

Light Lagers

This category encompasses all light colored lagers brewed in the German, Czech or American traditions and can include “modern” variants on these styles, which tend to have more hop character than is traditional in the areas of origin. Unfiltered or “zwickel” versions are acceptable here. Brewers should note the style of lager entered in order to supply judges with appropriate information for evaluation. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging.

Amber & Dark Lagers

This category encompasses any amber and dark colored lagers brewed in the German, Czech or American traditions and can include “modern” variants on these styles, which tend to have more hop character than is traditional in the areas of origin. Unfiltered or “zwickel” versions are acceptable here. Brewers should note the style of lager entered in order to supply judges with appropriate information for evaluation. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging.

Wheat Beers (American, Wit, Hefe)

Any beer brewed in a classic style featuring a significant amount of wheat may be entered in this category. This includes, but is not limited to: Belgian Wit, Hefeweizen, Dunkelweizen, and American Wheat. Berliner Weisse, Gose, and other sour wheat beers should be entered in the Wild & Sour Ales category. Unfiltered beers are allowed however the presence of yeast in the beer should not detract from the flavor profile. The use of some fruit and/or spice is permissible as it may be appropriate to the classic style however beers whose flavor profile is dominated by fruit or spice character should be entered in the fruit and spice category. For instance a witbier with orange peel and subtle spicing would be appropriate in this category, but a cherry vanilla hefeweizen should be entered in the Fruit & Spice Beer category.

Golden/Blonde Ales (American, Kolsch, Cream Ale)

This category encompasses all interpretations of light colored ales including (but not limited to) Kolsch, Cream Ale, and Blonde Ale and may include more modern versions that have more hop character than is traditional in the areas of origin. Slight haze may be allowable depending on the style of beer. Winning beers should exhibit the malt, body, balance and fermentation profile of the intended style. Brewers should note the style of ale entered in order to supply judges with appropriate information for evaluation. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging.

Amber/Red Ales (British, American, Irish, Scottish)

This category encompasses all interpretations of amber or red colored ales including (but not limited to) Irish Red, Scottish Ale, English Bitter, American Amber and may include more modern versions that have more hop character than is traditional in the classic style. Unfiltered versions are acceptable here although significant murkiness may be considered a fault. Winning beers should exhibit the malt, body, balance, and fermentation profile of the intended style. Brewers should note the style of ale entered in order to supply judges with appropriate information for evaluation. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging.

Pale Ales

This category encompasses all classic and contemporary styles of Pale Ale including American Pale Ale, British Pale Ale and more modern lower abv “golden” pale ales. Unfiltered versions are acceptable here. Winning entries should be hop forward but may include more classic pales that exhibit malt/hop balance and modern versions which are more hop focused. Unfiltered versions are acceptable here although significant murkiness may be considered a fault. Beers in this category should not be above 6.5% abv.

American IPA

Beers in this category include those brewed in the style of classic American IPA. Classic American IPA ranges in color from light golden to dark copper. Beers in this category exhibit clarity that may be bright to hazy. However flavors and aromas of hops--described often as citrusy, piney, resinous, tropical, fruity, woody, sulfuric, and/or dank--are the signature elements of this beer, and are the most noticeable element of the flavor and aroma. The presence of yeast should not detract from the overall flavor of the beer. The hop flavor and aroma should be intense, complex and harmonious. Diacetyl should not be present. Malt flavor and aroma is present and balanced, and serves as a secondary actor to hops. Beers above 7.5% abv should be entered in the American DIPA category.

New England IPA

This category is intended for beers brewed in the recently popular New England or Northeast IPA style. New England IPA ranges in color from light golden to dark copper. Beers clarity may range from light haze to murky. Hop flavors and aromas should dominate with mild to medium bitterness. Fruit forward hop character is common but not required. The hop flavor and aroma should be intense, complex and harmonious. Diacetyl should not be present. Malt flavor and aroma is present and balanced, and serves as a secondary actor to hops and a high level of residual sweetness is common.

Any beer brewed with specialty ingredients, such as fruit or spices, should be entered elsewhere.

American IPA Variations

This category includes all variations of IPA that would be considered stylistically independent. This may include, but is not limited to, Session IPA, Black IPA, Brett IPA and fruited IPAs or “milkshake” IPAs. Winning entries should still exhibit the flavors of and aromas of hops common to IPA but may also include non-traditional malt profiles, yeast strains, abv levels, or added ingredients. However the overall impression should be of a beer that is variation of IPA. Brewers should note any specialty ingredients used in order to supply judges with appropriate information for evaluation.

