 SRM)

Bitterness: 30 – 45 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.4 – 6.0% ABV

Subcategory B: Ordinary Bitter/ Best Bitter

- **Appearance:** Gold to medium amber for Ordinary and deep gold to medium amber for Best Bitter. Some chill haze is acceptable. Head formation may be small, head retention is fair.
- **Aroma:** Hop aroma may be evident. Malt aroma should be cracker-like or biscuit-like and may have caramel or toffee notes. Fruity ester character is medium. Diacetyl should be below or near threshold levels; no DMS.
- **Flavor:** Medium bitterness, and low to medium malt sweetness. Hop flavor and character may be evident. In traditional form, fruity ester character is acceptable, and it may exhibit notes of marmalade. Best Bitter has a more robust malt character than Ordinary Bitter, and usually higher hopping rates. The hops should exhibit classic English character; floral, earthy, herbal, fruity, and even spicy. **The brewer must indicate if the entry is an Ordinary or Best Bitter.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium body with mild carbonation.

Color: Gold to Medium Amber (Ordinary, 5 – 14 SRM), Deep Gold to Medium Amber (Best, 6 – 14 SRM)

Bitterness: 20 – 30 IBUs (Ordinary), 25 – 40 IBUs (Best)

Alcohol: 3.0 – 3.8% ABV (Ordinary), 4.1 – 4.8% ABV (Best)

Subcategory C: Strong Bitter ESB (Extra Special)

- **Appearance:** Deep gold to copper. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Hop aroma should be at moderate to high intensity. Malt aroma should be cracker-like or biscuit-like and may have caramel or toffee notes. Fruity ester character is moderate to moderately high. Diacetyl should be below or near threshold levels; no DMS.
- **Flavor:** Medium to strong hop qualities in aroma, flavor, and bitterness. More robust malt character than Special Bitter with moderate sweetness and caramel or toffee notes. Bitterness is medium to medium high. Fruity ester flavors are moderate to moderately high. In traditional form, it may exhibit notes of marmalade. The hops should exhibit classic English character; floral, earthy, herbal, fruity, and even spicy.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium body with mild carbonation.

Color: Deep Gold to Copper (8 – 14 SRM)

Bitterness: 35 – 55 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.8 – 5.8% ABV

Subcategory D: Scottish-Style Ale/Scottish-Style Export

- **Appearance:** Pale amber to brown. Chill haze is acceptable. Head formation may be small, head retention is fair.
- **Aroma:** Very low to negligible hop aroma. Malt aromas can have a toasty, biscuit-like, caramel or toffee character. Esters should be subdued. Diacetyl should be below or near threshold levels; no DMS. Hydrogen sulfide should be below or near threshold levels.
- **Flavor:** Malt flavor is biscuity, toasty and caramel-like. Hop bitterness is low and hop flavor is negligible. Fruity flavors are minimal. While there is no evidence that traditional Scottish Ales had any smoke character, modern market examples can exhibit some smoke or peat flavors and aromas, but these should be very subtle. **Beers with higher levels of smoke character should be entered in smoked beer categories.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Light body, low alcohol, moderate carbonation.

Color: Pale Amber to Brown (9 – 30 SRM)

Bitterness: 9 – 30 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.0 – 6.0% ABV

Subcategory E: Irish-Style Red Ale

- **Appearance:** Medium amber to amber brown in color. Chill haze is acceptable. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Hop aroma may be absent but may also range from low to moderate in intensity. Floral, herbal or noble hops are appropriate. Low to moderate levels of fruity esters are appropriate. Malt aroma should have toffee, caramel, and toasty notes. Diacetyl should be below or near threshold levels; no DMS.
- **Flavor:** Low to medium caramel sweetness with medium hop bitterness and flavor. They may have low to moderate levels of fruity ester flavor.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium body, moderate carbonation.

Color: Medium Amber to Amber Brown (10 – 19 SRM)

Bitterness: 20 – 30 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.0 – 5.5% ABV

Subcategory F: Altbier

- **Appearance:** Copper to medium brown. Bright without haze. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Fruity-esters are low to medium-low. Noble hops are characteristic, intensity ranges from low to high. Malt aromas of Pilsner, Vienna and/or Munich malts are appropriate. Slight caramel notes are also okay. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** This malty German-style ale can be hoppy and somewhat bittersweet. Noble hop character is well balanced with malt flavor. Malt character is toasty, with light caramel, nutty or cocoa notes. Although a malty beer, Alt should present a crisp, clean, snappy finish.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium bodied, well-carbonated.

Color: Copper to Medium Brown (10 – 20 SRM)

Bitterness: 25 – 45 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.8 – 5.5% ABV

Subcategory G: Double/Imperial Red Ale

- **Appearance:** Medium amber to dark copper. Chill haze allowable. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** An intense aroma balanced between American hop character and caramel malt is characteristic. Hop aromas can be citrusy, floral, resinous or piney. Esters are medium to high in intensity. Dark fruit aromas are not typical for this style, as this beer is intended to be served fresh. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** These are big examples of American Amber Ales with intense hop flavor and bitterness. Though the hop character is intense it's balanced with alcohol flavors, moderate to high fruity esters, and medium to high caramel malt character. Hops should not be harsh. Imperial Red Ales are differentiated from Imperial IPAs by caramel flavor and color. They are differentiated from Barley Wines by freshness; these beers do not have the products of oxidation from aging.
- **Mouthfeel:** Full-bodied. Alcohol content is very high and of notable character. Moderately carbonated.

Color: Medium Amber to Dark Copper (10 – 15 SRM)

Bitterness: 55 – 85 IBUs

Alcohol: 7.8 – 10.5% ABV

Category 12: Brown and Black Ales

Subcategory A: English-Style Mild Ale

- **Appearance:** Light amber to dark brown. Chill haze is allowable.
- **Aroma:** There is little to no hop aroma. Esters are moderate to moderately high for this low-strength ale. Malt aroma can have toasty, caramel or cocoa-like notes. No DMS, diacetyl should be below or near threshold levels.
- **Flavor:** Mild Ales are low alcohol beers designed to quench a thirst. The style is sweeter than other English ales with a flavor as malty as possible in a low alcohol beer. There is very little hop bitterness. Darker examples may have more malt complexity with notes of caramel, roast and licorice.
- **Mouthfeel:** The body is light to medium light; carbonation is mild to moderate.

Color: Light Amber to Dark Brown (15 – 35 SRM)

Bitterness: 10 – 24 IBUs

Alcohol: 3.2 – 4.5% ABV

Subcategory B: English-Style Brown Ale

- **Appearance:** Medium copper to medium brown with garnet highlights. Chill haze is allowable.
- **Aroma:** Low to very little hop aroma. Lack of hop aroma is okay. Malt aromas are caramel-like and cocoa-like. Fruity esters are appropriate. No DMS, diacetyl should be below or near threshold levels.
- **Flavor:** Ales in this category are sweeter and more full-bodied than Mild Ales and might be thought of as a Mild's big brother. The flavor presents with a hint of chocolate and low hops. The overall emphasis is on the malt with possible notes of roast and fruitiness.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-bodied, carbonation is mild to moderate.

Color: Medium Copper to Medium Brown (12 – 26 SRM)

Bitterness: 15 – 25 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.5 – 5.9% ABV

Subcategory C: American-Style Brown Ale

- **Appearance:** Deep copper to deep brown. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Moderately assertive hop aroma. A floral or sweet citrus hop character is typical. Malt nose of cocoa, caramel, and biscuit. Medium-low to medium fruity esters. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** This style, as compared to English Brown Ale has increased malt, alcohol, extract, and hop character. It is a balanced beer with moderately assertive hop bitterness. The flavor features cocoa, caramel, and may have low biscuit malt character married with a floral or sweet citrus hop flavor. Fruity ester characters should be subdued.
- **Mouthfeel:** The body is medium to medium full, typically well-carbonated.

Color: Deep Copper to Deep Brown (25 – 35 SRM)

Bitterness: 30 – 45 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.5 – 6.3% ABV

Subcategory D: Brown Porter

- **Appearance:** Medium brown to deep brown with reddish tones. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Fruity esters and low hop aroma are acceptable. Malt aromas are cocoa-like and caramel-like. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Malty with an emphasis on sweet caramel/toffee and chocolate-like character. Hops are low and restrained, just enough to balance the sweetness. No sharp roast or coffee notes should be apparent.
- **Mouthfeel:** Brown Porters are lighter than Robust Porters with low to medium body. Carbonation is moderate to well-carbonated.

Color: Medium to Deep Brown (30 – 45 SRM)

Bitterness: 20 – 30 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.4 – 5.9% ABV

Subcategory E: Robust Porter

- **Appearance:** Ruby brown to deep brown/black with red hues. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Coffee-like malt aroma. Cocoa- and caramel-like malt characters are also typical. Hop aroma ranges from low to medium high. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** A balanced beer with a dry, coffee-like malty flavor. Chocolate and black malts add bitterness without burnt malt or charcoal notes. Cocoa and caramel-like flavors are typical but with more balancing hop character than in Brown Porter. Hop flavor ranges from medium-low to medium-high. Fruity esters may be evident, balanced with roast malt and hop bitterness.
- **Mouthfeel:** This style has medium to full body. Carbonation is moderate to well-carbonated.

Color: Ruby Brown to Deep Brown (24 – 40 SRM)

Bitterness: 30 – 45 IBUs

Alcohol: 5.0 – 6.5% ABV

Subcategory F: Cascadian Style Dark Ale /American Black Ale

- **Appearance:** Deep brown to black. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Pronounced hop aroma ranges from medium-high to high in intensity, and can exhibit hop character that is floral, herbal, earthy, spicy, resinous, but most commonly citrusy. Fruity esters are part of the aroma profile and should blend with the hop character. A subtle to moderate cocoa-like roastiness is often part of the aroma profile, but no roast aroma is also okay.
- **Flavor:** A hop forward beer with a pronounced hop flavor and bitterness. Malt character is lighter than the color would suggest, often with cocoa-like notes but no heavy caramel or roast character. Bitterness is assertive, ranging from medium-high to very high. Overall, the flavor should be reminiscent of IPA with more malt complexity.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium body in keeping with the evolution of this style as an IPA with color malts added. Alcoholic warmth in the finish is okay, but should not be a dominant character.

