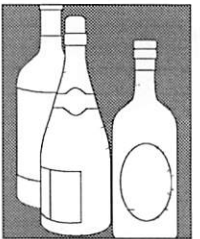


BEER AND WINE



EVALUATING BEERS

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of home brewing, requiring time and refinement, is the development of the perception of all aspects of flavor, body, aroma and other character which we will conveniently lump into the term beer evaluation. While taste is of course subjective as to preference, it is definable as to particular characteristics of sweetness versus bitterness, etc. Each beer style and in fact every batch of beer, will present a unique balance (or lack thereof) of maltiness, hop character, aroma, carbonation, appearance, head retention, and almost any other attribute relating to beer you can think of. As you get more involved with the making of beer, you should also develop your ability to appreciate and describe what you make and taste. That will let you pinpoint what you like and dislike in a beer. Additionally, awareness of characteristic tastes and aromas will often help in troubleshooting flaws in beers. Finally, by learning and using a common set of terms as developed by homebrewers over the years, you'll be able to communicate effectively about the beers you share.

Homebrewers have developed rating systems which generally assign points broken down in categories as follows:

Aroma

Desirable is a top aroma, malt or grainy smell, as befits particular beer styles. Off aromas are undesirable.

Appearance

Clarity and color are observed, as is beading, i.e. the steady rise of gas bubbles. Desirable qualities of the head are also noted, such as small bubbles, and foam legs along the glass as you drink.

Taste

Maltiness, hoppiness and balance are rated, again depending on the type of beer being tasted. Off flavors, such as sourness, take points away.

Condition

This refers to the carbonation. The beer should have a nice sparkle, a tingle over the tongue, but not a bite. Head retention is also evaluated, more being required for full bodied dark beers than for light beers.

Consistency with Beer Style

While an individual beer may taste great, points may be deducted if it doesn't match the general description for the type of beer (the brewer attempted to produce. For example, even if a beer would be a great Pale Ale, if it lacks a strong hop character, it should lose points if presented to the taster as an India Pale Ale.

Overall

All of the above factors are considered and blended into an overall judgement of the beer.

Following these evaluations, the points assigned to each category are added up to form an overall rating for the beer. By using a consistent system for each beer you taste and by thinking about the separate qualities which together make up the overall taste sensation and beer quality, you'll train yourself to become an expert beer judge. Individual preferences notwithstanding, experienced beer judges, using a defined system, will usually generate very similar scores when tasting any given beer.

Wine

A number 9 cork which measures $15/16$ " in diameter and $1\ 1/2$ " in length is the standard wine bottle cork and provides the best seal. It requires a good corker such as the lever hand corker to insert properly. A number 8 cork is $1/16$ " smaller and is easier when using a simple hand corker, but will not seal as securely. A number 8 cork is best for bottling in tenths ($1/2$ wine bottle), which have a smaller opening.

If the corks are difficult to seal (caused by the pressure built up in the remaining air space), a thin wire such as a .020" wire can be inserted in the neck of the bottle and withdrawn after the cork is in place to relieve the pressure.

After corking, leave the bottles upright for a day or two and observe that the corks stay in place. Store the bottles on their sides to keep the cork moist. If the cork is allowed to dry out air will get to the wine and the bottles may leak. The bottling procedure adds a bit of oxygen to the wine which sometimes causes "bottle sickness." A month or two of resting in the wine cellar will cure this disease.

With your newly bottled wine stored securely, stand back and admire your handiwork. It is a good feeling to see the bottles lined up, ready to be selected for the appropriate medal or moment, whenever you desire. The gift of your own wine, whether a glass or a whole bottle makes a noble present and one which can't be duplicated. Finally, you will find your appreciation of all wines enhanced because of all you have learned.

Sparkling Wines

To make champagne or sparkling wine, start with a clear, stable, dry still wine, low in alcohol (10-11%). It is a good idea to chill the wine for several weeks to settle out tartrates.

When you are ready to bottle, assemble washed champagne bottles, plastic champagne stoppers and champagne wires. Dissolve a 5 gram packet of champagne yeast in $1/2$ cup tepid water and leave for $1/2$ hour.

Add 2 teaspoons of sugar to each bottle and 10 drops of the yeast solution. Fill the bottles to within 2" of the top. Insert stoppers and wire securely. Store upright at 70 degrees for a week. After that the wine may be moved to a cooler place. Bottles can be stored inside cartons which will protect the surroundings if one should "pop".

Chill the wine before serving and pour at eye level, watching the sediment. Cease pouring when the sediment nears the neck.

WINE EVALUATION POINT SYSTEM

The following is an explanation of the various categories of wine evaluation. Only experience will make you an expert.

Appearance (Maximum 3)

3 - Excellent	Brilliant with outstanding characteristic color
2 - Good	Clear with characteristic color
1 - Poor	Slight haze and/or slight off color
0 - Objectionable	Cloudy and/or off color

Aroma and Bouquet (Maximum 6)

6 - Extraordinary	Unmistakable characteristic aroma of grape variety or wine type. Outstanding and complex bouquet. Well balanced.
5 - Excellent	Characteristic aroma. Complex bouquet. Well balanced.
4 - Good	Characteristic aroma. Distinguishable bouquet.
3 - Pleasant	Slight aroma and bouquet. Pleasant.
2 - Acceptable	No perceptible aroma or bouquet or with slight off odors.
1 - Poor	Off odors. May be drinkable.
0 - Objectionable	Objectionable and offensive odors.

Taste (Maximum 6)

6 - Extraordinary	Unmistakable characteristic flavor of a grape variety or wine type. Extraordinary balance. Smooth, full bodied and overwhelming.
5 - Excellent	All of the above but a little less. Excellent but not overwhelming.
4 - Good	Characteristic grape variety or wine type flavor. Good balance. Smooth. May have minor imperfections.
3 - Pleasant	Undistinguished wine but pleasant. May have minor faults.
2 - Acceptable	Undistinguished wine with more pronounced faults than above.
1 - Poor	Disagreeable flavors. May be drinkable with strong foods.
0 - Objectionable	Undrinkable. Offensive flavors.

Aftertaste (Maximum 3)

3 - Excellent	Lingering outstanding aftertaste
2 - Good	Pleasant aftertaste
1 - Poor	Little or no distinguishable aftertaste
0 - Objectionable	Unpleasant aftertaste

Overall Impression (Maximum 2)

2 - Excellent
1 - Good
0 - Poor

Total Scores

18-20	Extraordinary	9-11	Pleasant
15-17	Excellent	6-9	Acceptable
12-14	Good	0-5	Poor and Objectionable