American DIPA

This category encompasses hop-forward beers that are above 7.5% ABV. Classic Double IPA and stronger versions of the contemporary variations listed in the American IPA category may be entered here. As with American IPA, the overall flavor of these beers should strongly favor hops with malt and yeast characters in balance.

Barrel Aged Sour

This category includes any beer that has a substantial acidic and/or wild yeast character AND has a substantial oak or barrel related character. Winning examples in this category will deftly marry barrel or spirit character (including oak, bourbon, gin, rum, wine, vermouth, brandy, tequila, etc...) with an underlying base beer. This category may include beers with fruits, spices, or other flavorings. The intensity of the barrel-related character will vary with the base beer, but it should be prominent and well integrated in the finished beer. The intensity of the acidic or “wild” character may vary from moderate to intense. Beers entered in this category will require substantial explanation from the brewer in order to be judged appropriately. Brewers should note process, ingredients (including the types of barrels used) and objectives in order to paint a full picture of the beer being judged. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging.

Barrel Aged (non-Sour)

This category includes all barrel-aged beers that are not sour or wild. Beers in this category should demonstrate a balance of flavor between the barrel(s) and base beer. Pleasant oxidative notes may enhance the character of these beers due to extended aging. Beers entered in this category will require explanation from the brewer in order to be judged appropriately. Brewers should note the base beer (or variation on a classic

style) and the barrel(s) used in order to paint a full picture of the beer being judged. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging. Beers with light to moderate fruit, spice or other “culinary” character may be entered here, but if the intensity of the “adjunct” character is high, they would be better entered in another category.

Belgian Farmhouse

This is a broad category for all interpretations of farmhouse ales. This may include dark, light, imperial, or session versions of farmhouse ales. Beers in this category may have moderate Brettanomyces, bacterial/ sour, or spice character, though they are not required. The unifying thread for this category is farmhouse yeast: while non-Saccharomyces character may be present, expressive farmhouse yeast character is a requirement. Similarly, winning examples should finish dry to very dry. Heavily fruited, spiced, soured, or Bretted versions should be entered elsewhere, particularly if the “specialty” character is more dominant than the original farmhouse yeast character. Beers entered in this category may range from traditional DuPont-esque versions to experimental “Bretted imperial black saisons”. As such, beers entered in this category may require substantial explanation from the brewer in order to be judged appropriately. Brewers should note process, ingredients and objectives in order to paint a full picture of the beer being judged. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging.

Belgian Other (Trappist, Strong, etc...)

This category encompasses all Belgian-style beers that do not fall elsewhere in the style guidelines. Classic styles appropriate to this category include Abbey styles (dubbel, tripel, quad), as well as Belgian blonde and pale ales, Belgian IPA, Belgian-strong golden ales, and obscure styles such as Belgian biere de table. Belgian Farmhouse ales have their own dedicated category and should be entered there. Classifying Belgian-style beers can be difficult, but any beer that does not fit the mold of one of the Belgian classic styles should be entered elsewhere. Some of the above styles may allow for slight acidic, Brett, or spice character; however, any beers with substantial wood, sour, or wild/Brettanomyces character should be entered elsewhere. For judging purposes, please note the classic style on your entry form. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging. Beers will be grouped and judged by classic styles where possible until the medal round.

Experimental

This category is a catch-all to encompass any beers that do not fit elsewhere in the style guidelines. If an entering brewer is dissatisfied with the way another style is written,

s/he can enter the beer here. Beers entered into this category should use some non-traditional ingredient, adjunct or process. This may include beers that strive for flavors outside the normal realm of beer (e.g. “cocktail beers” or savory beers), as well as beers that do not have an identifiable classic base style. Beers entered in this category will require substantial explanation from the brewer in order to be judged appropriately. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging. Brewers should note process, ingredients and objectives in order to paint a full picture of the beer being judged.

Fruit & Spice Beers 6.0% abv and lower

This category includes any beer made with any fruit, spice, vegetable, or coffee, where the added ingredient(s) is moderate to strong and dominates the overall impression of the beer. Beers entered in this category should have an abv of 6.0% or lower. When entering the beer, the brewer should note his/her goal in creating this beer. While citing a traditional base style is not required for judging, it does help give the judges some useful context, even if the beer does not adhere strictly to that base style. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging. The specialty ingredients used should be stated in the beer description. Brewers should avoid using descriptive words like puree, fresh, natural, organic, canned, etc. For example, Fresh Organic Peaches and Peach Puree would both be listed as just “Peach.” While beers with moderate acidity, Brett character, or barrel character are allowable in this category, entries with substantial sour/wild or barrel character should be entered in another category.