Color: Deep Brown to Black (30 – 40 SRM)

Bitterness: 50 – 70 IBUs

Alcohol: 6.0 – 7.5% ABV

Subcategory G: Dry Stout

- **Appearance:** Deep brown/garnet to opaque dark brown/black. Dry Stout characteristically has excellent foam stability.
- **Aroma:** There are no noticeable hop aromas. Esters are at a moderate level. Malt aromas are roasty, with cocoa, coffee and caramel notes. No DMS, diacetyl should be below or near threshold.
- **Flavor:** Sometimes called Irish Stout, dry stout is not a heavy beer; its distinguishing feature is the use of roasted barley for a slightly roasted coffee and light caramel flavor. Fruity esters are minimal. Diacetyl should be very low or not perceived. There are no noticeable hop flavors. Burnt-roast malt flavor characterizes the finish. Some slight, low, sour-lactic character is allowable at a background level.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium in body and alcohol. Carbonation is moderate.

Color: Deep Brown to Black (30 – 40 SRM)

Bitterness: 30 – 40 IBUs

Alcohol: 3.5 – 5.5% ABV

Subcategory H: Sweet Stout

- **Appearance:** Deep brown/garnet to opaque dark brown/black. Sweet stouts are sometimes a shade lighter in color than other stouts. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** There are no noticeable hop aromas. Malt aromas are of cocoa and caramel, without strong coffee-like or burnt notes. Moderate esters are typical. No DMS, diacetyl should be below or near threshold.
- **Flavor:** Also called Milk Stout, because it may be sweetened with lactose (milk sugar), Sweet Stout has a sweeter, more chocolate- or caramel-like flavor than Dry Stout. Hop bitterness is low.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium body, moderate carbonation.

Color: Deep Brown to Black (30 – 40 SRM)

Bitterness: 15 – 25 IBUs

Alcohol: 3.1 – 5.5% ABV

Subcategory I: Oatmeal Stout

- **Appearance:** Brown to opaque dark brown/black with garnet hues. Head retention is excellent.
- **Aroma:** There are no noticeable hop aromas. Malt aromas are of cocoa, caramel, coffee, and roast. Moderate ester profile. No DMS, diacetyl should be below or near threshold levels.
- **Flavor:** Oatmeal stouts are typically softer and sweeter than either Dry Stout or Foreign Stout, but will display similar malt and roast character. Hops provide balancing bitterness without adding much flavor.
- **Mouthfeel:** Silky/creamy Mouthfeel from the addition of oats to the grist. Some astringency from the use of oats may be present at low levels. Moderate carbonation.

Color: Brown to Black (20 – 40 SRM)

Bitterness: 20 – 40 IBUs

Alcohol: 3.8 – 6.5% ABV

Subcategory J: Foreign-Style Stout

- **Appearance:** Opaque black with brown/garnet highlights possible. Head retention is excellent.
- **Aroma:** Roasted malt aromas (cocoa, coffee, caramel) and fruity esters are appropriate but not hop aroma. No DMS, diacetyl should be below or near threshold.
- **Flavor:** This is a stronger version of Dry Stout with additional malt and hops. Foreign-Style stouts exhibit malt sweetness and caramel flavor with a distinctive dry-roasted bitterness in the finish with coffee-like roasted barley. Diacetyl should be negligible or not perceived but no diacetyl is preferred.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-full to full bodied. Moderate carbonation.

Color: Black (40 SRM)

Bitterness: 40 – 55 IBUs

Alcohol: 6.0 – 7.5% ABV

Subcategory K: American-Style Stout

- **Appearance:** Opaque black with brown/garnet highlights possible. Head retention is excellent.
- **Aroma:** Hop aroma may be moderate to high with American citrusy, floral and/or resinous hop character. Roasted malt aromas (cocoa, coffee, caramel) and fruity esters are appropriate in balance with hop character. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** This beer is a version of Foreign Stout with the same malt character, Mouthfeel and color, plus evident hop flavor, aroma and bitterness. Low to medium malt sweetness with a degree of caramel, chocolate and/or roasted coffee flavor with a roasted bitterness. Hop bitterness and flavor may be moderate to high with American citrusy, floral and/or resinous hop character. The bitterness profile overlaps with Foreign Stout and may be higher.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-full to full bodied. Moderate carbonation. Low levels of astringency are okay.

Color: Black (40 SRM)

Bitterness: 45 – 65 IBUs

Alcohol: 5.6 – 8.8% ABV

Subcategory L: Imperial Stout

- **Appearance:** Brown to black. Head retention can sometimes be compromised by the high alcohol content.
- **Aroma:** The aroma is balanced with assertive hopping and fruity esters. Hop aroma can be moderate to high, with floral, citrus or herbal characteristics. Malt aromas of coffee, dark chocolate and/or even slightly burnt/charred character are appropriate. No DMS, diacetyl below or near threshold levels.
- **Flavor:** Imperial Stout is differentiated from Foreign Stout by even higher levels of hops and alcohol than other styles. It can be extremely rich, with malty, currant-like or dark fruit flavor. Bitterness can be moderate to high, but balanced. Roasted malt astringency and bitterness can be moderate. Milder versions are ready to drink fresh and stronger versions benefit from maturation.
- **Mouthfeel:** Full-bodied, with medium-low to moderate carbonation

Color: Brown to Black (22 – 40 SRM)

Bitterness: 50 – 80 IBUs

Alcohol: 7.0 – 12.0% ABV

Category 13: Strong Ales

Subcategory A: Scotch Ale (Wee Heavy)

- **Appearance:** Deep copper to brown. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation is good, but retention is often compromised.
- **Aroma:** No noticeable hop aromas. Extremely malty aroma: toasty, biscuit-like, and complex, deep caramel characters. Esters are low to moderate for a beer of this strength due to yeast selection and low fermentation temperatures. Some subtle smoke or peat aromas are acceptable. Scotch Ales are often stored and present a range of attributes from aging: dark fruit, deep caramel, toffee or even molasses. No DMS, and diacetyl should be below or near threshold.
- **Flavor:** Scotch Ale is the strongest ale style to originate in Scotland and can be thought of as a Scottish equivalent to Barleywine. Scotch Ales are lightly hopped, with the emphasis on a very malty, caramel-like, full-bodied beer with a noticeable alcohol presence. Hop flavors should be low to none. While there is no evidence that traditional Scotch Ales had any smoke character, modern market examples can exhibit some smoke or peat flavors, but these should be very subtle. Higher smoke character beers should be entered in smoked beer. Aged examples will exhibit products of maturation; these should enhance the basic aroma and flavor profile of the beer. Oxidation that presents as papery, cardboard-like or otherwise unpleasant, is not appropriate.
- **Mouthfeel:** Full-bodied, with a silky, rounded texture. Moderate carbonation.

Color: Deep Copper to Brown (18 – 30 SRM)

Bitterness: 25 – 35 IBUs

Alcohol: 6.5 – 9.0% ABV

Subcategory B: English-Style Old Ale

- **Appearance:** Copper to medium brown. Chill haze is acceptable. Head formation is modest, and retention is often weak.
- **Aroma:** Well-aged malty, caramel aromas with positive aging and oxidation characters are typical and desirable, often with sherry- or port-like notes. Hop aroma is usually negligible as a result of prolonged aging. Aromas of dark or dried fruits are typical and appropriate: raisins, dates, figs, plums, prunes, etc. No DMS, and diacetyl should be below or near threshold.
- **Flavor:** Characteristics of this beer include a nutty quality and malty sweetness. They typically have a fruity nature. Hopping may be assertive, but the perceived bitterness is often masked by residual sugars and products of maturation. With oxidation it can take on a vinous, sherry, port-like character. Oak aged character is acceptable when subtle. **Higher levels of oak-aged character should be entered in the wood- and barrel-aged category.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium to full body. Alcohol is not as strong as Barley Wine. Mild to moderate carbonation.

Color: Copper to Medium Brown (10 – 26 SRM)

Bitterness: 30 – 50 IBUs

Alcohol: 7.0 – 9.5% ABV

Subcategory C: American-Style Strong Ale/American Barely Wine

- **Appearance:** Copper to brown. Chill haze is acceptable. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Hop aroma can be floral, citrusy, herbal, resinous, or piney at medium to very high levels. Noticeable fruity esters, caramel, toasted malts. No diacetyl or DMS. American strong ales differ from their English counterparts in the character and intensity of hop aromas.
- **Flavor:** Hopping is assertive, but the perceived bitterness may be tempered by residual sugars and/or intense malt flavor. Oxidation is not part of this style; these strong ales are meant to be served fresh. American strong ales have less complex malt character and more bitterness than English strong ales.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium to full body, alcohol warming may be evident. Moderate carbonation to well-carbonated.

Color: Copper to Medium Brown (10 – 22 SRM)

Bitterness: 50 – 70 IBUs

Alcohol: 7.5 – 14.0% ABV

Subcategory D: English-Style Barley Wine

- **Appearance:** Tawny copper to dark brown. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation can be moderate to good, but retention is often compromised.
- **Aroma:** Hop aroma may be minimal to medium with evident ester and alcohol aroma. Hop aroma, if present, is typically floral, herbal, earthy or spicy. Citrusy, resinous or piney aromas are not characteristic. Malt aromas of caramel, toffee, toasted bread or biscuits are characteristic. Oxidation products of dark or dried fruit, molasses, brown sugar, toasted marshmallow is all appropriate. No DMS, diacetyl should be below or near threshold.
- **Flavor:** Barley Wines and "Strong" or "Old" ales share many common traits. They are both strong and full bodied and characterized by evident alcohol and high residual malty sweetness. They all have hops that diminish during cellaring (aging) and are therefore predominately malty in flavor. The flavor in Barley Wines is complex and can include qualities described anywhere from prunes, nutty, biscuit, to woody and dark fruit esters. Hop flavor may be minimal to medium. **Higher levels of barrel-aged character should be entered in the wood- and barrel-aged category.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Full bodied with evident alcohol warming. Mild to moderate carbonation.

Color: Tawny Copper to Dark Brown (12 – 30 SRM)

Bitterness: 35 – 55 IBUs

Alcohol: 9.0 – 13.5% ABV

Category 14: Continental-Style Wheat Ales

Subcategory A: Belgian-Style Wit (White)

- **Appearance:** Very pale straw to light yellow. These very pale beers are often bottle conditioned and served cloudy. A very thick, white head is characteristic.
- **Aroma:** Low to medium fruity ester level. Orange and coriander should be at subtle to moderate levels. Some mild phenolic character is okay, but if present, should be more of a cinnamon or nutmeg character than a clove-like or smoky character. Malt aroma is bready, wheat-like or even slightly grainy. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Belgian White Ales are brewed using un-malted wheat and malted barley and are lightly spiced with coriander and orange peel. The style is further characterized using noble-type hops to achieve a low to medium bitterness and hop flavor. Mild acidity is appropriate. Low levels of the appropriate phenolic character are acceptable.
- **Mouthfeel:** Low to medium body. This style should give the impression of a highly drinkable session beer. Highly carbonated.

Color: Pale Straw to Light Yellow (2 – 4 SRM)

Bitterness: 10 – 20 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.0 – 5.3% ABV

Subcategory B: Kristall Weizen

- **Appearance:** Kristall Weizen is a filtered version of Hefeweizen. Color ranges from straw to pale amber. Bright without haze. Head formation and retention is excellent.
- **Aroma:** Fruity and phenolic, with a clove-banana character. A bready/grainy malt aroma is typical. No diacetyl or DMS should be present.
- **Flavor:** Fruity and phenolic. The phenolic characteristics are often described as clove- or nutmeg-like and can be smoky or even vanilla-like. Low hop level, and hop bitterness is low.
- **Mouthfeel:** It lacks the full Mouthfeel of the Hefeweizen because the beer has been filtered, and yeast is not present. Well attenuated and very highly carbonated. Light to medium-bodied beer.

Color: Straw to Pale Amber (3 – 9 SRM)

Bitterness: 10 – 16 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.9 – 5.5% ABV

Subcategory C: Bavarian-Style Wheat Beer

- **Appearance:** Straw to gold. Unfiltered and uses a high percentage of wheat so it typically is hazy to very cloudy. Head formation and retention is excellent.
- **Aroma:** Clove-banana character. A bready/grainy malt aroma is typical. No diacetyl or DMS should be present.
- **Flavor:** The flavor of a Weissbier with yeast is decidedly fruity and phenolic. The phenolic characteristics are often described as clove- or nutmeg-like and can be smoky or even vanilla-like. These beers have a low hop level and therefore hop bitterness is low.
- **Mouthfeel:** Well attenuated and very highly carbonated. It is a light to medium-bodied beer. Weissbier is often served after rousing the yeast, so yeast bite, yeast astringency and some additional texture from the roused sediment can be part of the style
- **Note: Brewer may indicate on the bottle whether the yeast should be intentionally roused.**

Color: Straw to Gold (2 – 8 SRM)

Bitterness: 10 – 20 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.9 – 5.5% ABV

Subcategory D: Dunkelweizen/Weizen Bock

- **Appearance:** Dunkelweizen is copper to dark brown; weizen bocks are yellow to brown. May be bright or cloudy. Head formation and retention is good to excellent.
- **Aroma:** Notes of banana esters are common. Phenolic aromas of clove or nutmeg are typical and highly appropriate. A bready malt aroma is typical for Weizen Bock, with caramel, dark fruit and melanoidin highlights. Hopping rates and aroma are subdued and barely noticeable. Beady/grainy malt aroma is typical, with toasty, cocoa-like and caramel notes. No diacetyl or DMS should be present.
- **Flavor:** Malty sweet and full tasting, presents a cocoa-like and/or caramel flavor. Estery and phenolic elements of this beer should be evident. Weizen bock exhibits the same fruity, phenolic flavors associated with other Bavarian style wheat beers, but intensified due to higher extract and alcohol.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium to full bodied, well attenuated and very highly carbonated. Alcohol should be evident as a warming sensation for weizen bock.
- **Note:** Brewer should indicate whether the yeast should be intentionally roused. The brewer must note whether the entry is a Dunkelweizen or Weizen Bock.

Color: Copper to Dark Brown (Dunkel, 18 – 30 SRM), Yellow to Brown (Weizen Bock, 5 – 20 SRM)

Bitterness: 10 – 18 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.8 – 9.4% ABV

Category 15: Belgian- and French-Style Ales

Subcategory A: Belgian-Style Pale Ale

- **Appearance:** Yellow to medium amber. Chill or slight yeast haze is okay. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Malt aroma is low to medium-low. Fruity esters dominate the aroma, while hop character may or may not be evident. Even clove, nutmeg or cinnamon-like phenolics may or may not be evident in the overall balanced beer. Hop character is typically floral, herbal, earthy or spicy, reflecting most commonly noble or English hops. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Malt flavor is low to medium. Bitterness is medium low to medium high. Earthy character and phenolic character are both acceptable when in balance with the overall beer. They can be bottle-conditioned, and exhibit may some yeast character.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium in body with moderate to high carbonation.

Color: Yellow to Medium Amber (4 – 16 SRM)

Bitterness: 25 – 35 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.0 – 5.5% ABV

Subcategory B: Saison

- **Appearance:** Yellow to medium amber. Traditionally produced versions of this style are often bottle-conditioned. Chill or slight yeast haze is okay. Head formation and retention is excellent.
- **Aroma:** Malt aroma is low to medium-low. Fruity esters dominate the aroma, while hop character, complex alcohols, herbs, spices, and even clove and smoke-like phenolics may or may not be evident in the overall balanced beer. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Malt flavor is low but provides foundation for the overall balance. A certain amount of sour or acidic flavors is acceptable when in balance with other components. Earthy, cellar-like, musty aromas are acceptable. Traditional Saisons are lighter, lower alcohol beers but some markets have been increasing alcohol and all related characteristics. Diacetyl should not be perceived. They are often bottle-conditioned and exhibit some yeast character.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium in body with high to very high carbonation.

Color: Yellow to Medium Amber (4 – 16 SRM)

Bitterness: 20 – 30 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.0 – 7.0% ABV

Subcategory C: Bière de Garde

- **Appearance:** Gold to light brown. Chill haze is okay. Traditionally produced versions of this style are often bottle-conditioned. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** A biscuity, toasted malt aroma should be the most prominent aroma character, with low to medium hop aromas that are herbal, earthy or noble type in character. Fruity esters can be low to medium in intensity. Belgium-style phenolics may be present but should be very low. Earthy, cellar-like musty aromas are acceptable and often included. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Slight malt sweetness, and medium hop bitterness. Malt character should be toasty, biscuit-like or cracker-like. Low caramel character is okay but optional. Noble-type hop, herbal or earthy flavors should be low to medium. Flavor of alcohol is evident. These beers are often bottle-conditioned and exhibit some yeast character.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium body. Often highly carbonated.

Color: Gold to Light Brown (8 – 12 SRM)

Bitterness: 20 – 30 IBUs

Alcohol: 5.0 – 7.9% ABV

Subcategory D: Dubbel

- **Appearance:** Dark amber to deep brown. Head is dense and retention is good. Chill haze is acceptable.
- **Aroma:** Nutty, chocolate-like, caramel and roast malt aroma. A faint hop aroma is acceptable. Fruity esters (especially banana) are appropriate. No DMS, diacetyl should be below or near threshold.
- **Flavor:** Characterized by low bitterness, no hop flavor and a malty sweetness. Malt flavor should follow malt aroma: nutty, cocoa-like, caramel and soft roast character.
- **Mouthfeel:** This medium- to full-bodied beer is well carbonated to highly carbonated.

Color: Dark Amber to Deep Brown (18 – 35 SRM)

Bitterness: 18 – 25 IBUs

Alcohol: 6.0 – 7.5% ABV

Subcategory E: Tripel

- **Appearance:** Color is yellow to amber. Head retention is good. Chill haze is acceptable.
- **Aroma:** Complex, fruity, malty aroma with spicy, phenolic notes. No DMS, diacetyl below or near threshold levels.
- **Flavor:** Often characterized by a complex, fruity, flavor with spicy, phenolic notes with a neutral hop/malt balance. Can be sweet. There should be no roasted or dark malts. Low hop flavor is okay. Tripel often exhibits notes of allspice, nutmeg, and cinnamon. Tripel can be peppery.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium bodied and well carbonated. Alcohol strength and flavor should be evident.

Color: Yellow to Amber (5 – 10 SRM)

Bitterness: 20 – 25 IBUs

Alcohol: 7.0 – 10.0% ABV

Subcategory F: Belgian-Style Pale (Golden) Strong Ale

- **Appearance:** Color is yellow to golden. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Belgian yeast-generated fruity, phenol/spicy, and/or earthy aromas. A subtle light or pale malt character is appropriate. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Hop bitterness, flavor and aroma is low to medium. Grain bills of these beers are often augmented with brewing sugars, and they are well attenuated. The intensity of malt character should be low to medium, often along with a complex fruitiness. Belgian yeast-generated fruity, phenol/spicy, and/or earthy flavors are present. Herbs and spices are sometimes used to flavor these strong ales but should be subtle and in balance with the other elements of the beer. Background yeast acidity is okay when in balance with other elements.
- **Mouthfeel:** Relatively light body for a beer of its alcoholic strength. Often bottle-conditioned and highly carbonated.

Color: Yellow to Gold (3 – 7 SRM)

Bitterness: 20 – 30 IBUs

Alcohol: 7.0 – 11.0% ABV

Subcategory G: Belgian-Style Dark Strong Ale

- **Appearance:** Color is amber to dark brown. Chill haze is allowable. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Belgian yeast-generated fruity, phenol/spicy, and/or earthy aromas. Fruity aromas are characteristic. Rich caramel and soft roasted malt character is appropriate. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** Hop bitterness, flavor and aroma is low to medium. Grain bills of these beers are often augmented with brewing sugars, and they are well attenuated. The intensity of malt character can be rich, creamy, and sweet with intensities ranging from medium to high. Belgian yeast-generated fruity, phenol/spicy, and/or earthy flavors are present. Herbs and spices are sometimes used to flavor these strong ales but should be subtle and in balance with the other elements of the beer. Background yeast acidity is okay when in balance with other elements.
- **Mouthfeel:** Well attenuated, ranging from medium to full-bodied. Often bottle-conditioned and highly carbonated.
- **Note:** Beers marketed as “quadruple” can be appropriately entered into this category.

Color: Amber to Dark Brown (9 – 35 SRM)

Bitterness: 20 – 30 IBUs

Alcohol: 7.0 – 11.0% ABV

Subcategory H: Hoppy Belgian Ales

- **Appearance:** Varies with underlying classic Belgian ale style.
- **Aroma:** Aroma should match the underlying base Belgian ale style, with an elevated hop character representative of the hop varietal utilized. Note that hop aroma does not need to be ‘high,’ it just needs to be ‘higher than’ normal for the underlying style.
- **Flavor:** Flavor should match the underlying base Belgian ale style, with an elevated hop character representative of the hop varietal utilized. Note that hop flavor does not need to be ‘high,’ it just needs to be ‘higher than’ normal for the underlying style.
- **Mouthfeel:** Matches underlying base style.
- **Note:** Brewers must specify the base style and hop varieties used. Entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging.

Color: Variable according to base beer style

Bitterness: Variable according to base beer style

Alcohol: Variable according to base beer style

Subcategory I: Other Belgian-Style Ales

Belgium is home to countless unique, idiosyncratic and fascinating beers as a result, Belgian beers often do not fit into general style categories. This category is for unique interpretations of existing classic styles or for historical, rare Belgian styles that don’t have a designated category. Recognizing this fact, this category exists for beers which follow or are inspired by various Belgian traditions, but do not fit into other existing style categories. Examples of **acceptable** beers for this category are Patersbier/Abbey Single, Imperial Wit, Table Bier, Grisette, Dark/Autumn Saison. Examples of beers **not acceptable** in this category are fruited versions of classic Belgian styles (fruit beers), Saisons with Brett (Brett beers), wood-aged Saisons (wood-aged beers or wood-aged sours), rye Bière de Garde (Bière de Garde).

To allow for accurate evaluation by the judge panel, brewers must provide information and context about the entry, such as what unique regional or historical traditions provide inspiration, what classic Belgian style serves as a starting point, or what unique interpretation of an established Belgian style makes an entry suitable for this category.

- **Appearance:** Varies with style.
- **Aroma:** Varies with style.
- **Flavor:** Varies with style.
- **Mouthfeel:** Varies with style.

Color: variable according to base beer style

Bitterness: variable according to base beer style

Alcohol: variable according to base beer style

Category 16: Sour Ales

Subcategory A: Classic Berliner Weisse and Classic Gose

- **Appearance:** Color is pale straw to pale amber. These beers may be hazy. Head formation is initially very good, but stability and retention are usually poor.
- **Aroma:** Sour or tart aromas are typical and should be lactic (not citric or acetic) in character. Low to no malt character that may have bready, yeasty or unbaked sourdough bread like character. No noticeable hop character. Light to medium fruity ester aromas of pear, apple or other pomme fruits can bring a sense of low sourness. Low to medium coriander or lemon character is acceptable in Gose entries. Horsey, leathery or earthy aromas contributed by *Brettanomyces* may be evident in very low levels but *Brettanomyces* character is not required. No diacetyl or DMS should be present.
- **Flavor:** Low to medium-high sourness without being overbearing and the acidity should be lactic (not acetic, malic, citric, etc.) in character. Pomme fruit character follows aroma with a light to moderate presence. Low notes of lemon, or grapefruit. Light to medium salt character should be noticeable but not overtly salty. No hop flavor. Low to no hop bitterness. Malt flavors will appear light and be bready or doughy. Low to medium coriander character may be present in Gose entries. Acidity should be refreshing and not harsh.
- **Mouthfeel:** Berliner Weisse will be very light-bodied; Gose ranges from very light to medium bodied and may be perceived as fuller-bodied due to the presence of salt. Effervescent with high carbonation. A slightly tingly, mouth-watering quality may be perceived from the salt in Gose entries. A full, dextrinous finish is inappropriate.

Note: Brewers must indicate whether the beer they are entering is a Berliner Weisse or a Gose.

Color: Pale Straw to Pale Amber (2 – 9 SRM)

Bitterness: 5 – 15 IBUs

Alcohol: 2.5 – 5.4% ABV

Subcategory B: Specialty Berliner Weisse and Specialty Gose

- **Appearance:** Color is pale straw to pale amber and may be tinted to mimic the fruit or adjuncts used. The Berliner Weisse entries are lighter in color. A very thick, white head is characteristic. These beers may be hazy.
- **Aroma:** Low to no malt character. No noticeable hop aroma. Light to medium fruity ester aromas of pear, apple or other pome fruits can bring a sense of low sourness. Low to no coriander or lemon are also acceptable. Horsey, leathery or earthy aromas contributed by *Brettanomyces* may be evident in very low levels in Gose entries. No diacetyl or DMS should be present. Added spices, fruits, or other brewer listed ingredients must be evident.
- **Flavor:** Low to medium-high sourness without being overbearing. Pomme fruit character follows aroma with a light to moderate presence. Light to medium salt character that should be noticeable but not overtly salty in Gose entries. No hop flavor. Low to no hop bitterness. Malt flavors are light to medium. Added spices, fruits, or other brewer listed ingredients must be evident.
- **Mouthfeel:** Very-light to medium-full body. Effervescent. A slightly tingly, mouthwatering quality may be perceived from the salt in Gose entries. A full, dextrinous finish is inappropriate.

Note: The brewer must list fruits and any specialty adjuncts used in the beer. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.

Color: Pale Straw to Pale Amber (2 – 9 SRM)

Bitterness: 3 – 15 IBUs

Alcohol: 2.5 – 5.4% ABV

Subcategory C: Flanders-Style Red or Brown Ale

- **Appearance:** Color is medium amber to copper brown. Chill haze is acceptable. When bottle-conditioned, may appear cloudy when served.
- **Aroma:** Lactic and/or acetic aromas are appropriate, as well as low to moderate roasted malt character in Flanders Browns, or low to moderate caramel character for Flanders Reds. Fruity ester character is appropriate for both styles. No hop aroma. No DMS, and diacetyl should be below or near threshold levels.
- **Flavor:** A fruity estery ale character is apparent with slight to strong lactic sourness and spiciness. No hop flavors. They have low to medium bitterness. Roasted malt character in flavor is acceptable at low levels for Flanders Browns, or caramel character for Flanders Reds. Oak-like or woody characters may be pleasantly integrated into overall palate. Very small quantities of diacetyl are acceptable, but no diacetyl is preferred.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium bodied. Some versions may be more highly carbonated.

Color: Medium Amber to Copper Brown (12 – 18 SRM)

Bitterness: 15 – 25 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.8 – 5.5% ABV

Subcategory D: Lambic, Fruit Lambic and Gueuze Lambic

- **Appearance:** Young or straight Lambic is straw to medium amber and may be tinted with a fruit color. Gueuze Lambic is typically a bit darker due to oxidation and may be yellow to copper. Cloudiness is acceptable.
- **Aroma:** Intensely estery, wild, barnyard-like aroma profile typical of a spontaneous fermentation. If fruit is added, it should exhibit notes of the fruit. Traditional hop aroma is not present; however, a slight cheesiness or floral-like aroma from the use of aged hops is often present and acceptable.
- **Flavor:** Traditionally, Lambics and Gueuze are spontaneously fermented. They express high to very high levels of fruity esters as well as bacteria and yeast-derived sourness. Characteristic horsey, goaty, leathery and phenolic aromas and flavors derived from *Brettanomyces* yeast are often present at moderate levels. High to very high fruity-estery aromas are present, as are sour and acidic aromas and flavors. Carbonation can range from very low to high. Vanillin and other wood-derived flavors should not be evident. Diacetyl character should be absent. In fruited versions, fruit sourness may also be an important part of the profile. Historically, traditional Lambics are dry and completely attenuated, exhibiting no residual sweetness either from malt, sugar, fruit or other sweeteners. Some versions often have a degree of sweetness contributed by fruit sugars, other sugars or other sweeteners. Gueuze Lambics is a blend of old and young Lambic and always bottle conditioned. Traditionally, Lambic is brewed with unmalted wheat, malted barley, and stale, aged hops.
- **Mouthfeel:** Quite dry and light bodied. Straight or young Lambic will be low in carbonation. Gueuze is traditionally bottle conditioned and will be highly effervescent and dry.

Note: Brewers must note whether their entry is to be classified as a Lambic, Gueuze or Fruit Lambic. Fruited versions should specify the fruit used. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.

Color: Straw to Medium Amber (6 – 13 SRM)

Bitterness: 10 – 25 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.8 – 6.3% ABV

Subcategory E: Traditional Beers with Brettanomyces

- **Appearance:** Color ranges from light to dark. May be hazy or bright. Beer color may be influenced by the color of added fruits or other ingredients. Chill haze, bacterial haze, and yeast-induced haze are allowable at any level.
- **Aroma:** Phenolic, horsey, leathery, barnyard-like, feral, and fruity/tropical aromas from *Brettanomyces* are appropriate. Fruity ester character is appropriate at moderate to high levels. Hop aroma can range from low to high. No diacetyl or DMS. Malt aroma is typically low but may be evident in darker versions.
- **Flavor:** “Funky” notes of *Brettanomyces* should be present and forward, including barnyard-like, feral compounds, phenols, and esters derived from fatty acids. Moderate to intense fruity-estery aromas and flavors should be evident. *Brettanomyces* character may be dominant and should be expressed as horsey, goaty, leathery, phenolic, fruity and/or acidic aromas and flavors. Bitterness may range from low to high. Beers in this category may be slightly acidic; however, they should be more Brett-forward than sour. Strong sulfur compounds, including DMS, should not be present, nor should heavy chlorophenols (band aid), THP (corn nut, mousey, Cheerios), nor undesirable, “sick” acidic notes from fatty acids or *Pediococcus*.
- **Mouthfeel:** Body may range from low to high. Typically, these beers finish very dry. Carbonation levels vary from low to high, depending on the results desired by the brewer.

Note: This category is for beers fermented with *Brettanomyces* that do not have wood-derived flavors. The brewer may identify a classic base style or may state “No Classic Style”. *The brewer should list any fruits or specialty ingredients for the beer to be judged properly.* Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.

Color: Variable according to base beer style

Bitterness: Variable according to base beer style

Alcohol: Variable according to base beer style

Subcategory F: American Sour Ale

- **Appearance:** Variable depending on underlying beer style. Chill haze, bacteria haze, and yeast haze is acceptable
- **Aroma:** Malt and hop aromas are generally low; however, this may vary depending on the base style of beer. Moderate to high fruity esters and flavors are evident, as are sour and acidic aromas. Fruited versions will reflect aromas of the fruit that has been used. Diacetyl, DMS, Wood, and *Brettanomyces* should not be perceived
- **Flavor:** Clean, lactic-derived acidity is the hallmark flavor of most beers in this style. Malt and hop flavor may range from low to high depending on the base beer. Perceived bitterness may range from low to high. Diacetyl, DMS, Wood, and *Brettanomyces* should not be perceived. Beers entered in this category should demonstrate a substantial level of acidity/sourness. While “substantial” or “dominant” acidity is an important feature of the beers in this category, winning examples will harmoniously balance acidity against other elements of the beer, and the ultimate goal is a refreshing, balanced and innovative sour beer. A wide range of acids may contribute to the overall character of this beer, including lactic, acetic, citric, malic, tartaric, and organic fatty acids. Enteric (fecal), butyric (vomit), or isovaleric (cheesy, rubbery) character is not appropriate as they are widely considered flaws. If present, acetic character is balanced and sweet rather than harsh or sharp. Moderate to intense, yet balanced, fruity-estery flavors should be evident. Wood vessels may be used during the fermentation and aging process, but wood-derived flavors such as vanillin should not be present. Fruited versions will exhibit fruitiness in harmony with malt, hop, acidity and other characteristics of fermentation.
- **Mouthfeel:** Body may range from low to high. Typically, these beers finish dry, but some lasting sweetness may be evident.

Note: This category is for sour beers that have been brewed without *Brettanomyces* AND without wood-derived flavors from barrel aging. The brewer may identify a classic base style or may state “No Classic Style.” Many breweries enter their kettle soured beers as American Sour Beers.

Beers made with fruits, spices, or other specialty ingredients may be entered into this category.

Color: Variable according to base beer style

Bitterness: Variable according to base beer style

Alcohol: Variable according to base beer style

Subcategory G: Mixed-Culture and Wild Beers

- **Appearance:** Color ranges from light to dark according to the base beer style. May be hazy or bright. Chill haze, bacterial haze, and yeast-induced haze are allowable at any level.
- **Aroma:** A wide range of aromas is to be expected and accepted in this category. Tart, acidic character from bacteria such as *Lactobacillus* and *Pediococcus* may be evident. Phenolic, horsey, leathery, barnyard-like, and tropical aromas from *Brettanomyces* are appropriate. Fruity ester character is appropriate at moderate to high levels. Hop aroma can range from low to high. Aromas from used spirit and/or wine barrels are present, as are many aromas from the use of neutral or new oak. No diacetyl or DMS. Malt aroma is typically low but may be evident in darker versions.
- **Flavor:** A wide range of complex flavors that may include tart, acidic flavors from lactic acid producing bacteria and/or phenolic, acidic, and fruity/fatty estery notes from *Brettanomyces*. The intensity of the acidic or “wild” character may vary from moderate to intense. Wood-derived flavors such as vanillin, or other wood flavors may be appropriate. Flavors derived from liquids previously held in wood vessels (wine, rum, whiskey, sherry, gin, etc.) may also be present and contribute to the overall flavor and complexity of the beer. Bitterness may range from low to high. Strong sulfur compounds, including DMS, should not be present, nor should unpleasant chlorophenols (band aid), THP (corn nut, mousey, Cheerios), or undesirable, “sick” acidic notes from fatty acids or *Pediococcus*.
- **Mouthfeel:** Varies with base beer. Carbonation may vary from still to very high.

Note: This category includes any beer that has a substantial acidic or wild yeast character or BOTH. Barrel character can present as aromas and flavors from the previous contents of the barrel as well as aromas and flavors from the oak or other wood itself, whether new or charred, toasted or neutral. Used spirit and/or wine and other barrels are often used, imparting complexity and uniqueness to a beer. Beers made with spices, or specialty ingredients other than may be entered into this category. Fruited versions should be entered in Subcategory H. The brewer may identify a classic base style or may state "No Classic Style". For more accurate evaluation by the judge panel, and the brewer should list specialty ingredients for the beer to be judged properly. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.

Color: Variable according to base beer style

Bitterness: Variable according to base beer style

Alcohol: Variable according to base beer style

Subcategory H: Mixed-Culture and Wild Fruit Beers

- **Appearance:** Color ranges from light to dark according to the base beer style. May be hazy or bright. Beer color may be influenced by the color of added fruits or other ingredients. Chill haze, bacterial haze, and yeast-induced haze are allowable at any level.
- **Aroma:** Tart, evident acidity and sourness from bacteria such as *Lactobacillus* and *Pediococcus* is featured. Phenolic, horsey, leathery, barnyard-like, and tropical aromas from *Brettanomyces* are appropriate. Fruity ester character is appropriate at moderate to high levels. Hop aroma can range from low to high. No diacetyl or DMS. Malt aroma is typically low but may be evident in darker versions.
- **Flavor:** Tart, acidic flavors from lactic acid producing bacteria and phenolic, acidic, and/or fruity/fatty estery notes from *Brettanomyces* form the primary flavor elements. The sourness can be the result of many different microorganisms, raw materials, or brewing processes, either used individually or in concert with each other. *Brettanomyces* character should be present and expressed as horsey, goaty, leathery, phenolic, fruity and/or acidic aromas and flavors. Bitterness may range from low to high. Cultured yeast may be used in the fermentation. Bacteria should be incorporated and in evidence. Bacteria will contribute acidity which may or may not dominate the flavor profile. The overall goal is to produce a beer with a balanced, complex sour/tart character that is harmonious with the malt and hops of the base beer, as well as any other flavor components. Fruit flavors should be evident. **The brewer must provide information on the added fruit. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.** Strong sulfur compounds, including DMS, should not be present, nor should unpleasant chlorophenols (band aid), THP (corn nut, mousey, Cheerios), or undesirable, “sick” acidic notes from fatty acids or *Pediococcus*.
- **Mouthfeel:** Often light to medium-bodied, typically very well attenuated from yeast, wild yeast and bacterial fermentation. Carbonation levels vary from low to high, depending on the results desired by the brewer.

Note: This category is for beers that have both high acidity AND evident *Brettanomyces* with fruit character. Beers made with fruits, spices, or other specialty ingredients may be entered into this category. This category encompasses a wide range of beers that have notable “wild” yeast character from the use of non-*Saccharomyces* yeast and bacteria. Beers in this category may be brewed with traditional mixed culture fermentations, spontaneous fermentations, or blending. Fruited versions will exhibit fruit flavors in balance with other elements. Wood vessels may be used for fermentation and aging. The brewer may identify a classic base style or may state “No Classic Style”. For more accurate evaluation by the judge panel, and the brewer should list any fruits or specialty ingredients for the beer to be judged properly. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.

Color: Variable according to base beer style

Bitterness: Variable according to base beer style

Alcohol: Variable according to base beer style

Subcategory I: Oenobeer (Wine-Beer Hybrid)

Oenbeer is a grape-forward beer that shows a balance between wine and beer influences. Oenobeers are made from co-fermentations of traditional wort and up to 49.9% grape juice. These beers may range from very dry to semi-sweet, evidencing the range of residual sugars one finds across styles of wine.

- **Appearance:** Color ranges from straw to black and may take on the hues and color from the grapes used.
- **Aroma:** Strong vinous, wine-like aromas are typical. Malt and hops are absent to very low. Grape-derived aromas and complex fermentation attributes, including a wide range of fruity esters and alcohols should be evident. Brettanomyces, wood-derived notes, and acidic aromas may all be present, but they are not required.
- **Flavor:** Grape flavor is high and should be typical of the underlying wine grapes used. The overall flavor blurs the line between wine and beer, combining the fruit intensity and alcohol of wine with carbonation and mild malt artifacts. Brettanomyces and wood-derived flavors may be present but are not required. Acidity may be present in the form of a lactic fermentation, but more often, the acidity is driven by the fruit itself. Bitterness is absent to low. Hop and malt flavor are absent to very low.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to full depending on the wood treatment, type of grapes used, and residual sweetness. Tannins from oak or grape skins may provide some structure to the finish. Carbonation may vary from very low to very high.

Note: The brewer must identify the grape varieties used as well as other information about the brewing and cellaring of the beer. Beers lacking this information will be at a disadvantage during judging.

Color: Variable

Bitterness: 0 – 20 IBUs

Alcohol: Greater than 5% ABV

Hybrid Beer Styles

Category 17: Hybrid Beers

Subcategory A: Rye Beers

Brewers must specify the base beer style; entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging.

- **Appearance:** Color is variable. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Aroma should be characteristic of the base beer style. Spicy character may be noticeable; toffee, caramel, or biscuit-like aromas with low fruity esters are acceptable with the use of rye.
- **Flavor:** Flavor should be characteristic of the base beer style. These beers should be brewed with perceptible levels of rye malt. Phenols may be present, and some astringency is acceptable in darker versions but is well balanced.
- **Mouthfeel:** Mouthfeel should be characteristic of the base beer style, and some mild astringency is acceptable in darker versions. Yeast body and Mouthfeel should be evident if served with yeast.

The brewer should indicate that it is an example with yeast and if it should be roused when served.

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Subcategory B: Session Beer

A Session Beer is any style of traditional ale or lager that is below 5% ABV AND brewed to a lower ABV than normal for that style (some traditional styles may be <5% ABV; a session interpretation should have a reduced ABV as compared to the traditional style). **Session IPAs should not be entered here; they have their own subcategory (9A). To allow for accurate evaluation by the judge panel, brewers must provide information about the base beer style. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.**

- **Appearance:** Color is of the base beer style. May be bright to hazy also depending on the base style. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** Aroma is characteristic of the base beer style but at lower levels.
- **Flavor:** The style is characterized by a lower alcohol and milder flavor profile of a classic beer style either ale or lager. Mild flavors and drinkability should be paramount.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium bodied and refreshing.

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: 5% ABV or less

Subcategory C: Fresh Hop Beers

Typically brewed immediately after the hop harvest, these beers showcase the use of fresh hops. Hops used for brewing include “green” or “wet” hops directly off the bine, or freshly kilned hops prior to packaging. These beers are often intended to be consumed within a short timeframe after brewing to maximize fresh hop character; aroma and flavor of the beer often changes upon aging. **To allow for accurate evaluation by the judge panel, brewers must provide information about the base beer style and hop varieties used. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.**

- **Appearance:** Color as appropriate to base beer style. Clear or hazy beer is acceptable.
- **Aroma:** Appropriate to the base style. Grassy, hay-like, or vegetal aromas may be present from the use of fresh hops but should not be overpowering. Cheesy or paper-like oxidation aromas are not appropriate.
- **Flavor:** The characteristics of the base beer style should be evident. Grassy, hay-like, or vegetal flavors may be present from the use of fresh hops but should not be overpowering. Perceived bitterness may be characterized as softer, well-rounded, or more mellow than a traditional hopped beer.
- **Mouthfeel:** Appropriate to the base style.

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Subcategory D: Strong Beers

- **Appearance:** Color is of the base beer style. May be bright to hazy also depending on the base style.
- **Aroma:** Aroma is characteristic of the base beer style.
- **Flavor:** Any style of traditional ale or lager brewed to a strength above the normal range for that style should be entered here. Flavor is characteristic of the base beer style as is the aroma of both malt and hops. The style is characterized by a higher alcohol content balance with the base beer style. Bitterness is variable with the base beer style. **To allow for accurate evaluation by the judge panel, brewers must provide information about the base beer style. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition**
- **Mouthfeel:** Varies with underlying style.

Color: Variable according to base beer style

Bitterness: Variable according to base beer style

Alcohol: Variable according to base beer style

Subcategory E: Specialty, Historical and Experimental Beers

This category includes beers that may **not be covered by another category**. These beers may be a lager, ale or other beer that is primarily grain-based and **may use special brewing techniques and/or ingredients**. These beers may be based on a traditional or historical beer style. **Entries must state the primary ingredients, for example, "Millet and Prickly Pear Beer" or "Watermelon, Garlic Infused, Rauch Beer", etc. and identify these beers as either loose or close interpretations of an accepted style. Any special or unusual brewing techniques should be listed to aid in the evaluation of the entry.** The special ingredients should be featured in the character of the beer. The discrepancy with the traditional style description should be listed if applicable. **Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.**

Category 18: Smoke- and Wood Flavored Beers

Subcategory A: Bamberg-Style Rauchbier

- **Appearance:** Color is pale gold to medium amber. Bright without haze. Head formation and retention is good.
- **Aroma:** The aroma should strike a balance between malt, hop, and smoke. Malt character is sweet and toasty. No fruity esters, diacetyl or DMS.
- **Flavor:** German Style Rauchbier should have smoky characteristics ranging from low to high. Smoke character is not harsh or phenolic, but smooth, with a mild sweetness. Malt flavor should be toasty with mild caramel notes, similar to Vienna or Märzen/Okttoberfest Lagers.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium body. Well-carbonated.

Color: Pale Gold to Medium Amber (4 – 14 SRM)

Bitterness: 20 – 30 IBUs

Alcohol: 4.5 – 6.3% ABV

Subcategory B: Smoke-Flavored Beer

- **Appearance:** Color as appropriate to base beer style. Clear or hazy beer is acceptable in appearance. Head formation and retention as appropriate to base beer style.
- **Aroma:** Appropriate to the base style with smoke character.
- **Flavor:** Any style of beer can be smoked; the goal is to reach a balance between the style's character and the smoky properties. The level of smoke will vary with base style, and lighter versions should not be penalized for being 'less smoky' than bigger, richer beers. **The brewer must list the traditional or experimental style of the base beer as well as the wood, malt, or grain type used as a smoke source (e.g. "alder smoked dry stout"). Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Appropriate to the base style.

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Subcategory C: Barrel-Aged Beer

- **Appearance:** Color as appropriate to base beer style. Clear or hazy beer is acceptable. Head formation and retention as appropriate to base beer style.
- **Aroma:** Appropriate to the base style with added aromas from the type of wood or barrel used, **OR** the previous contents of the barrel.
- **Flavor:** Barrel-aged beer, whether a traditional or experimental style, or a hybrid or blend of styles, has been aged for a period in a wooden barrel or in contact with wood. This beer is aged to impart the character of the wood and/or what has previously been in the wood. New wood is often characterized as a blend of vanilla and wood character. Used sherry, bourbon, scotch, port, wine and other barrels are often used, imparting those flavors to the beer. **The brewer must list the type of wood used (new or old, oak or other wood type), type of barrel used (new, port/ whiskey/ wine/ sherry/ other), and base beer style. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Appropriate to the base beer style.

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: 5.0 – 8.5% ABV

Subcategory D: Barrel-Aged Strong Beer

- **Appearance:** Color as appropriate to base beer style. Clear or hazy beer is acceptable. Head formation and retention is often compromised by high alcohol levels.
- **Aroma:** Appropriate to the base style with added aromas from the type of wood or barrel used, or the previous contents of the barrel.
- **Flavor:** Barrel-Aged Strong Beer can be either a traditional style or experimental style, or a hybrid or blend of styles, and has been aged for a period of time in a wooden barrel or in contact with wood. This beer is aged to impart the character of the wood and/or what has previously been in the wood. New wood is often characterized as a blend of vanilla and wood character. Used sherry, bourbon, scotch, port, wine and other barrels are often used, imparting those flavors to the beer. **The brewer must list the type of wood used (new or old, oak or other wood type), type of barrel used (new, port/ whiskey/ wine/ sherry/ other), base beer style or achieved character.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Appropriate to the base style.

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: 8.5 – 14+% ABV

Subcategory E: Barrel-Aged Strong Stout

- **Appearance:** Color ranges from brown to black. Head retention can sometimes be compromised by the high alcohol content.
- **Aroma:** Malt aromas of coffee, blackstrap molasses, dark chocolate and/or even slightly burnt/charred character are appropriate. Added aromas from the type of wood or barrel used, or the previous contents of the barrel.
- **Flavor:** Barrel-Aged Strong Stouts are complex high alcohol content beverages and have a deep range of flavors from the use of roasted grains, specialty adjuncts, and barrel aging or contact with wood. They can be extremely rich, with malty, currant-like or dark fruit flavor. Bitterness can be moderate to high, but should be balanced. Roasted malt astringency and bitterness can be moderate. Residual sweetness is appropriate, but should be balanced and not cloying. Complex oxidation character such as sherry, port, or vinous flavors are also appropriate. This beer is aged to impart the character of the wood and/or what has previously been in the wood. New wood is often characterized as a blend of vanilla, caramel, toffee, and wood character. Used sherry, bourbon, scotch, port, wine and other barrels are often used, imparting those flavors to the beer. **The brewer must list the type of wood used (new or old, oak or other wood type), type of barrel used (new, port/ whiskey/ wine/ sherry/ other), base beer style or achieved character.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Full-bodied and rich. Low to moderate carbonation.

Color: Brown to Black (22 – 40 SRM)

Bitterness: 50 – 80 IBUs

Alcohol: 8% ABV or greater

Category 19: Flavored Beers

Subcategory A: Honey Beer

- **Appearance:** Color as appropriate to base beer style. Clear or hazy beer is acceptable, but most commercial examples are bright. Head formation and retention is good, or as appropriate to base beer style.
- **Aroma:** Character of honey should be perceived in the aroma and balanced with other aromas.
- **Flavor:** These beers are brewed using honey and malted barley. Beers may be brewed to any style. Character of honey should be perceived in the flavor and balanced with other flavors. **The brewer must list the base beer style. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Appropriate to the base style but may be lighter.

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Subcategory B: Citrus Fruit Beers

- **Appearance:** Color as appropriate to base beer style or may be tinted with fruit color. Clear or hazy beer is acceptable in appearance. Head formation and retention is good, or as appropriate to base beer style.
- **Aroma:** Appropriate to the base beer style and added fruits.
- **Flavor:** Citrus fruit (e.g., orange, lime, lemon, grapefruit, yuzu, etc.) is used and should impart a distinctive presence in the beer. The characteristics of the base beer should be evident. Mild fruit-derived acidity may be present; however, it should not be overpowering, and strong sour or acidic notes are not appropriate. **The brewer must list what citrus fruits are used and must also list a base beer style. Fruited sour beers and fruited Gose have their own categories and should not be entered in this category. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Appropriate to the base style.

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Subcategory C: Tropical Fruit Beers

- **Appearance:** Color as appropriate to base beer style or may be tinted with fruit color. Clear or hazy beer is acceptable in appearance. Head formation and retention is good, or as appropriate to base beer style.
- **Aroma:** Appropriate to the base beer style and added fruits.
- **Flavor:** Tropical fruit (e.g., pineapple, guava, coconut, papaya, mango, banana, etc.) is used and should impart a distinctive presence in the beer. The characteristics of the base beer should be evident. Mild fruit-derived acidity may be present; however, it should not be overpowering, and strong sour or acidic notes are not appropriate. **The brewer must list what tropical fruits are used and must also list a base beer style. Fruited sour beers and fruited Gose have their own categories and should not be entered in this category. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Appropriate to the base style.

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Subcategory D: Other Fruit Beers

- **Appearance:** Color as appropriate to base beer style or may be tinted with fruit color. Clear or hazy beer is acceptable in appearance. Head formation and retention is good, or as appropriate to base beer style.
- **Aroma:** Appropriate to the base beer style and added fruits.
- **Flavor:** Other fruits (e.g., strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, peaches, apricots, plums, cherries, etc.) is used and should impart a distinctive presence in the beer. The characteristics of the base beer should be evident. Mild fruit-derived acidity may be present; however, it should not be overpowering, and strong sour or acidic notes are not appropriate. **The brewer must list what fruits are used and must also list a base beer style. Fruited sour beers and fruited Gose have their own categories and should not be entered in this category. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Appropriate to the base style.

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Subcategory E: Vegetable or Field Beers

- **Appearance:** Color as appropriate to base beer style. Clear or hazy beer is acceptable. Head formation and retention is good, or as appropriate to base beer style, and may be tinged with color from the added vegetable.
- **Aroma:** Appropriate to the base style, and vegetables added.
- **Flavor:** Vegetables are used in the beer to impart a distinctive flavor. The characteristics of the base beer should be evident. **The brewer must list what vegetables that are used and must also list a base beer style. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition. Beers flavored with chilies should be entered as Chili Beer Subcategory 19-K. Pumpkin or Pumpkin Spiced beers should not be entered in this category, enter in 19-F.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Appropriate to the base style.

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Subcategory F: Pumpkin or Pumpkin Spiced Beers

- **Appearance:** Color as appropriate to base beer style. Clear or hazy beer is acceptable. Head formation as appropriate to base beer style.
- **Aroma:** Appropriate to the base style. Specialty spices, if used, should be evident but not overpowering.
- **Flavor:** Pumpkin and any spices used in the beer should impart a distinctive flavor. The characteristics of the base beer should be evident. **The brewer must list any specialty ingredients that are used and must also list a base beer style. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Appropriate to the base style.

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Subcategory G: Herbed/Spiced Beers

- **Appearance:** Color as appropriate to base beer style. May be hazy from adjuncts. Head formation and retention as appropriate to base beer style.
- **Aroma:** Appropriate to the base style and the herbs and spices added.
- **Flavor:** A low hopping level puts the emphasis on the spices used. The character of beer should be in balance with the spice and a good evaluation is based on balance of flavors. **The brewer must list the herbs and/or spices are used and must also list a base beer style. Pumpkin spiced beers should be entered in subcategory 18-F. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Appropriate to the base style.

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Subcategory H: Coffee Stout

Brewers must list the base stout style (reference stout subcategories in Category 11). Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.

- **Appearance:** Color is deep brown/garnet to opaque dark brown/black. Head formation and retention may be poor due to oils present from coffee beans.
- **Aroma:** Aroma according to the base stout style, but with coffee character both evident and complimentary to the overall aroma character.
- **Flavor:** Flavor according to the base stout style, but with coffee character both evident and complimentary to the overall aroma character.
- **Mouthfeel:** Variable according to base stout style

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Subcategory I: Other Coffee Beers

- **Appearance:** Color is variable according to base beer style or may be tinted with coffee colors. Head formation and retention may be poor due to oils present from coffee beans.
- **Aroma:** Variable according to base beer style, but the coffee character should be both evident and complimentary to the character of the base beer.
- **Flavor:** Variable according to base beer style, but the coffee character should be both evident and complimentary to the character of the base beer. **The brewer must list the base beer style. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Variable according to base beer style

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Subcategory J: Chocolate/Cocoa Beers

- **Appearance:** Color is variable according to base beer style or may be tinted with chocolate like colors. Head formation and retention is appropriate for the base beer style but may be diminished by the addition of chocolate or cocoa.
- **Aroma:** Variable according to base beer style, but the chocolate or cocoa character should be both evident and complimentary to the character of the base beer.
- **Flavor:** Variable according to base beer style, but the chocolate or cocoa character should be both evident and complimentary to the character of the base beer. **The brewer must list the base beer style. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Variable according to base beer style

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Subcategory K: Chili Beer

- **Appearance:** Clear or hazy beer is acceptable in appearance. Color as appropriate for the base beer style. Head formation and retention as appropriate to base beer style however it may be low due to chili oils.
- **Aroma:** Character of the types of chilies used should be perceived. The types and levels of the chilis used will make the aroma intensity variable. Some chilis (habanero for example) would make the beer too hot if the levels used were high enough to have a habanero aroma. The base beer style should be perceived in the aroma.
- **Flavor:** The character of beer should be in balance with the heat and a good evaluation is based on balance of flavors. **The brewer must list the types of chilies used and must list a base beer style. Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Chili peppers are used in the beer to impart the distinctive chili heat in addition to the characteristics of the base beer.

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Category 20: Collaboration Beers

Entries intended to be recognized as collaboration beers should be entered as Category 21 regardless of the beer style. In addition, brewers should indicate the subcategory of the beer style as referenced in this style guide. For example, identifying the entry as category 21/15B implies that it is a collaboration beer of style subcategory 15B; the beer will be judged against the description for subcategory 15B, which is Specialty Berliner Weisse and Specialty Gose. **All brewers participating in the collaboration should be named in the entry.** Any and all styles in this style guide may be entered in this category.

Judging panel participants: Per NABA procedure, at no time may the name of a brewer or of the proprietary name of a beer be divulged to any of the participating judges. This will be confirmed by the Judge Coordinator and Head Steward prior to flight

Category 21: Brewing School Beers

Brewing School competition beers should be entered as Category 23 no matter the style for clarity of judging for the correct awards. Secondly the school should indicate the category number of the style of the beer (i.e. Category 21/15B). Any and all styles in this style guide, allowed by the entry rules, may be entered in this category.

Category 22: Non-Alcoholic Beers

Non-alcoholic (NA) beer closely replicates the look and flavor of beer in any other style category listed herein. NA beers are divided into three subcategories (light, dark, and hoppy) to prevent direct comparison of disparate base beer styles. The major distinction is the lack of alcohol (levels must be 0.5% ABV or lower). By nature, these malt-based “near beers” will lack the complexity derived from fermentation; however, the basic characteristics of the emulated style should be apparent. They should not be marked down for reasons related to the absence of alcohol. **To allow for accurate evaluation by the judge panel, brewers must provide the beer style being emulated or may state “No Classic Style”.** **Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging but will not eliminate the entry from the competition.**

Subcategory A: Light Non-Alcoholic Beers

- **Appearance:** Appearance is straw gold to light amber. Head formation and retention may be variable based on emulated beer style.
- **Aroma:** Aroma is characteristic of the base beer style. Excessive hop aroma is inappropriate; hoppy NA beer styles should be entered in Subcategory C.
- **Flavor:** Flavor should be characteristic and emulative of the base beer style. Excessive hop flavor is inappropriate; hoppy NA beer styles should be entered in Subcategory C.
- **Mouthfeel:** Varies with underlying style.

Color: Straw to Light Amber (1 – 10 SRM)

Bitterness: Variable according to base beer style

Alcohol: Must be less than 0.5% ABV

Subcategory B: Dark Non-Alcoholic Beers

- **Appearance:** Appearance is medium amber to black. Head formation and retention may be variable based on emulated beer style.
- **Aroma:** Aroma is characteristic of the base beer style. Excessive hop aroma is inappropriate; hoppy NA beer styles should be entered in Subcategory C.
- **Flavor:** Flavor should be characteristic and emulative of the base beer style. Excessive hop flavor is inappropriate; hoppy NA beer styles should be entered in Subcategory C.
- **Mouthfeel:** Varies with underlying style.

Color: Medium Amber to Black (11 – 40 SRM)

Bitterness: Variable according to base beer style

Alcohol: Must be less than 0.5% ABV

Subcategory C: Hoppy Non-Alcoholic Beers

- **Appearance:** Color as appropriate to base beer style. Clear or hazy beer is acceptable. Head formation and retention is good, or as appropriate to base beer style, and may be tinged with color from the added vegetable.
- **Aroma:** Aroma is characteristic of the base beer style, but should have a distinct hop-forward aroma that may be characterized as by citrus, floral, resin, or sweet pine.
- **Flavor:** Flavor is characteristic of the base beer style. Hop flavor may be characterized as citrus, floral, resin, or sweet pine notes. A strong hop flavor and bitterness is appropriate.
- **Mouthfeel:** Appropriate to the base style.

Color: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Bitterness: Variable According to Base Beer Style

Alcohol: Must be less than 0.5% ABV

Other Categories

Category 23: Alternative Products

Subcategory A: Hard Seltzers

Hard Seltzers are alternative alcohol beverages. They come in a variety of flavors including but not limited to spices such as ginger and various fruit flavors such as mango, pineapple, lime, cherry, and mixed fruits. They should be clean and pleasing; not cloyingly sweet. No off or overpowering flavor is desirable. They should be well balanced. Carbonation is generally high. These beverages are typically crystal clear and highly effervescent, but some styles may exhibit haziness or color due to the use of specialty ingredients or flavorings. Clean, crisp, refreshing and drinkable is the goal. **Brewers must list specialty ingredients and/or flavorings used, entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging.**

Subcategory B: Non-Alcoholic Soft Drinks (Sodas)

Non-alcoholic soft drinks come in a variety of flavors including but not limited to, root beer, sarsaparilla, birch beer, cream soda, cola, and various fruit flavors. They should be clean and pleasing; not cloyingly sweet. Often produced by breweries, craft beer quality and attention to detail is expected. No off or overpowering flavor is desirable. They should be well balanced. Carbonation can be low to high but should complement the flavors used. Clean, refreshing and drinkable is the goal. **Brewers must list specialty ingredients and/or flavorings used, entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging.**

Subcategory C: Hard Soft Drinks (Sodas)

Hard Sodas are alternative alcohol beverages. They come in a variety of flavors including but not limited to, root beer, sarsaparilla, birch beer, ginger ale, cola, and various fruit flavors. They should be clean and pleasing; usually sweet but not cloyingly sweet. No off or overpowering flavor is desirable. They should be well balanced. Carbonation can be low to high but should complement the flavors used. Clean, refreshing and drinkable is the goal. Alcohol levels vary. **Brewers must list specialty ingredients and/or flavorings used, entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging.**

Subcategory D: Packaged Cocktails or Spritzers

Packaged cocktails and spritzers are alternative alcohol beverages. These beverages are typically produced using distilled spirits and specialty ingredients or flavorings. They come in a variety of flavors that are exemplary of classic cocktail and spritzer recipes; examples include but are not limited to the old fashioned, gin and tonic, margarita, mojito, vodka soda, Moscow mule, white Russian, Aperol spritzer, vodka spritzer, etc. Packaged cocktails should be well-balanced, highlighting flavor and aroma of the base alcohol and specialty ingredients utilized. Carbonation should be representative of the base cocktail or spritzer style; examples may range from uncarbonated to sparkling depending on style. **Brewers must list the cocktail or spritzer style, to include the base alcohol, specialty ingredients, or flavorings. Entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging.** Alcohol levels range from medium to high.

Subcategory E: Spirit-Inspired Flavored Malt Beverages

Spirit-inspired flavored malt beverages are brewed with a malt base, containing natural or artificial flavors that create flavor profiles inspired by their distilled spirit counterparts (fruit-flavored shots, cinnamon whiskey, etc.). These beverages have a high alcohol content and are typically served in small volumes, often classified as a malt-based liqueur or aperitif. Appearance, aroma, and flavor varies based on the specialty ingredients used. Beverages entered here must be made with malt-based alcohol. **Brewers must list specialty ingredients and/or flavorings used, entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging.** Alcohol content ranges from 13 – 20% ABV in a 1 – 2 ounce serving.

Subcategory F: Hop Water

Hop waters are alternative non-alcoholic beverages. This beverage showcases the flavor and aroma typical of American hop varieties, which may be characterized as fruity, tropical, citrus, floral, resin, or sweet pine. Specialty ingredients, most commonly but not limited to fruit flavorings, may be added. **Brewers must list specialty ingredients and/or flavorings used, entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging.** Hop flavor and aroma should be evident and in harmony with any fruit or specialty ingredients. Hop waters are normally highly carbonated, effervescent, and refreshing to drink; however, un-carbonated examples are acceptable. Color and clarity may vary depending on brewing method and use of specialty ingredients.

International Cider Awards

Category 100: Modern Cider

- **Appearance:** Color is straw to medium gold. Usually clear to bright. Head formation and retention is variable; may be still but usually effervescent.
- **Aroma:** Character of the types of apples used, usually culinary apples, should be evident. There may be other esters, alcohols and sulfur (H₂S) notes present in low levels.
- **Flavor:** Apple or pear taste should be crisp and evident. Refreshing and drinkable, not harsh. Dry varieties will be more wine-like. Sweeter examples should not be cloying. **No additives are appropriate** (see Specialty Cider and Fruit Flavored Cider). Low to no sulfur. THP (corn nut, mousey, Cheerios) or acetic acid (vinegar) flavors are not appropriate.
- **Mouthfeel:** Alcohol may be evident at the upper end of the range. Body is light to medium. No carbonic bite. Astringency, if present, is preferred only in the finish and should be from tannins. No bitterness. Apple wines are typically lighter and may be very effervescent.

Color: Straw to Medium (Gold 3 – 10 SRM)

Bitterness: 0 IBUs

Alcohol: 4 – 8.5% ABV

Category 101: Traditional Cider

- **Appearance:** Hazy to bright. Yellow to amber. Head formation and retention is variable; may be still or effervescent.
- **Aroma:** Fruity esters suggest apples but is not necessarily apple aroma. May be low notes of sulfur, phenols, smoke and barnyard.
- **Flavor: Usually made with tradition cider apple varieties (i.e. bittersweets).** Very subtle spicy, smoky, phenolic and horsy notes may be present but not required and must not be assertive. Apple-like esters and apple flavors. Never salty. Can be dry or sweet.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium to full body. Astringency is perceived as balance to the sweetness. May be some bitterness in the finish.
- **Note: Cidermakers may specify the apple varietal used in the cider as they may bring unique flavor characteristics.**

Color: Yellow to Amber (3 – 15 SRM)

Bitterness: 0 IBUs

Alcohol: 2.5 – 9.0% ABV

Category 102: Sour or Farmhouse Style Cider

- **Appearance:** Color is pale yellow to brown. Clear to cloudy. May contain apple pulp but no haze. Head formation and retention is variable.
- **Aroma:** The aroma should have floral, alcohol notes with some other fermentation or yeast byproducts and notes of sulfur (H₂S) from the use of wild or non-standard yeast.
- **Flavor:** These have a strong apple flavor and are usually dry. Sourer examples will have higher levels of acidity. Because wild yeasts used, the flavor profile may range from unsophisticated to aggressively complex with aggressive notes of sulfur. Notes of wood may be present if barreled aged. **Barrel aging should be noted.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Warming alcohol may be present. Astringency, if present, is preferred only in the finish. May be still or effervescent.

Color: Pale Yellow to Brown (3 – 20 SRM)

Bitterness: 0 IBUs

Alcohol: 6.0 – 15.0% ABV

Category 103: Fruit Flavored Cider and Perry

- **Appearance:** Color is pale yellow to brown or a color associated with the other added fruit. Usually clear. Head formation and retention is variable.
- **Aroma:** Apple or pear aroma with notes of the **added fruits**. There may be other esters, alcohols, and very low levels of sulfur present.
- **Flavor:** Apple or pear taste should be crisp and evident. The flavor profile should include any other added fruits. It is acceptable for added fruits to have more dominant flavor but the entry should present as a beverage that is unmistakably a cider (i.e. as opposed to a wine, malt, or spirit-based beverage). Acidic and sweet characters should be in balance. **Perry, a fermented pear juice beverage (not a pear cider which is mostly apple juice) may be entered in this category. Brewers must list any fruits used, and state whether entry is a cider or a perry.**
- **Mouthfeel:** May be dry or sweet with light to full body. Warming alcohol may be present but not harsh. Astringency, if present, is preferred only in the finish.

Color: Pale Yellow (3 – 25 SRM), or variable color associated with adjuncts

Bitterness: 0 IBUs

Alcohol: 2.5 – 15.5% ABV

Category 104: Flavored and Wood Aged Cider and Perry

- **Appearance:** Color is pale yellow or any color associated with a flavor additive or fermentation method. Usually clear. Head formation and retention is variable.
- **Aroma:** Apple or pear aroma must predominate with complementing notes of any specialty ingredients or adjuncts such as spices, spicy vegetables, or herbs used. **Fruit flavored or hopped cider or perry should not be entered here.** There may be other esters, alcohols, and low levels of sulfur present.
- **Flavor:** Apple or pear taste should be crisp and evident. The flavor profile should include any adjuncts in balance with the apple or pear. Acidity and sweetness characteristics should balance. **Specialty ingredients or, adjuncts or wood aging used to flavor the cider or perry must be listed, and state whether entry is a cider or perry.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Cider may be dry or sweet with light to full body. Warming alcohol may be present but not harsh. Astringency, if present, is preferred only in the finish.

Color: Pale Yellow (3 – 25 SRM), or variable color associated with adjuncts

Bitterness: 0 IBUs

Alcohol: 2.5 – 15.5% ABV

Category 105: Hopped Cider

- **Appearance:** Very pale yellow to brown or colored by adjuncts. Hazy to clear. May be still or effervescent.
- **Aroma:** The aroma is determined by the hop variety used and the intensity by the methods used to incorporate them. The aroma of the base cider must be present and not over powered by the hop addition.
- **Flavor:** Cider flavor is clean and prevalent. Hop flavors should be evident. Apple flavors (usually culinary varieties) should be present in blended examples. Bitterness in finish from hops or tannins. **The style of the base cider should be listed to assist in judging.**
- **Mouthfeel:** Body will vary with base style. May be still or effervescent.

Color: Pale Yellow (3 – 25 SRM)

Bitterness: 10 – 40 IBUs

Alcohol: 3 – 9.0% ABV

Category 106: Intensified Cider (Apple Wine, Pommeau, Ice Cider)

- **Appearance:** Very pale yellow to brown. Hazy to bright. May be still or effervescent.
- **Aroma:** Intense fruity aromas to lesser fruity or apple only. May have wood aging characteristics.
- **Flavor:** Fruity, may be sweet but not cloying or dry. Sweet/tart notes acceptable. May slightly tannic.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium full body. Warming but not harsh. Tannic or slightly astringent is acceptable.

Color: Pale Yellow to Brown (3 – 20 SRM)

Bitterness: 0 IBUs

Alcohol: 15+% ABV