

BEER JUDGE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

2015 STYLE GUIDELINES

Cider Style Guidelines



For 2019 Asia Beer Championships

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Edited by Gordon Strong

with

Kristen England

Content: Dick Dunn (lead), Gary Awdey, Charles McGonegal

Review and Commentary: Andrew Lea, Nick Bradstock, Rich Anderson, Lee McAlpine, Claude Jolicoeur, Rex Halfpenny

Final Review: Dennis Mitchell, Agatha Feltus, Michael Wilcox, Brian Eichhorn

INTRODUCTION TO CIDER GUIDELINES (CATEGORIES C1-C2)

The following discussion applies to all the cider styles, except where explicitly superseded in the sub-category guidelines. This introduction identifies common characteristics and descriptions for all types of cider, and should be used as a reference whenever entering or judging cider. **Cider** is fermented apple juice. There are two categories for cider: Standard Cider (Category C1) and Specialty Cider (Category C2). The Standard category covers ciders made primarily or entirely from the juice of apples). The only adjunct permitted in the Standard category, and only in some sub-categories, is a limited addition of sugar to achieve a suitable starting gravity or to raise sweetness post-fermentation. Note that honey is not a “sugar” for this purpose; a cider made with added honey must be entered either as a Specialty cider or as a Cyser under the appropriate mead sub-category. Other sugar sources that also add significant flavors (brown sugar, molasses) would also create a Specialty cider (such as New England style).

Note for Asia Beer Championships 2019 entry: Please ignore any reference to Perry in the below guidelines – the competition is open only to alcoholic/hard Apple Cider

Aroma and Flavor

- Ciders do not necessarily present overtly fruity aromas or flavors — in the same sense that a wine does not taste overtly of grapes. Drier styles of cider in particular develop more complex but less fruity characters. A simple *apple soda* or *wine cooler* character is not desirable in a cider or perry.
- Some styles of cider exhibit distinctly **non-fruity** tastes or aromas, such as the *smoky ham* undertones of a dry English cider.
- The **sweetness** (residual sugar, or RS) of a cider may vary from absolutely dry (no RS) to as much as a sweet dessert wine (10% or more RS). In sweeter ciders, other components of taste — particularly acidity — must balance the sweetness. The level of sweetness must be specified so organizers and judges can arrange flights of tastings and entries within flights. Tasting should always proceed from drier to sweeter. There are five categories of sweetness, expanded from three in earlier guidelines. Note that the numbers for these levels are **not** rigid or restrictive. They are intended to guide the cidemaker on how to enter, not to be used as judging criteria unless a cider is declared at a sweetness level far from its actual sweetness. Judges must realize that sweetness can mask faults. Be more attentive to this in a sweeter cider. Likewise, do not penalize dry ciders excessively for minor faults which may be more evident only because of lack of sweetness. The categories and *approximate* sugar levels are as follows. Final gravities are particularly rough numbers since they cannot take account of what the SG would be if the cider fermented out completely.
 - o **Dry:** below 0.4% residual sugar. This corresponds to a final specific gravity less than 1.002. There is no perception of sweetness.
 - o **Medium-dry:** 0.4-0.9% residual sugar. This corresponds to a final specific gravity of 1.002-1.004. There is a hint of sweetness but the cider is still perceived primarily as dry. Also known as semi-dry.
 - o **Medium:** in the range between dry and sweet, 0.9-2.0% residual sugar, final gravity 1.004-1.009. Sweetness is now a notable component of the overall character.
 - o **Medium-sweet:** 2.0-4.0% residual sugar, final gravity 1.009-1.019. The cider is sweet but still refreshing. Also known as semi-sweet.
 - o **Sweet:** above 4.0% residual sugar, roughly equivalent to a final gravity of over 1.019. The cider has the character of a dessert wine. It must not be cloying; see notes on balance.
- If a cider is close to one of these boundaries, it should be identified by the sweetness category which best describes the overall impression it gives. The five categories above were expanded from the earlier three

dry-medium-sweet by splitting the dry and medium categories.

- **Acidity** is an essential element of cider: it must be sufficient to give a clean, refreshing impression without being puckering. Acidity (from malic and in some cases lactic acids) must not be confused with acetification (from ethyl acetate or acetic acid—vinegar). The acrid aroma and tingling taste of acetification is a fault.
- Ciders vary considerably in **tannin**. This affects both bitterness and astringency (see *Mouthfeel* below). If made from culinary or table fruit, tannins are typically low; nevertheless some tannin is desirable to balance the character. The character contributed by tannin should be mainly astringency rather than bitterness. An overt or forward bitterness is a fault, and is often due to processing techniques rather than fruit character.
- Cider may go through a **malo-lactic fermentation** (MLF) which converts some or all of the sharp malic acid to softer, less-acidic lactic acid. In ciders made with tannic apples, the MLF commonly produces ethylphenols which are evident as other flavors: spicy/smoky including smoked meat, phenolic, and farmyard/old-horse. These flavors are desirable although not mandatory in English and French styles, but must not be *over the top*. The spicy smoky character is the most desirable of the three. Note that a dominating farmyard character may be the result of a *Brettanomyces* contamination rather than MLF; this is a serious fault. Also, because MLF reduces the acidity of a cider, the result should not be *flabby* or too soft; the cider must remain refreshing. Finally, judges should be attentive to the possibility of faults such as mousiness which are more likely in a higher pH cider that has gone through MLF. (Some judges may be unable to detect *mouse*; an alkaline oral rinse may be needed to confirm and reach agreement among judges.)

Appearance

- Clarity may vary from good to brilliant. The lack of sparkling clarity is not a fault, but visible particles are undesirable. In some styles a “rustic” lack of brilliance is common. However, a “sheen” in either cider or perry generally indicates the early stage of lactic contamination and is a distinct fault.
- Carbonation may vary from entirely still to a champagne level. No or little carbonation is termed **still**. A still cider may give a slight *tickle on the tongue*. A moderate carbonation level is termed **petillant**. Highly carbonated is termed **sparkling**. At the higher levels of carbonation, the *mousse* (head) may be retained for a short time. However, gushing, foaming, and difficult-to-manage heads are faults.

Mouthfeel

- In general, cider has a body and fullness

akin to a light wine. The body is much less than that of beer. Mouthfeel depends on tannin level. Tannic styles (English and French) will have astringent mouthfeel resembling a red wine. Full-sparkling ciders will be champagne-like.

Ingredients

- The apple varieties are intended to illustrate commonly used examples, not dictate requirements when making the style. In general, adjuncts and additives are prohibited except where specifically allowed in particular styles, and then the entrant must state them. Common processing aids, and enzymes, are generally allowed as long as they are not detectable in the finished cider. Yeast used for cider may be either *natural* (the yeast which occurs on the fruit itself and/or is retained in the milling and pressing equipment) or *cultured* yeast. Malo-lactic fermentation is allowed, either naturally occurring or with an added ML culture. Enzymes may be used for clarification of the juice prior to fermentation. Malic acid may be added to a low-acid juice to bring acidity up to a level considered safe for avoiding bacterial contamination and off-flavors (typically pH 3.8 or below). Sulfites may be added as needed for microbiological control. If used, the maximum accepted safe level for sulfites (200 mg/l) must be strictly observed; moreover, any excess sulfite that is detectable in the finished cider (a “burning match” character) is a serious fault.
- If a cider is to have sweetness (residual sugar), this may be obtained by arresting fermentation or back sweetening with sugar or fresh juice. In this case, entrant must ensure that the cider is stable. Turbidity, gushing, or foaming resulting from restarted fermentation in-bottle are considered serious faults.
- If the cider is fermented and/or aged with wood (barrel, chips, staves/strips), the type of wood and process must be declared. Except for category C2F (Specialty Cider), the wood character must be no more than barely recognizable. A cider with substantial wood/barrel character entered in any category other than C2F will be regarded as not in the style.
- Sorbate may be added at bottling to stabilize the cider. However, any residual aroma/flavor from excessive use or misuse of sorbate (e.g., a *geranium* note) is a distinct fault.
- Carbonation may be either natural (by maintaining CO₂ pressure through processing or by bottle-conditioning) or added (by CO₂ injection). In most categories, a still (completely uncarbonated) cider is appropriate. Judges must realize that carbonation can improve a naive impression of a cider and must not penalize still ciders (when declared properly) for lack of carbonation.

C1 APPLE CIDER

C1. STANDARD CIDER

The styles represented in this category are the principal established styles. “New World” is simply a name change from the “Common” of earlier versions. There are known styles not represented here. In particular, Spanish (Asturian and Basque) does not yet have a style definition because there is presently insufficient appreciation and understanding, as well as a lack of commercial examples of known quality for reference. In the case of a cider made to a style not explicitly represented here, it should be entered in the closest applicable category. The first decision is whether the cider was made with apples with significant tannin content that gives the cider noticeable

astringency or bitterness. If not, it should be entered as a New World Cider. If so, the choice is between the English and French sub-categories; this decision should be based on whether the cider tends more toward sweet, rich, somewhat fruity (French) or drier and more austere (English).

C1A. New World Cider

A New World Cider is made from culinary/table apples, with wild or crab apples often used for acidity/tannin balance. Compared to other styles in this category, these ciders are generally relatively lower in tannin and higher in acidity. “New World” references the style, not a location, as ciders in this style are also made in eastern England, Australia, Germany, etc.

Overall Impression: A refreshing drink of some substance – not bland or watery. Sweet ciders must not be cloying. Dry ciders must not be too austere.

Aroma/Flavor: Sweet or low-alcohol ciders may have apple aroma and flavor. Dry ciders will be more wine-like with some esters. Sugar and acidity should combine to give a refreshing character. Acidity is medium to high, refreshing, but must not be harsh or biting.

Appearance: Clear to brilliant, pale to medium gold in color.

Mouthfeel: Medium body. Some tannin should be present for slight to moderate astringency, but little bitterness.

Comments: An ideal cider serves well as a “session” drink, and suitably accompanies a wide variety of food.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level (3 levels). Entrants **MUST** specify sweetness (5 categories). If OG is substantially above typical range, entrant should explain, e.g., particular variety of apple giving high-gravity juice.

Varieties: Common (Winesap, Macintosh, Golden Delicious, Braeburn, Jonathan), multi-use (Northern Spy, Russets, Baldwin), crabapples, any suitable wildings.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.045 – 1.065

FG: 0.995 – 1.020

ABV: 5 – 8%

C1B. English Cider

English Cider includes the English “West Country” plus ciders inspired by that style. These ciders are made with bittersweet and bitter-sharp apple varieties cultivated specifically for cider making. English ciders are traditionally fermented and aged in wood barrels, which adds some character; however, the barrels used are rarely new, so there is no overt wood character.

Overall Impression: Generally dry, full-bodied, austere. Complex flavor profile, long finish.

Aroma/Flavor: No overt apple character, but various flavors and esters that suggest apples, particularly tannic varieties. English-style ciders commonly go through MLF (see *Introduction/Aroma-and-Flavor*) which produces desirable spicy/smoky, phenolic, and farmyard/old-horse characters. These flavor notes are positive but **not** required. If present, they must not dominate; in particular, the phenolic and farmyard notes should not be heavy. A strong farmyard character without spicy/smoky or phenolic suggests a *Brettanomyces* contamination, which is a fault. Mousiness is a serious fault.

Appearance: Barely cloudy to brilliant. Medium yellow to amber color.

Mouthfeel: Full. Moderate to high tannin, perceived as astringency and some bitterness. Carbonation still to moderate. Bottle-fermented or -conditioned ciders may have high carbonation, up to champagne levels, but not gushing or foaming.

Comments: Sweet examples exist, but dry is most traditional, particularly when considering the drying contributions of tannin.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level (3 levels). Entrants **MUST** specify sweetness (dry through medium-sweet, 4 levels). Entrants **MAY** specify variety of apple for a single varietal cider; if specified, varietal character will be expected.

Varieties: Kingston Black, Stoke Red, Dabinett, Porter’s

Perfection, Nehou, Yarlinton Mill, Major, various Jerseys, etc.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.050 – 1.075

FG: 0.995 – 1.015

ABV: 6 – 9%

C1C. French Cider

French Cider includes Normandy styles plus ciders inspired by those styles, including ciders made by various techniques to achieve the French flavor profile. These ciders are made with bittersweet and bitter-sharp apple varieties cultivated specifically for cider making.

Traditional French procedures use small amounts of salt and calcium compounds (calcium chloride, calcium carbonate) to aid the process of pectin coagulation. These compounds may be used, pre-fermentation, but in limited quantity. It is a fault if judges can detect a salty or chalky taste. The enzyme PME (pectin methyl esterase) may also be used pre-fermentation for pectin coagulation.

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Note that the sweetness/gravity levels indicate an overall tendency, not a sharp delineation between English and French ciders.

Overall Impression: Medium to sweet, full-bodied, rich.

Aroma/Flavor: Fruity character/aroma. This may come from slow or arrested fermentation (in the French technique of *défécation*) or approximated by back-sweetening with juice. Tends to a rich fullness. MLF notes of spicy-smoky, phenolic, and farmyard are common but not required (just as with English style), and must not be pronounced. The French expect more subtle MLF character than do the English.

Appearance: Clear to brilliant, medium yellow to amber color.

Mouthfeel: Medium to full, mouth-filling. Moderate tannin, perceived mainly as astringency. Carbonation moderate to champagne-like, but at higher levels it must not gush or foam.

Comments: Typically made sweet to balance the tannin levels from the traditional apple varieties.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level (3 levels). Entrants **MUST** specify sweetness (medium to sweet only, 3 levels). Entrants **MAY** specify variety of apple for a single varietal cider; if specified, varietal character will be expected.

Varieties: Nehou, Muscadet de Dieppe, Reine des Pommes, Michelin, etc.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.050 – 1.065

FG: 1.010 – 1.020

ABV: 3 – 6%

C2 SPECIALTY APPLE CIDER

Cider with fruit/herb/spices added

C2. SPECIALTY APPLE CIDER

Specialty cider includes beverages made with added flavorings (spices and/or other fruits), those made with substantial amounts of sugar-sources to increase starting gravities, and the beverage made from a combination of apple and pear juice (sometimes called pider). The same general characteristics and fault descriptions apply to specialty ciders as to standard ciders (preceding category), with the exception of added ingredients allowed.

C2B. Cider with Other Fruit

This is a cider with other fruits or fruit-juices added – for example, berry. This is the correct style to enter a beverage fermented from a combination of apple and pear juice.

Overall Impression: Like a white wine with complex flavors. The apple character must marry with the added fruit so that neither one dominates the other.

Aroma/Flavor: The cider character must be present and must

fit with the other fruits. It is a fault if the added fruit(s) completely dominate; a judge might ask, *Would this be different if neutral spirits replaced the cider?* A fruit cider should not be like an alco-pop. Oxidation is a fault.

Appearance: Clear to brilliant. Color appropriate to added fruit, but should not show oxidation characteristics. (For example, red berries should give red-to-purple color, not orange.)

Mouthfeel: Substantial. May be significantly tannic, depending on fruit added.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level (3 levels). Entrants **MUST** specify sweetness (5 categories). Entrants **MUST** specify all fruit(s) and/or fruit juice(s) added.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.045 – 1.070

FG: 0.995 – 1.010

ABV: 5 – 9%

C2E. Cider with Herbs/Spices

This is a cider with any combination of “botanicals” added. Hopped ciders are included in this category. Other examples are ciders with “apple pie” spices (cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice), ginger, lemon grass, herbal tea blends, etc.

Overall Impression: Like a white wine with complex flavors. The apple character must marry with the botanicals and give a balanced result.

Aroma/Flavor: The cider character must be present and must fit with the botanicals. As with a fruit cider, it is a fault if the botanicals dominate; a judge might ask, *Would this be different if neutral spirits replaced the cider?* Oxidation of either the base cider or the additions is a fault.

Appearance: Clear to brilliant. Color appropriate to added botanicals.

Mouthfeel: Average or more. Cider may be tannic from effect of botanicals but must not be bitter from over-extraction.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level (3 levels). Entrants **MUST** specify sweetness (5 categories). Entrants **MUST** specify all botanicals added. If hops are used, entrant must specify variety/varieties used.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.045 – 1.070

FG: 0.995 – 1.010

ABV: 5 – 9%