Fruit & Spice Beers over 6.0% abv

This category includes any beer made with any fruit, spice, vegetable, or coffee, where the added ingredient(s) is moderate to strong and dominates the overall impression of the beer. Beers in this category should have an abv over 6.0%. When entering the beer, the brewer should note his/her goal in creating this beer. While citing a traditional base style is not required for judging, it does help give the judges some useful context, even if the beer does not adhere strictly to that base style. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging. The specialty ingredients used should be stated in the beer description. Brewers should avoid using descriptive words like puree, fresh, natural, organic, canned, etc. For example, Fresh Organic Peaches and Peach Puree would both be listed as just “Peach.” While beers with moderate acidity, Brett character, or barrel character are allowable in this category, entries with substantial sour/wild or barrel character should be entered in another category.

Brown Ale (American & British)

All brown ales should be entered in this category. Color should be light to dark brown and chill haze is allowable at low temperatures. Hop bitterness, flavor and aroma may range from low to medium. Malt character from roasted, toasted or caramelized malts may be low to medium-high but should be evident. Fruity esters are allowable provided they are in balance with the other flavors. Diacetyl, if present at all, should be very low. Any beers with substantial wood, sour, or wild/Brettanomyces/spontaneous character should be entered elsewhere. Any beer brewed with specialty ingredients, such as fruit or spices, should be entered elsewhere.

Porters (non-Imperial)

All porters with the exception of Imperial Porter should be entered in this category. This includes Smoked Porter, Brown Porter, London Porter, and Robust Porter. Porters should be dark brown to black with low to medium hop bitterness. Malt character, particularly from roasted malts, should be medium to medium-high. Fruity esters are allowable provided they are in balance with the other flavors. . Diacetyl, if present at all, should be very low. Any beers with substantial wood, sour, or wild/Brettanomyces/spontaneous character should be entered elsewhere. Imperial Porters should be entered in the Imperial Stout & Porter category. Any beer brewed with specialty ingredients, such as fruit or spices, should be entered elsewhere.

Stout (non-Imperial)

All variations of stout with the exception of Imperial Stout should be entered in this category. This includes Classic Irish Dry Stout, Export Stout, American Stout, Oatmeal Stout, and Sweet/ Milk Stout. Stouts may be of varying abv levels however all should exhibit medium to high roasted malt character. Color should be black and body should be medium to full. Any beers with substantial wood, sour, or wild/Brettanomyces/spontaneous character should be entered elsewhere. Imperial Stouts should be entered in the Imperial Stout category. Any beer brewed with specialty ingredients such as fruit or spices should be entered elsewhere. Brewers should note the style of stout entered in order to supply judges with appropriate information for evaluation. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging.

Imperial Stouts & Porters

All classic Imperial Stouts, Imperial Porters and Baltic Porters should be entered in this category. This may include modern variations but winning beers should exhibit the roasted malt, full body, higher abv, balance and fermentation profile appropriate to the style. Any beers with substantial barrel, coffee or spice characters should be entered elsewhere.

Strong Ales (non-Belgian)

This is a catch-all category for any strong (above 7.5% abv) beer not covered by other categories. This may include, but is not limited to, British and American Barleywines, Scotch Wee Heavy, Imperial Brown or Red Ale, Imperial Pilsner, and Doppelbock. Imperial Stouts, Imperial Porters, Double/Triple IPAs and Belgian strong ales should be entered elsewhere. Winning entries should exhibit the flavor profile and balance that would be appropriate to the base style of beer. Beers with noticeable barrel or spice flavor should be entered elsewhere. Brewers should note the intended style of the beer, or the classic style that they have used as their base (i.e. Imperial Pilsner or Imperial Red Ale). Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging.

Wild & Sour Ales

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 in a traditional style such as Berliner Weisse, Gose, Flanders Red or Lambic or may be brewed with traditional mixed culture fermentations, spontaneous fermentations, or blending. “Funky” notes of Brettanomyces or other non-traditional yeast may be present in high levels. Beers in this category may show elevated levels of acidity, due to the presence of bacteria. Acid levels in these beers may vary from very low to medium-high, but they should be in balance with or secondary to the wild/Brett character. This category may include beers with fruits, spices, or other flavorings. Wood-aging is an acceptable component of beers in this category, but strong oak or barrel-related flavors should be secondary. 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. Brett beers with strong oak or barrel-related flavors should be entered into the Barrel Aged (sour) category. Beers in this category may exhibit high levels of hop character as well as fruit, spice or other flavorings; however they should not detract from the overall sour beer profile. Beers entered in this category will require substantial explanation from the brewer in order to be judged appropriately. Brewers should note process, ingredients and objectives in order to paint a full picture of the beer being judged. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging.