

# 2017 AUSTRALIAN AMATEUR BREWING CHAMPIONSHIP

## STYLE GUIDELINES

The following Categories and Styles have been agreed upon for the 2017 competition.

Entrants to the Australian Amateur Brewing Championship must first qualify by placing 1st , 2nd or 3rd at an endorsed State Championship. Brewers are then entitled to enter a beer in that Category in the AABC. See [www.aabc.org.au](http://www.aabc.org.au)

Beers will be judged against the Style Guidelines in this document. For this reason, brewers must specify one of the listed Styles for each entry. Please read the style guidelines before entering to ensure that you provide any additional information; this is especially important for Specialty Beers.

The organizers reserve the right to reclassify non-conforming entries to a listed Style.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to the BJCP 2015 Guidelines .....	4	1.4. Dark Mild .....	9
AABC2017 changes .....	4	1.5. German Leichtbier .....	9
Introduction to Beer Styles By BJCP .....	5	1.6. Czech Pale Lager .....	10
Basic Categorization .....	5	1.7. Ordinary Bitter .....	10
Common Attributes of All Beer Styles.....	5	2. Pale Lager.....	12
Glossary .....	5	2.1. Australian Lager [AABC].....	12
Hop Terms.....	6	2.2. Australian Premium Lager [AABC]	12
Malt or Mashing Terms.....	6	2.3. International Pale Lager .....	12
Yeast or Fermentation Terms .....	6	2.4. Munich Helles.....	13
Quality or Off-Flavour Terms .....	7	2.5. German Helles Exportbier (Dortmunder).....	13
Appearance Terms .....	7	2.6. Pre-Prohibition Lager (Classic American Pilsner) .....	14
Colour Reference.....	7	2.7. German Pils.....	14
Style Organization .....	7	2.8. Czech Premium Pale Lager (Bohemian Pils) .....	15
1. Low Alcohol (<4% ABV) .....	8	2.9. Festbier.....	16
1.1. Light Australian Lager [AABC].....	8	2.10. Helles Bock .....	16
1.2. Scottish Light.....	8	3. Amber and Dark Lager.....	18
1.3. London Brown Ale .....	8	3.1. International Amber Lager .....	18

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

3.2. Czech Amber Lager .....	18	9.1. Sweet Stout .....	39
3.3. Munich Dunkel.....	19	9.2. Irish Stout .....	39
3.4. Vienna Lager.....	19	9.3. Oatmeal Stout.....	40
3.5. Märzen .....	20	9.4. Irish Extra Stout .....	41
3.6. Czech Dark Lager .....	20	10 Strong Stout.....	42
3.7. Schwarzbier .....	21	10.1. Tropical Stout.....	42
3.8. California Common.....	22	10.2. Foreign Extra Stout.....	42
3.9. Dunkles Bock.....	22	10.3. American Stout .....	43
4. Pale Ale.....	24	10.4. Imperial Stout.....	43
4.1. Cream Ale.....	24	11. India Pale Ale .....	45
4.2. Blonde Ale .....	24	11.1. English IPA.....	45
4.3. Kölsch .....	25	11.2. American IPA.....	46
4.4. Belgian Pale Ale.....	25	12. Specialty IPA.....	47
4.5. Australian Sparkling Ale.....	26	12.1. Specialty IPA: White IPA .....	47
5. American Pale Ale.....	28	12.2. Specialty IPA: Red IPA .....	48
5.1. American Pale Ale .....	28	12.3. Specialty IPA: Brown IPA.....	48
6. Bitter Ale.....	29	12.4. Specialty IPA: Rye IPA.....	49
6.1. Australian Bitter Ale [AABC] .....	29	12.5. Specialty IPA: Belgian IPA.....	50
6.2. British Golden Ale .....	29	12.6. Specialty IPA: Black IPA.....	50
6.3. Best Bitter .....	30	12.7. Specialty IPA: Double IPA.....	51
6.4. American Amber Ale.....	30	13. Wheat & Rye Ale .....	53
6.5. Altbier .....	31	13.1. Weissbier.....	53
6.6. Strong Bitter .....	32	13.2. Witbier .....	53
7. Brown Ale.....	33	13.3. Dunkles Weissbier.....	54
7.1. Scottish Heavy .....	33	13.4. Roggenbier .....	55
7.2. Scottish Export .....	33	13.5. American Wheat Beer .....	55
7.3. Irish Red Ale .....	34	13.6. Weizenbock.....	56
7.4. Australian Dark/Old Ale [AABC].....	34	13.7. Wheatwine.....	57
7.5. British Brown Ale .....	35	14. Sour Ale .....	58
7.6. American Brown Ale .....	35	14.1. Berliner Weisse.....	58
8. Porter.....	37	14.2. Gose .....	58
8.1. English Porter .....	37	14.3. Flanders Red Ale .....	59
8.2. American Porter.....	37	14.4. Lambic .....	60
8.3. Baltic Porter.....	38	14.5. Gueuze .....	60
9. Stout .....	39	14.6. Fruit Lambic.....	61

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

14.7. Oud Bruin.....	62	Introduction to Specialty-Type Beer.....	81
14.8. Brett Beer.....	63	18.1. Rauchbier.....	82
14.9. Mixed-Fermentation Sour Beer.....	63	18.2. Classic Style Smoked Beer.....	83
15. Belgian Ale.....	65	18.3. Specialty Smoked Beer.....	83
15.1. Saison.....	65	18.4. Wood-Aged Beer.....	84
15.2. Bière de Garde.....	66	18.5. Specialty Wood-Aged Beer.....	85
15.3. Trappist Single.....	67	18.6. Belgian Specialty Ale [AABC].....	86
15.4. Belgian Blond Ale.....	67	18.7. Alternative Grain Beer.....	86
15.5. Belgian Dubbel.....	68	18.8. Alternative Sugar Beer.....	87
15.6. Belgian Tripel.....	68	18.9. Experimental Beer.....	87
15.7. Belgian Golden Strong Ale.....	69	19. Mead.....	89
15.8. Belgian Dark Strong Ale.....	69	Introduction to Mead Guidelines.....	89
16. Strong Ales & Lagers.....	71	19.1. Dry Mead.....	92
16.1. Wee Heavy.....	71	19.2. Semi-sweet Mead.....	92
16.2. Doppelbock.....	71	19.3. Sweet Mead.....	92
16.3. Eisbock.....	72	19.4. Fruit Mead (Melomel).....	93
16.4. British Strong Ale.....	72	19.5. Fruit & Spice Mead.....	94
16.5. Old Ale.....	73	19.6. Braggot.....	95
16.6. American Strong Ale.....	74	19.7. Other Mead.....	96
16.7. English Barleywine.....	75	20. Cider.....	97
16.8. American Barleywine.....	75	Introduction to Cider Guidelines.....	97
17. Fruit/Spice/Herb/Vegetable Beer.....	77	20.1. New World (Common) Cider.....	99
17.1. Fruit Beer.....	77	20.2. English Cider.....	99
17.2. Spice, Herb, or Vegetable Beer.....	77	20.3. French Cider.....	99
17.3. Autumn Seasonal Beer.....	78	20.4. Perry (New World, Traditional).....	100
17.4. Winter Seasonal Beer.....	79	20.5. Other Cider/Perry.....	100
18. Specialty Beer.....	81		

# 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

## INTRODUCTION TO THE BJCP 2015 GUIDELINES (upon which the AABC 2017 guidelines are based)

*The 2015 BJCP Style Guidelines ([www.bjcp.org](http://www.bjcp.org)) are a major revision from the 2008 edition. The goals of the new edition are to better address world beer styles as found in their local markets, keep pace with emerging craft beer market trends, describe historical beers now finding a following, better describe the sensory characteristics of modern brewing ingredients, take advantage of new research and references, and help competition organizers better manage the complexity of their events.*

*Many new styles have been added, and some existing styles have been divided into multiple categories or simply renamed. The groupings of styles into categories has a new philosophy that groups styles with similar judging characteristics rather than a common heritage or family name. Do not assume that the same primary characteristic (e.g., colour, strength, balance, dominant flavour, country of origin) was used to determine each category grouping; the reasoning was more variable and nuanced. Some changes have been made to allow us to be more agile in making future revisions. Finally, we have provided some additional guidance on how to use the guidelines to reduce the potential for misuse that we have observed in past editions.*

*If you are familiar with the 2008 guidelines, note that many category names and numbers are changing. Note that we have added an Introduction to Beer Styles section, just as we have had in the past with Mead and Cider styles. This new section addresses common characteristics of beer, and attributes that are assumed by default to be present or absent unless otherwise noted.*

## AABC2017 CHANGES

*A major update on AABC2014 Guidelines to incorporate the improved style descriptions in BJCP 2015. It also split some of the categories with the largest numbers of entries (e.g. Specialty, IPAs) and combined some of the smaller categories (Pale Lager & Pilsner, Strong Ale & Strong Lager). The styles with names appended by [AABC] are specific AABC guidelines.*

# 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

## INTRODUCTION TO BEER

### STYLES BY BJCP

In order to reduce the size of style descriptions, we use some basic shorthand or jargon to represent more complex thoughts, and we also omit some items that should only be noted in exception circumstances. Some terminology may have different meanings in certain parts of the world, so we define our usages to avoid confusion. We also identify certain characteristics that are assumed not to be present in all beer styles so we don't have to repeat those restrictions in every style.

### BASIC CATEGORIZATION

The most general categorization of beer styles by yeast type is a modern craft brewing phenomenon. American brewers and most other craft brewers call beers *ales* if they use top-fermenting (ale) yeast and *lagers* if they use bottom-fermenting (lager) yeast. Most categorization systems will allow for a third classification, often called spontaneously-fermented because of the method; however, *wild* is perhaps a more widely-used modern craft beer term for these beers fermented with bacteria or non-saccharomyces yeast. The term *wild* in this context does not imply spontaneous fermentation; most are directly inoculated with the desired fermentation strains.

In Germany and other old world brewing centers, the terminology most typically used to differentiate beers is to refer to them as *top-fermenting* or *bottom-fermenting*. Germans think of ale as a type of English beer, and lager as a method of conditioning beer. So Germans would typically speak of Kölsch as a top-fermenting lager beer, not an ale.

English brewers, particularly when dealing in a historical context, might separate ales from porters and stouts as types of beer (although in the next breath, saying there is no difference between porters and stouts). When dealing in even more historical contexts, they might go even further to describe ale as distinct from beer in that beer was hopped (or more highly hopped) than ale. These historical notes are important for understanding old recipes and writings, but have little relevance today in the common usages of terms describing beer.

These guidelines attempt to use the modern craft beer definitions of *ale*, *lager*, and *wild* as the major groupings of beer styles, but will

mention how they might be described in local or regional contexts, if possible.

### COMMON ATTRIBUTES OF ALL BEER

#### STYLES

The attributes discussed in this section are assumed to be present in every beer style description unless otherwise noted. It is not necessary to repeat all these characteristics for every style description. *Do not assume that since a characteristic (such as diacetyl) isn't mentioned in a style description that somehow it is allowable.*

Unless explicitly noted in an individual style description, all beer styles are assumed to be cleanly fermented and free from technical faults, including acetaldehyde, astringency, chlorophenols, diacetyl, DMS, fusel alcohol, and phenolics. All beer styles are assumed to be free of packaging and handling faults, including oxidation, light-struck, sour, and musty characteristics.

In mouthfeel, all beers are assumed to be free from astringency, and not be creamy or have any other palate sensations unless otherwise noted. Beers with an alcohol level of 6% or less are assumed to not have the flavour or warming nature of alcohol, unless otherwise noted. Higher-alcohol beers that have a noticeable alcohol presence should not be harsh, hot, solventy, or burning. The alcohol character if noted, should be clean and not have fusel alcohols.

Lagers tend to be smooth, clean, and free of esters, but may have slight yeast-derived sulfur notes that are often fleeting. Styles made with a large amount of Pilsner malt may have low DMS notes; this is not a fault, but it is also not required unless otherwise noted. In both cases, the small amounts of sulfur and/or DMS should not be taken as meaning that prominent quantities are somehow desirable – they're not. Just be aware that the use of some traditional ingredients often leave small sensory indications of their presence that might be considered faults in other contexts; that is perfectly acceptable, although not required.

Unless otherwise noted, assume all lagers to not have any fruitiness (esters). Ales tend to be less smooth than lagers, so unless otherwise noted, assume all ales may have some esters (not required, but not a fault).

### GLOSSARY

*Some terminology used in the style guidelines may be unfamiliar to some readers. Rather*

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

than include a complete dictionary, we have highlighted a few terms that either may not be well understood, or that imply specific meanings within the guidelines. Sometimes ingredient names are used as a shorthand for the character they provide to beer. When judges use these terms, they don't necessarily imply that those specific ingredients have been used, just that the perceived characteristics match those commonly provided by the mentioned ingredients.

### HOP TERMS

**American hops** – modern American brewing hops from the craft beer era, typically having citrusy, resinous, evergreen, or similar characteristics. More modern hops can add even more unusual and experimental characteristics, such as stone fruit, berry, and melon.

**Old World hops** – traditional European brewing hops, including Saazer-type hops, British brewing hops, and those other varieties from continental Europe. Typically described as floral, spicy, herbal, or earthy. Generally less intense than many New World hops.

**New World hops** – American hops, along with those from Australia and New Zealand, and other non-Old World locations. Can have all the attributes of classic American hops, as well as tropical fruit, stone fruit, white grape, and other interesting aromatics.

**Saazer-type hops** – often called noble hops, traditionally among the finest continental European brewing hops. Often having a lightly floral, spicy, or herbal character; rarely brash and aggressive, typically more subtle and elegant in nature.

### MALT OR MASHING TERMS

**Munich malt** – can provide a bread-like, richly malty quality that enhances the malt backbone of a beer without adding residual sweetness, although some can confuse maltiness with sweetness. Darker Munich malts can add a deeply toasted malt quality similar to toasted bread crusts.

**Vienna malt** – can provide a bread-like-toasty malt presence, but don't expect the toasted notes to be extreme – they're more like untoasted bread crusts than toasted bread.

**Pilsner or Pils malt** – continental Pilsner malt is quite distinctive, and has a slightly sweet, lightly grainy character with a soft, slightly toasty, honey-like quality. Higher in DMS precursors than other malts, its use can sometimes result in a low corny DMS flavour.

**Maillard products** – a class of compounds produced from complex interactions between sugars and amino acids at high temperatures, resulting in brown colours and rich, malty, sometimes even somewhat meaty compounds. In previous versions of the guidelines, known as melanoidins, which are a subset of Maillard products responsible for red-brown colours (and, according to Kunze, are “aroma-intensive”). In some brewing literature, melanoidin and Maillard product are used interchangeably. The chemistry and flavour characterization is not well understood, so brewers and judges should avoid excessively pedantic discussions around these points. The takeaway is that we mean the richly malty flavours, and need some kind of convenient shorthand to discuss them. Maillard is pronounced, roughly, as “my-YARD.”

**Biscuity** – dry, toasted grain, flour, or dough flavour reminiscent of English digestive biscuits; in brewing, a flavour commonly associated with Biscuit malt and some traditional English malts.

### YEAST OR FERMENTATION TERMS

**Clean fermentation profile** – the quality of having very low to no yeast-derived fermentation by-products in the finished beer, typically implying that there are no esters, diacetyl, acetaldehyde, or similar components, except if specifically mentioned. A shorthand for saying that the long list of possible fermentation by-products are not present in significant or appreciable quantities (barely perceived trace quantities at the threshold of perception are typically acceptable, nonetheless).

**Pome fruit** – apple, pear, quince. The botanical classification contains other fruit, but these are the common ones we mean.

**Stone fruit** – fleshy fruit with a single pit (or stone), such as cherry, plum, peach, apricot, mango, etc.

**Brett** – shorthand term for *Brettanomyces*, an attenuative genus of yeast that often is used to produce fruity or funky complex flavours (leather, sweat, funk, etc.) in fermented beverages. Literally means “British fungus” and is often associated with qualities produced during barrel aging. Common species used in brewing include *B. bruxellensis* and *B. anomalus*, although they are sometimes known by other names; several strains exist with very different profiles (as with *S. cerevisiae*). May be used as a primary fermentation or secondary fermentation strain.

# 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

## QUALITY OR OFF-FLAVOUR TERMS

**Adjunct quality** – a characteristic of beer aroma, flavour, and mouthfeel that reflects the use of higher percentages of non-malt fermentables. Can present as a corny character, a lighter body than an all-malt product, or a generally thinner-tasting beer. Does not necessarily imply the use of any specific adjunct.

**DMS** – Dimethyl Sulfide, which can take on a wide range of perceptual characteristics. Most are inappropriate in any style of beer; however, a light cooked corn quality may be apparent in beers with high levels of Pilsner malt. When the guidelines state that any levels of DMS are appropriate, it is this light cooked corn flavour, not other cooked vegetable characteristics or other DMS flavours.

**Rustic** – coarse, hearty, robust character reminiscent of older, traditional ingredients; perhaps less refined as a general sensory experience.

**Elegant** – smooth, tasteful, refined, pleasant character suggestive of high quality ingredients handled with care; lacking rough edges, sharp flavours, and palate-attacking sensations.

**Funky** – A positive or negative term, depending on the context. If expected or desirable, can often take on a barnyard, wet hay, slightly earthy, horse blanket, or farmyard character. If too intense, unexpected, or undesirable, can take the form of silage, fecal, baby diaper, or horse stall qualities.

## APPEARANCE TERMS

**Belgian Lace (Lacing)** – a characteristic and persistent latticework pattern of foam left on the inside of the glass as a beer is consumed. The look is reminiscent of fine lacework from Brussels or Belgium, and is a desirable indicator of beer quality in Belgium.

**Legs** – a pattern that a beverage leaves on the inside of a glass after a portion has been consumed. The term refers to the droplets that slowly fall in streams from beverage residue on the side of the glass. Not an indication of quality, but can indicate a higher alcohol, sugar, or glycerol content.

## COLOUR REFERENCE

*Note that SRM is a measure of beer colour density more than hue/tint. Keep this in mind when attempting to use only SRM numbers when describing beers. Within these Guidelines, beer colour descriptors generally follow this mapping to SRM values:*

Straw	2-3
Yellow	3-4
Gold	5-6
Amber	6-9
Deep amber/light copper	10-14
Copper	14-17
Deep copper/light brown	17-18
Brown	19-22
Dark Brown	22-30
Very Dark Brown	30-35
Black	30+
Black, opaque	40+

## STYLE ORGANIZATION

The beer styles described in the guidelines have been categorized to assist with running homebrew competitions. Categories (the major groupings of styles) are artificial constructs that represent a collection of individual beer styles that may or may not have any historical, geographic, or traditional relationship with each other. Do not infer that membership in a style category somehow relates beer styles with each other. The only reason why they are grouped together is to assist with managing the scale and complexity of competitions. The names given to the groupings are for competition purposes only, and may not be used in any broader contexts in the beer and brewing industries.

**Competitions do not have to judge each style category separately;** they may be combined, split, or otherwise reorganized for competition purposes. Competition organizers are free to combine styles into their own competition categories. As long as each submitted beer is judged against the identified style, any logical grouping is permitted.

### **Serving temperature for judging:**

Judging will be carried out at appropriate serving temperatures for the beers, typically 8–12°C for ales and 5–7°C for lagers.

## 1. LOW ALCOHOL (<4% ABV)

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### 1.1. LIGHT AUSTRALIAN LAGER [AABC]

**Overall Impression:** Light-coloured, clean tasting beer. Low flavour levels make off-flavours obvious.

**Aroma:** Little to no malt aroma, although it can be slightly sweet if present. Little to no hop aroma. No fruitiness or diacetyl.

**Appearance:** Very clear. Light straw to pale yellow colour. High carbonation causing a medium white frothy head that seldom persists.

**Flavour:** Crisp and clean, dry flavour with some low levels of sweetness and some lingering hop bitterness at finish. Hop flavour ranges from none to low levels. Balance initially towards sweetness but with finish tending to dry/bitter. High levels of carbonation may provide a slight acidity or dryness. No diacetyl or fruitiness.

**Mouthfeel:** Very light to thin body, often from use of a high percentage of adjuncts. May seem watery. Very highly carbonated with slight carbonic bite on the tongue.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.028 – 1.035  
IBUs: 10 – 15 FG: 1.004 – 1.008  
SRM: 2 – 4 ABV: 2.8 – 3.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Cascade Premium Light

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### 1.2. SCOTTISH LIGHT

**Overall Impression:** A malt-focused, generally caramelly beer with perhaps a few esters and occasionally a butterscotch aftertaste. Hops only to balance and support the malt. The malt character can range from dry and grainy to rich, toasty, and caramelly, but is never roasty and especially never has a peat smoke character. Traditionally the darkest of the Scottish ales, sometimes nearly black but lacking any burnt, overtly roasted character.

**Aroma:** Low to medium maltness, often with flavours of toasted breadcrumbs, lady fingers, and English biscuits. Low to medium caramel and low butterscotch is allowable. Light pome fruitiness in best examples. May have low traditional English hop aroma (earthy, floral, orange-citrus, spicy, etc.). Peat smoke is inappropriate.

**Appearance:** Pale copper to very dark brown. Clear. Low to moderate, creamy off-white.

**Flavour:** Entirely malt-focused, with flavours ranging from pale, bready malt with caramel overtones to rich-toasty malt with roasted accents (but never roasty) or a combination thereof. Fruity esters are not required but add depth yet are never high. Hop bitterness to balance the malt. No to low hop flavour is also allowed and should of traditional English character (earthy, floral, orange-citrus, spicy, etc.). Finish ranges from rich and malty to dry and grainy. A subtle butterscotch character is acceptable; however, burnt sugars are not. The

malt-hop balance tilts toward malt. Peat smoke is inappropriate.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-low to medium body. Low to moderate carbonation. Can be relatively rich and creamy to dry and grainy.

**Comments:** Malt-focused ales that gain the vast majority of their character from specialty malts, never the process. Burning malt or wort sugars via 'kettle caramelization' is not traditional nor is any blatantly 'butterscotch' character. Most frequently a draught product. Smoke character is inappropriate as any found traditionally would have come from the peat in the source water. Scottish ales with smoke character should be entered as a *Classic Style Smoked Beer*.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Originally used Scottish pale malt, grits or flaked maize, and brewers caramel for colour. Later adapted to use additional ingredients, such as amber and brown malts, crystal and wheat malts, and roasted grains or dark sugars for colour but not for the 'roasty' flavour. Sugar adjuncts are traditional. Clean or slightly fruity yeast. Peat-smoked malt is inauthentic and inappropriate.

**Style Comparison:** Similar character to a Wee Heavy, but much smaller. Similar in colour to a Dark Mild, but a little weaker in strength.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.030 – 1.035  
IBUs: 10 – 20 FG: 1.010 – 1.013  
SRM: 17 – 22 ABV: 2.5 – 3.2%

**Commercial Examples:** McEwan's 60

**Tags:** session-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, amber-ale-family, malty

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### 1.3. LONDON BROWN ALE

**Overall Impression:** A luscious, sweet, malt-oriented dark brown ale, with caramel and toffee malt complexity and a sweet finish.

**Aroma:** Moderate malty-sweet aroma, often with a rich, caramel or toffee-like character. Low to medium fruity esters, often dark fruit like plums. Very low to no hop aroma, earthy or floral qualities.

**Appearance:** Medium to very dark brown colour, but can be nearly black. Nearly opaque, although should be relatively clear if visible. Low to moderate off-white to tan head.

**Flavour:** Deep, caramel or toffee-like malty and sweet flavour on the palate and lasting into the finish. Hints of biscuit and coffee are common. Some fruity esters can be present (typically dark fruit); relatively clean fermentation profile for an English ale. Low hop bitterness. Hop flavour is low to non-existent, possibly earthy or floral in character. Moderately-low to no perceivable roasty or bitter black malt flavour. Moderately sweet finish with a smooth, malty aftertaste. May have a sugary-sweet flavour.



## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Mouthfeel:** Medium body, but the residual sweetness may give a heavier impression. Medium-low to medium carbonation. Quite creamy and smooth in texture, particularly for its gravity.

**Comments:** Increasingly rare; Mann's has over 90% market share in Britain, but in an increasingly small segment. Always bottled. Frequently used as a sweet mixer with cask mild and bitter in pubs. Commercial versions can be pasteurized and back-sweetened, which gives more of a sugary-sweet flavour.

**History:** Developed by Mann's as a bottled product in 1902. Claimed at the time to be "the sweetest beer in London." Pre-WWI versions were around 5% ABV, but same general balance. Declined in popularity in second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, and now nearly extinct.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** English pale ale malt as a base with a healthy proportion of darker caramel malts and often some roasted (black) malt and wheat malt (this is Mann's traditional grist – others can rely on dark sugars for colour and flavour). Moderate to high carbonate water. English hop varieties are most authentic, though with low flavour and bitterness almost any type could be used. Post-fermentation sweetening with lactose or artificial sweeteners, or sucrose (if pasteurized).

**Style Comparison:** May seem somewhat like a less roasty version of a sweet stout (and lower-gravity, at least for US sweet stout examples) or a sweet version of a dark mild.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.033 – 1.038  
IBUs: 15 – 20 FG: 1.012 – 1.015  
SRM: 22 – 35 ABV: 2.8 – 3.6%

**Commercial Examples:** Harveys Bloomsbury Brown Ale, Mann's Brown Ale

**Tags:** session-strength, dark-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, historical-style, brown-ale-family, malty, sweet

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### 1.4. DARK MILD

**Overall Impression:** A dark, low-gravity, malt-focused British session ale readily suited to drinking in quantity. Refreshing, yet flavourful, with a wide range of dark malt or dark sugar expression.

**Aroma:** Low to moderate malt aroma, and may have some fruitiness. The malt expression can take on a wide range of character, which can include caramel, toffee, grainy, toasted, nutty, chocolate, or lightly roasted. Little to no hop aroma, earthy or floral if present. Very low to no diacetyl.

**Appearance:** Copper to dark brown or mahogany colour. A few paler examples (medium amber to light brown) exist. Generally clear, although is traditionally unfiltered. Low to moderate off-white to tan head; retention may be poor.

**Flavour:** Generally a malty beer, although may have a very wide range of malt- and yeast-based flavours (e.g., malty, sweet, caramel, toffee, toast, nutty, chocolate, coffee, roast, fruit, licorice, plum, raisin). Can finish sweet to dry. Versions with darker malts may have a dry, roasted finish. Low to moderate bitterness, enough to provide some

balance but not enough to overpower the malt. Fruity esters moderate to none. Diacetyl and hop flavour low to none.

**Mouthfeel:** Light to medium body. Generally low to medium-low carbonation. Roast-based versions may have a light astringency. Sweeter versions may seem to have a rather full mouthfeel for the gravity.

**Comments:** Most are low-gravity session beers around 3.2%, although some versions may be made in the stronger (4%+) range for export, festivals, seasonal and/or special occasions. Generally served on cask; session-strength bottled versions don't often travel well. A wide range of interpretations are possible. Pale versions exist, but these are even more rare than dark milds; these guidelines only describe the modern dark version.

**History:** Historically, 'mild' was simply an unaged beer, and could be used as an adjective to distinguish between aged or more highly hopped keeping beers. Modern milds trace their roots to the weaker X-type ales of the 1800s, although dark milds did not appear until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In current usage, the term implies a lower-strength beer with less hop bitterness than bitters. The guidelines describe the modern British version. The term 'mild' is currently somewhat out of favor with consumers, and many breweries no longer use it. Increasingly rare. ***There is no historic connection or relationship between Mild and Porter.***

**Style Comparison:** Some versions may seem like lower-gravity modern English porters. Much less sweet than London Brown Ale.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pale British base malts (often fairly dextrinous), crystal malt, dark malts or dark sugar adjuncts, may also include adjuncts such as flaked maize, and may be coloured with brewer's caramel. Characterful British ale yeast. Any type of hops, since their character is muted and rarely is noticeable.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.030 – 1.038  
IBUs: 10 – 25 FG: 1.008 – 1.013  
SRM: 12 – 25 ABV: 3.0 – 3.8%

**Commercial Examples:** Banks's Mild, Cain's Dark Mild, Highgate Dark Mild, Brain's Dark, Moorhouse Black Cat, Rudgate Ruby Mild, Theakston Traditional Mild

**Tags:** session-strength, dark-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, brown-ale-family, malty

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### 1.5. GERMAN LEICHTBIER

**Overall Impression:** A pale, highly-attenuated, light-bodied German lager with lower alcohol and calories than normal-strength beers. Moderately bitter with noticeable malt and hop flavours, the beer is still interesting to drink.

**Aroma:** Low to medium hop aroma, with a spicy, herbal, or floral character. Low to medium-low grainy-sweet or slightly crackery malt aroma. Clean fermentation profile.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Appearance:** Straw to pale gold in colour. Brilliant clarity. Moderate white head with average to below average persistence.

**Flavour:** Low to medium grainy-sweet malt flavour initially. Medium hop bitterness. Low to medium hop flavour, with a spicy, herbal, or floral quality. Clean fermentation character, well-lagered. Dry finish with a light malty and hoppy aftertaste.

**Mouthfeel:** Light to very light body. Medium to high carbonation. Smooth, well-attenuated.

**Comments:** Marketed primarily as a diet-oriented beer with lower carbohydrates, alcohol, and calories. Pronounced “LYESHT-beer.” May also be known as a Diat Pils or Helles, this style is in the schankbier gravity class. Other variations of Leicht class beers can be made from Weissbier, Kölsch, and Altbier; those beers are best entered in the *Mixed-Style Beer* category.

**History:** Traditional versions existed as drinks for physical laborers in factories or fields, but modern versions are more based on popular American products in the same class.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Similar to a German Pils or Helles, continental Pils malt, German lager yeast, Saazer-type hops.

**Style Comparison:** Like a lower-alcohol, lighter-bodied, slightly less aggressive German Pils or Helles.

**Vital Statistics:**

OG: 1.026 – 1.034	
IBUs: 15 – 28	FG: 1.006 – 1.010
SRM: 2 – 5	ABV: 2.4 – 3.6%

**Commercial Examples:** Beck's Light, Bitburger Light, Mahr's Leicht, Paulaner Münchner Hell Leicht, Paulaner Premium Leicht

**Tags:** session-strength, pale-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, pale-lager-family, bitter, hoppy

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### 1.6. CZECH PALE LAGER

**Overall Impression:** A lighter-bodied, rich, refreshing, hoppy, bitter pale Czech lager having the familiar flavours of the stronger Czech Premium Pale Lager (Pilsner-type) beer but in a lower alcohol, lighter-bodied, and slightly less intense format.

**Aroma:** Light to moderate bready-rich malt combined with light to moderate spicy or herbal hop bouquet; the balance between the malt and hops may vary. Faint hint of caramel is acceptable. Light (but never intrusive) diacetyl and light, fruity hop-derived esters are acceptable, but need not be present. No sulfur.

**Appearance:** Light gold to deep gold colour. Brilliant to very clear, with a long-lasting, creamy white head.

**Flavour:** Medium-low to medium bready-rich malt flavour with a rounded, hoppy finish. Low to medium-high spicy or herbal hop flavour. Bitterness is prominent but never harsh. Flavourful and refreshing. Diacetyl or fruity esters are acceptable at low levels, but need not be present and should never be overbearing.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body. Moderate carbonation.

**Comments:** The Czech name of the style is *světlé výčepní pivo*.

**History:** Josef Groll initially brewed two types of beer in 1842–3, a *výčepní* and a *ležák*, with the smaller beer having twice the production; Evan Rail speculates that these were probably 10 °P and 12 °P beers, but that the *výčepní* could have been weaker. This is the most consumed type of beer in the Czech Republic at present.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Soft water with low sulfate and carbonate content, Saazer-type hops, Czech Pilsner malt, Czech lager yeast. Low ion water provides a distinctively soft, rounded hop profile despite high hopping rates.

**Style Comparison:** A lighter-bodied, lower-intensity, refreshing, everyday version of Czech Premium Pale Lager.

**Vital Statistics:**

OG: 1.028 – 1.044	
IBUs: 20 – 35	FG: 1.008 – 1.014
SRM: 3 – 6	ABV: 3.0 – 4.1%

**Commercial Examples:** Břežňák Světlé výčepní pivo, Notch Session Pils, Pivovar Kout na Šumavě Koutská 10°, Únětické pivo 10°

**Tags:** session-strength, pale-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, pale-lager-family, bitter, hopp

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### 1.7. ORDINARY BITTER

**Overall Impression:** Low gravity, low alcohol levels, and low carbonation make this an easy-drinking session beer. The malt profile can vary in flavour and intensity, but should never override the overall bitter impression. Drinkability is a critical component of the style

**Aroma:** Low to moderate malt aroma, often (but not always) with a light caramel quality. Bready, biscuity, or lightly toasty malt complexity is common. Mild to moderate fruitiness. Hop aroma can range from moderate to none, typically with a floral, earthy, resinous, and/or fruity character. Generally no diacetyl, although very low levels are allowed.

**Appearance:** Pale amber to light copper colour. Good to brilliant clarity. Low to moderate white to off-white head. May have very little head due to low carbonation.

**Flavour:** Medium to moderately high bitterness. Moderately low to moderately high fruity esters. Moderate to low hop flavour, typically with an earthy, resinous, fruity, and/or floral character. Low to medium maltiness with a dry finish. The malt profile is typically bready, biscuity, or lightly toasty. Low to moderate caramel or toffee flavours are optional. Balance is often decidedly bitter, although the bitterness should not completely overpower the malt flavour, esters and hop flavour. Generally no diacetyl, although very low levels are allowed.

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

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Comments:** The lowest gravity member of the British Bitter family, typically known to consumers simply as “bitter” (although brewers tend to refer to it as Ordinary Bitter to distinguish it from other members of the family).

**History:** See comments in category introduction.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pale ale, amber, and/or crystal malts. May use a touch of dark malt for colour adjustment. May use sugar adjuncts, corn, or wheat. English finishing hops are most traditional, but any hops are fair game; if American hops are used, a light touch is required. Characterful British yeast.

**Style Comparison:** Some modern variants are brewed exclusively with pale malt and are known as

golden ales, summer ales, or golden bitters. Emphasis is on the bittering hop addition as opposed to the aggressive middle and late hopping seen in American ales.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.030 – 1.039  
IBUs: 25 – 35 FG: 1.007 – 1.011  
SRM: 8 – 14 ABV: 3.2 – 3.8%

**Commercial Examples:** Adnams Southwold Bitter, Brains Bitter, Fuller's Chiswick Bitter, Greene King IPA, Tetley's Original Bitter, Young's Bitter

**Tags:** session-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, amber ale-family, bitter

## 2. PALE LAGER

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### 2.1. AUSTRALIAN LAGER [AABC]

**Overall Impression:** Light, refreshing and thirst quenching.

**Aroma:** Little to no malt aroma. Hop aroma may range from low to none and may be flowery. Slight fruity aromas from yeast and hop varieties used may exist. No diacetyl.

**Appearance:** Very pale straw to pale gold colour. White head. Carbonation medium to high. Clarity good to excellent.

**Flavour:** Crisp and dry flavour with some low levels of sweetness. Hop flavour may range from low to medium. Hop bitterness low to medium. Balance can vary from slightly malty to slightly bitter, but is usually close to even. No diacetyl. No fruitiness. Finish tending dry.

**Mouthfeel:** Low to low medium. Well carbonated. Slight carbonic bite on tongue is acceptable.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.040 – 1.050  
IBUs: 10 – 20 FG: 1.004 – 1.010  
SRM: 2 – 4 ABV: 4.5 – 5.1%

**Commercial Examples:** Fosters Lager, Carlton Draught, XXXX, and Tooheys New.

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### 2.2. AUSTRALIAN PREMIUM LAGER [AABC]

**Overall Impression:** A clean, crisp lager, designed basically for quaffing, but containing more interest and more malt and hop character than the typical Australian session lagers.

**Aroma:** A mild, malt aroma, which may be supported by low to moderate, possibly noble, hop notes. Estery fruitiness, diacetyl, and phenolic or yeasty notes should be absent.

**Appearance:** Straw to pale gold. Bright, with a reasonable head. Darker than common Australian lagers, due to the use of less adjuncts.

**Flavour:** Low to moderate mild malt flavour may be supported by low to moderate hop flavours. Bitterness can range from low-medium (lagers) to high-medium (pilsners), resulting in a neutral to slightly bitter malt/bitterness balance. Medium to medium-high carbonation. Crisp and dry. Any fruity flavours, phenolics, yeasty flavours, diacetyl, astringency or harshness, should be penalized.

**Mouthfeel:** Light to light-medium.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.045 – 1.055  
IBUs: 15 – 25 FG: 1.008 – 1.012  
SRM: 2 – 6 ABV: 4.7 – 6.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Malt Shovel Pilsner, Boags Premium Lager.

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### 2.3. INTERNATIONAL PALE LAGER

**Overall Impression:** A highly-attenuated pale lager without strong flavours, typically well-balanced and highly carbonated. Served cold, it is refreshing and thirst-quenching.

**Aroma:** Low to medium-low malt aroma, which can be grainy-malty or slightly corny-sweet. Hop aroma may range from very low to a medium, spicy or floral hop presence. While a clean fermentation profile is generally most desirable, low levels of yeast character (such as a light apple fruitiness) are not a fault. A light amount of DMS or corn aroma is not a fault.

**Appearance:** Pale straw to gold colour. White, frothy head may not be long lasting. Very clear.

**Flavour:** Low to moderate levels of grainy-malt flavour, with a crisp, dry, well-attenuated finish. The grain character can be somewhat neutral, or show a light bready-crackery quality or up to moderate corny or malty sweetness. Hop flavour ranges from none to medium levels, and often showing a floral, spicy, or herbal character if detected. Hop bitterness at medium-low to medium level. Balance may vary from slightly malty to slightly bitter, but is relatively close to even. Neutral aftertaste with light malt and sometimes hop flavours. A light amount of DMS is not a fault.

**Mouthfeel:** Light to medium body. Moderately high to highly carbonated. Can have a slight carbonic bite on the tongue.

**Comments:** International lagers tend to have fewer adjuncts than standard American lagers. They may be all-malt, although strong flavours are still a fault. A broad category of international mass-market lagers ranging from up-scale American lagers to the typical “import” or “green bottle” international beers found in America and many export markets. Often confusingly labeled as a “Pilsner.” Any skunkiness in commercial beers from being lightstruck in a green bottle is a mishandling fault, not a characteristic of the style.

**History:** In the United States, developed as a premium version of the standard American lager, with a similar history. Outside the United States, developed either as an imitation of American style lagers, or as a more accessible (and often drier and less bitter) version of a Pilsner-type beer. Often heavily marketed and exported by large industrial or multi-national breweries.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Two- or six-row barley. May use rice, corn, or sugar as adjuncts, or may be all malt.

**Style Comparison:** Generally more bitter and filling than American lager. Less hoppy and bitter than a German Pils. Less body, malt flavour, and hop character than a Czech Premium Pale Lager. More robust versions can approach a Munich Helles in flavour, although with more of an adjunct quality.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.042 – 1.050  
IBUs: 18 – 25 FG: 1.008 – 1.012  
SRM: 2 – 6 ABV: 4.6 – 6.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Asahi Super Dry, Birra Moretti, Corona Extra, Devils Backbone Gold Leaf

# 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

Lager, Full Sail Session Premium Lager, Heineken, Red Stripe, Singha

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, traditional-style, pale-lager-family, balanced

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## 2.4. MUNICH HELLES

**Overall Impression:** A clean, malty, gold-coloured German lager with a smooth grainy-sweet malty flavour and a soft, dry finish. Subtle spicy, floral, or herbal hops and restrained bitterness help keep the balance malty but not sweet, which helps make this beer a refreshing, everyday drink.

**Aroma:** Moderate grainy-sweet malt aroma. Low to moderately-low spicy, floral, or herbal hop aroma. While a clean aroma is most desirable, a very low background note of DMS is not a fault. Pleasant, clean fermentation profile, with malt dominating the balance. The freshest examples will have more of a malty-sweet aroma.

**Appearance:** Medium yellow to pale gold. Clear. Persistent creamy white head.

**Flavour:** Moderately malty start with the suggestion of sweetness, moderate grainy-sweet malt flavour with a soft, rounded palate impression, supported by a low to medium-low hop bitterness. The finish is soft and dry, not crisp and biting. Low to moderately-low spicy, floral or herbal hop flavour. The malt dominates the hops in the palate, finish, and aftertaste, but the hops should be noticeable. There should not be any residual sweetness, simply the impression of maltiness with restrained bitterness. Very fresh examples will seem sweeter due to the fresh, rich malt character that can fade with time. Clean fermentation profile.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium body. Medium carbonation. Smooth, well-lagered character.

**Comments:** A fully-attenuated Pils malt showcase, Helles is a malt-accentuated beer that is not overly sweet, but rather focuses on malt flavour with underlying hop bitterness in a supporting role. Export examples can quickly lose some of the rich malt character that often suggests sweetness. Helles in Munich tends to be lighter in all aspects than those outside the city, which can be more assertive with more body, flavour, and hop character.

**History:** Created in Munich in 1894 at the Spaten brewery to compete with pale Pilsner-type beers. Currently the most popular style in Southern Germany.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Continental Pilsner malt, traditional German Saazer-type hop varieties, clean German lager yeast.

**Style Comparison:** Similar in malt balance and bitterness to Munich Dunkel, but less malty-sweet in nature and pale rather than dark. More body and malt presence than a German Pils, with less hop character throughout. Similar malt profile as a German Exportbier, but with less hops in the balance.

**Vital Statistics:**  
IBUs: 16 – 22  
SRM: 3 – 5

OG: 1.044 – 1.048
FG: 1.006 – 1.012
ABV: 4.7 – 5.4%

**Commercial Examples:** Augustiner Lagerbier Hell, Bürgerbräu Wolznacher Hell Naturtrüb, Hacker-Pschorr Münchner Gold, Löwenbräu Original, Paulaner Premium Lager, Spaten Premium Lager, Weihenstephaner Original

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, pale-lager-family, malty

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## 2.5. GERMAN HELLES EXPORTBIER (DORTMUNDER)

**Overall Impression:** A pale, well-balanced, smooth German lager that is slightly stronger than the average beer with a moderate body and a mild, aromatic hop and malt character.

**Aroma:** Low to medium hop aroma, typically floral, spicy, or herbal in character. Moderate grainy-sweet malt aroma. Clean fermentation profile. A slight sulfury note at the start that dissipates is not a fault, neither is a low background note of DMS.

**Appearance:** Light gold to deep gold. Clear. Persistent white head.

**Flavour:** Neither grainy-sweet malt nor floral, spicy, or herbal hops dominate, but both are in good balance with a touch of malty sweetness, providing a smooth yet crisply refreshing beer. Balance continues through the finish and the hop bitterness lingers in aftertaste (although some examples may finish slightly sweet). Clean fermentation character. Some mineral character might be noted from the water, although it usually does not come across as an overt mineral flavour.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium body, medium carbonation. Smooth but crisp.

**Comments:** Sometimes known as Dortmunder or Dortmunder Export. Brewed to a slightly higher starting gravity than other light lagers, providing a firm malty body and underlying maltiness to complement the sulfate-accentuated hop bitterness. The term “Export” is a beer strength descriptor under German brewing tradition, and is not strictly synonymous with the “Dortmunder” style; beer from other cities or regions can be brewed to Export strength, and labeled as such (even if not necessarily exported).

**History:** The Dortmunder style developed in the Dortmund industrial region in the 1870s in response to pale Pilsner-type beers, it became very popular after World War II but declined in the 1970s. Other Export-class beers developed independently, and reflected a slightly stronger version of existing beers. The modern German style is typically 12-13 °P.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Mineral water with high levels of sulfates, carbonates and chlorides, German or Czech noble hops, Pilsner malt, German lager yeast. Newer commercial versions can contain adjuncts and hop extract.

**Style Comparison:** Less finishing hops and more body than a Pils but more bitter than a Helles.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.048 – 1.056

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

IBUs: 20 – 30                      FG: 1.010 – 1.015  
SRM: 4 – 7                              ABV: 4.8 – 6.0%

**Commercial Examples:** DAB Original, Dortmund Kronen, Dortmund Union Export, Flensburger Gold, Gordon Biersch Golden Export, Great Lakes Dortmund Gold

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, pale-lager-family, balanced

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### 2.6. PRE-PROHIBITION LAGER (CLASSIC AMERICAN PILSNER)

**Overall Impression:** A clean, refreshing, but bitter pale lager, often showcasing a grainy-sweet corn flavour. All malt or rice-based versions have a crisper, more neutral character. The higher bitterness level is the largest differentiator between this style and most modern mass-market pale lagers, but the more robust flavour profile also sets it apart.

**Aroma:** Low to medium grainy, corn-like or sweet maltiness may be evident (although rice-based beers are more neutral). Medium to moderately high hop aroma, with a range of character from rustic to floral to herbal/spicy; a fruity or citrusy modern hop character is inappropriate. Clean lager character. Low DMS is acceptable. May show some yeast character, as with modern American lagers; allow for a range of subtle supporting yeast notes.

**Appearance:** Yellow to deep gold colour. Substantial, long lasting white head. Bright clarity.

**Flavour:** Medium to medium-high maltiness with a grainy flavour, and optionally a corn-like roundness and impression of sweetness. Substantial hop bitterness stands up to the malt and lingers through the dry finish. All malt and rice-based versions are often crisper, drier, and generally lack corn-like flavours. Medium to high hop flavour, with a rustic, floral, or herbal/spicy character. Medium to high hop bitterness, which should neither be overly coarse nor have a harsh aftertaste. Allow for a range of lager yeast character, as with modern American lagers, but generally fairly neutral.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium body with a moderately rich, creamy mouthfeel. Smooth and well-lagered. Medium to high carbonation levels.

**Comments:** The classic American Pilsner was brewed both pre-Prohibition and post-Prohibition with some differences. OGs of 1.050–1.060 would have been appropriate for pre-Prohibition beers while gravities dropped to 1.044–1.048 after Prohibition. Corresponding IBUs dropped from a pre-Prohibition level of 30–40 to 25–30 after Prohibition.

**History:** A version of Pilsner brewed in the USA by immigrant German brewers who brought the process and yeast with them, but who had to adapt their recipes to work with native hops and malt. This style died out after Prohibition but was resurrected by homebrewers in the 1990s. Few commercial versions are made, so the style still remains mostly a homebrew phenomenon.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Six-row barley with 20% to 30% flaked maize (corn) or rice to dilute the excessive protein levels; modern versions may be all malt. Native American hops such as Clusters, traditional continental hops, or modern noble-type crosses are also appropriate. Modern American hops such as Cascade are inappropriate. Water with a high mineral content can lead to an unpleasant coarseness in flavour and harshness in aftertaste. A wide range of lager yeast character can be exhibited, although modern versions tend to be fairly clean.

**Style Comparison:** Similar balance and bitterness as modern Czech Premium Pale Lagers, but exhibiting native American grains and hops from the era before US Prohibition. More robust, bitter, and flavourful than modern American pale lagers, and often with higher alcohol.

**Vital Statistics:**                      OG: 1.044 – 1.060  
IBUs: 25 – 40                              FG: 1.010 – 1.015  
SRM: 3 – 6                                  ABV: 4.5 – 6.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Anchor California Lager, Coors Batch 19, Little Harpeth Chicken Scratch

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, north-america, historical-style, pilsner-family, bitter, hoppy

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### 2.7. GERMAN PILS

**Overall Impression:** A light-bodied, highly-attenuated, gold-coloured, bottom-fermented bitter German beer showing excellent head retention and an elegant, floral hop aroma. Crisp, clean, and refreshing, a German Pils showcases the finest quality German malt and hops.

**Aroma:** Medium-low to low grainy-sweet-rich malt character (often with a light honey and slightly toasted cracker quality) and distinctive flowery, spicy, or herbal hops. Clean fermentation profile. May optionally have a very light sulfury note that comes from water as much as yeast. The hops are moderately-low to moderately-high, but should not totally dominate the malt presence. One-dimensional examples are inferior to the more complex qualities when all ingredients are sensed. May have a very low background note of DMS.

**Appearance:** Straw to light gold, brilliant to very clear, with a creamy, long-lasting white head.

**Flavour:** Medium to high hop bitterness dominates the palate and lingers into the aftertaste. Moderate to moderately-low grainy-sweet malt character supports the hop bitterness. Low to high floral, spicy, or herbal hop flavour. Clean fermentation profile. Dry to medium-dry, crisp, well-attenuated finish with a bitter aftertaste and light malt flavour. Examples made with water with higher sulfate levels often will have a low sulfury flavour that accentuates the dryness and lengthens the finish; this is acceptable but not mandatory. Some versions have a soft finish with more of a malt flavour, but still with noticeable hop bitterness and flavour, with the balance still towards bitterness.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light body. Medium to high carbonation.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Comments:** Modern examples of Pils tend to become paler in colour, drier in finish, and more bitter as you move from South to North in Germany, often mirroring the increase in sulfate in the water. The Pils found in Bavaria tend to be a bit softer in bitterness with more malt flavour and late hop character, yet still with sufficient hops and crispness of finish to differentiate itself from a Helles. The use of the term 'Pils' is more common in Germany than 'Pilsner' to differentiate it from the Czech style, and (some say) to show respect.

**History:** Adapted from Czech Pilsner to suit brewing conditions in Germany, particularly water with higher mineral content and domestic hop varieties. First brewed in Germany in the early 1870s. Became more popular after WWII as German brewing schools emphasized modern techniques. Along with its sister beer, Czech Pilsner, is the ancestor of the most widely produced beer styles today. Average IBUs of many well-regarded commercial examples have dropped over time.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Continental Pilsner malt, German hop varieties (especially Saazer-type varieties such as Tettnanger, Hallertauer, and Spalt for taste and aroma; Saaz is less common), German lager yeast.

**Style Comparison:** Lighter in body and colour, drier, crisper, and more fully attenuated, with more of a lingering bitterness, and with higher carbonation than a Czech Premium Pale Lager. More hop character, malt flavour, and bitterness than International Pale Lagers. More hop character and bitterness with a drier, crisper finish than a Munich Helles; the Helles has more malt flavour, but of the same character as the Pils.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.044 – 1.050

IBUs: 22 – 40 FG: 1.008 – 1.013  
SRM: 2 – 5 ABV: 4.4 – 5.2%

**Commercial Examples:** König Pilsener, Left Hand Polestar Pils, Paulaner Premium Pils, Schönramer Pils, Stoudt Pils, Tröegs Sunshine Pils, Trumer Pils

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, pilsner-family, bitter, hoppy

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### 2.8. CZECH PREMIUM PALE LAGER

#### (BOHEMIAN PILS)

**Overall Impression:** Rich, characterful, pale Czech lager, with considerable malt and hop character and a long, rounded finish. Complex yet well-balanced and refreshing. The malt flavours are complex for a Pilsner-type beer, and the bitterness is strong but clean and without harshness, which gives a rounded impression that enhances drinkability.

**Aroma:** Medium to medium-high bready-rich malt and medium-low to medium-high spicy, floral, or herbal hop bouquet; though the balance between the malt and hops may vary, the interplay is rich and complex. Light diacetyl, or very low fruity hop-

derived esters are acceptable, but need not be present.

**Appearance:** Gold to deep gold colour. Brilliant to very clear clarity. Dense, long-lasting, creamy white head.

**Flavour:** Rich, complex, bready maltiness combined with a pronounced yet soft and rounded bitterness and floral and spicy hop flavour. Malt and hop flavours are medium to medium-high, and the malt may contain a slight impression of caramel. Bitterness is prominent but never harsh. The long finish can be balanced towards hops or malt but is never aggressively tilted either way. Light to moderate diacetyl and low hop-derived esters are acceptable, but need not be present.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium body. Moderate to low carbonation.

**Comments:** Generally a group of *pivo Plzeňského typu*, or Pilsner-type beers. This style is a combination of the Czech styles *světlý ležák* (11–12.9 °P) and *světlé speciální pivo* (13–14.9 °P). In the Czech Republic, only Pilsner Urquell is called a Pilsner, despite how widely adopted this name is worldwide. *Kvasnicové* (“yeast beer”) versions are popular in the Czech Republic, and may be either *kräusened* with yeasted wort or given a fresh dose of pure yeast after fermentation. These beers are sometimes cloudy, with subtle yeastiness and enhanced hop character. Modern examples vary in their malt to hop balance and many are not as hop-forward as Pilsner Urquell.

**History:** Commonly associated with Pilsner Urquell, which was first brewed in 1842 after construction of a new brewhouse by burghers dissatisfied with the standard of beer brewed in Pilsen. Bavarian brewer Josef Groll is credited with first brewing the beer.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Soft water with low sulfate and carbonate content, Saazer-type hops, Czech malt, Czech lager yeast. Low ion water provides a distinctively soft, rounded hop profile despite high hopping rates. The bitterness level of some larger commercial examples has dropped in recent years, although not as much as in many contemporary German examples.

**Style Comparison:** More colour, malt richness, and body than a German Pils, with a fuller finish and a cleaner, softer impression. Stronger than a Czech Pale Lager.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.044 – 1.060  
IBUs: 30 – 45 FG: 1.013 – 1.017  
SRM: 3.5 – 6 ABV: 4.2 – 5.8%

**Commercial Examples:** Bernard Sváteční ležák, Gambrinus Premium, Kout na Šumavě Koutská 12°, Pilsner Urquell, Pivovar Jihlava Ježek 11°, Primátor Premium, Únětická 12°

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, pilsner-family, balanced, hoppy

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

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### 2.9. FESTBIER

**Overall Impression:** A smooth, clean, pale German lager with a moderately strong malty flavour and a light hop character. Deftly balances strength and drinkability, with a palate impression and finish that encourages drinking. Showcases elegant German malt flavours without becoming too heavy or filling.

**Aroma:** Moderate malty richness, with an emphasis on toasty-doughy aromatics and an impression of sweetness. Low to medium-low floral, herbal, or spicy hops. The malt should not have a deeply toasted, caramel, or biscuity quality. Clean lager fermentation character.

**Appearance:** Deep yellow to deep gold colour; should not have amber hues. Bright clarity. Persistent white to off-white foam stand. Most commercial examples are medium gold in colour.

**Flavour:** Medium to medium-high malty flavour initially, with a lightly toasty, bread dough quality and an impression of soft sweetness. Medium to medium-low bitterness, definitely malty in the balance. Well-attenuated and crisp, but not dry. Medium-low to medium floral, herbal, or spicy hop flavour. Clean lager fermentation character. The taste is mostly of Pils malt, but with slightly toasty hints. The bitterness is supportive, but still should yield a malty, flavourful finish.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium body, with a smooth, somewhat creamy texture. Medium carbonation. Alcohol strength barely noticeable as warming, if at all.

**Comments:** This style represents the modern German beer served at Oktoberfest (although it is not solely reserved for Oktoberfest; it can be found at many other ‘fests’), and is sometimes called Wiesn (“the meadow” or local name for the Oktoberfest festival). We chose to call this style *Festbier* since by German and EU regulations, *Oktoberfestbier* is a protected appellation for beer produced at large breweries within the Munich city limits for consumption at Oktoberfest. Other countries are not bound by these rules, so many craft breweries in the US produce beer called Oktoberfest, but based on the traditional style described in these guidelines as *Märzen*.

**History:** Since 1990, the majority of beer served at Oktoberfest in Munich has been this style. Export beer specifically made for the United States is still mainly of the traditional amber style, as are US-produced interpretations. Paulaner first created the golden version in the mid-1970s because they thought the traditional Oktoberfest was too filling. So they developed a lighter, more drinkable but still malty version that they wanted to be “more poundable” (according to the head brewer at Paulaner). But the actual type of beer served at Oktoberfest is set by a Munich city committee.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Majority Pils malt, but with some Vienna and/or Munich malt to increase maltiness. Differences in commercial examples are mostly due to different maltsters and yeast, not major grist differences.

**Style Comparison:** Less intense and less richly toasted than a Märzen. More rich-heavy in body

than a Helles, with more hop flavour and higher alcohol. Less rich in malt intensity than a Maibock. The malt complexity is similar to a higher-gravity Czech Premium Pale Lager, although without the associated hops.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.054 – 1.057  
IBUs: 18 – 25 FG: 1.010 – 1.012  
SRM: 4 – 7 ABV: 5.8 – 6.3%

**Commercial Examples:** Augustiner Oktoberfest, Hacker-Pschorr Superior Festbier, Hofbräu Festbier, Löwenbräu Oktoberfestbier, Paulaner Wiesn, Schönramer Gold, Weihenstephaner Festbier

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, pale-lager-family, malty

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### 2.10. HELLES BOCK

**Overall Impression:** A relatively pale, strong, malty German lager beer with a nicely attenuated finish that enhances drinkability. The hop character is generally more apparent than in other bocks.

**Aroma:** Moderate to strong grainy-sweet malt aroma, often with a lightly toasted quality and low Maillard products. Moderately-low to no hop aroma, often with a spicy, herbal, or floral quality. Clean fermentation profile. Fruity esters should be low to none. Very light alcohol may be noticeable. May have a light DMS aroma.

**Appearance:** Deep gold to light amber in colour. Bright to clear clarity. Large, creamy, persistent, white head.

**Flavour:** Moderately to moderately strong grainy-sweet malt flavour dominates with some toasty notes and/or Maillard products providing added interest. Little to no caramel flavours. May have a light DMS flavour. Moderate to no hop flavour (spicy, herbal, floral, peppery). Moderate hop bitterness (more so in the balance than in other bocks). Clean fermentation profile. Well-attenuated, not cloying, with a moderately-dry finish that may taste of both malt and hops.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-bodied. Moderate to moderately-high carbonation. Smooth and clean with no harshness or astringency, despite the increased hop bitterness. A light alcohol warming may be present.

**Comments:** Also known as Mai Bock, but there is some dispute whether Helles (“pale”) Bock and Mai (“May”) Bock are synonymous. Most agree that they are identical, but some believe that Maibock is a “fest” type beer hitting the upper limits of hopping and colour for the range. Any fruitiness is due to Munich and other specialty malts, not yeast-derived esters developed during fermentation. The hops compensate for the lower level of Maillard products.

**History:** A fairly recent development in comparison to the other members of the bock family. The serving of Maibock is specifically associated with springtime and the month of May.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Base of Pils and/or Vienna malt with some Munich malt to add character (although much less than in a traditional



## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

bock). No non-malt adjuncts. Saazer-type hops. Clean lager yeast. Decoction mash is typical, but boiling is less than in Dunkles Bock to restrain colour development.

**Style Comparison:** Can be thought of as either a pale version of a Dunkles Bock, or a Munich Helles brewed to bock strength. While quite malty, this beer typically has less dark and rich malt flavours, and can be drier, hoppier, and more bitter than a Dunkles Bock. Has more of a rich malt character and more alcohol than a Festbier.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.064 – 1.072  
IBUs: 23 – 35 FG: 1.011 – 1.018  
SRM: 6 – 11 ABV: 6.3 – 7.4%

**Commercial Examples:** Altenmünster Maibock, Ayinger Maibock, Capital Maibock, Blind Tiger Maibock, Einbecker Mai-Urbock, Hacker-Pschorr Hubertus Bock, Mahr's Bock

**Tags:** high-strength, pale-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, bock-family, malty

## 3. AMBER AND DARK LAGER

### 3.1. INTERNATIONAL AMBER LAGER

**Overall Impression:** A well-attenuated malty amber lager with an interesting caramel or toast quality and restrained bitterness. Usually fairly well-attenuated, often with an adjunct quality. Smooth, easily-drinkable lager character.

**Aroma:** Low to moderate malt aroma which can be grainy, with a very low to moderate caramel-sweet to toasty-malty aroma. Hop aroma can range from low to none with a mildly floral or spicy character. Clean lager profile. A slight DMS or corny aroma is acceptable.

**Appearance:** Golden-amber to reddish-copper colour. Bright clarity. White to off-white foam stand which may not last.

**Flavour:** Low to moderate malt profile which can vary from dry to grainy-sweet. Low to moderate levels of caramel and toasty-bready notes can be evident. Low to medium-low corny sweetness is optional, but not a fault. Hop bitterness is low to moderate, and hop flavour is low to moderate with a spicy, herbal, or floral character. The balance can be fairly malty to nearly even, with the bitterness becoming more noticeable but not objectionable. The bitterness level can increase if the malt character increases to match. Clean fermentation profile. Finish is moderately dry with a moderately malty aftertaste.

**Mouthfeel:** Light to medium body. Medium to high carbonation. Smooth; some examples can be creamy.

**Comments:** A wide spectrum of mass-market Amber lagers developed either independently in various countries, or describing rather generic amber beers that may have had more historical relevance but who eventually changed into an indistinguishable product in modern times.

**History:** Varies by country, but generally represents an adaptation of the mass-market International Lager or an evolution of indigenous styles into a more generic product.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Two-row or six-row base malt. Colour malts such as victory, amber, etc. Caramel malt adjuncts. European or American hops or a combination of both.

**Style Comparison:** Less well-developed malt flavour than a Vienna lager, often with an adjunct taste.

**Vital Statistics:**

OG:	1.042 – 1.055
IBUs:	8 – 25
SRM:	7 – 14
FG:	1.008 – 1.014
ABV:	4.6 – 6.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Brooklyn Lager, Capital Winter Skål, Dos Equis Amber, Schell's Oktoberfest, Yuengling Lager

**Tags:** standard-strength, amber-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, traditional-style, amber-lager-family, malty

### 3.2. CZECH AMBER LAGER

**Overall Impression:** Malt-driven amber Czech lager with hop character that can vary from low to quite significant. The malt flavours can vary quite a bit, leading to different interpretations ranging from drier, bready, and slightly biscuity to sweeter and somewhat caramelly.

**Aroma:** Moderate intensity, rich malt aroma that can be either bready and Maillard product-dominant or slightly caramelly and candy-like. Spicy, floral or herbal hop character may be moderate to none. Clean lager character, though low fruity esters (stone fruit or berries) may be present. Diacetyl is optional and can range from low to none.

**Appearance:** Deep amber to copper colour. Clear to bright clarity. Large, off-white, persistent head.

**Flavour:** Complex malt flavour is dominant (medium to medium-high), though its nature may vary from dry and Maillard product-dominant to caramelly and almost sweet. Some examples have a candy-like to graham-cracker malt character. Low to moderate spicy hop flavour. Prominent but clean hop bitterness provides a balanced finish. Subtle plum or berry esters optional. Low diacetyl optional. No roasted malt flavour. Finish may vary from dry and hoppy to relatively sweet.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-full to medium body. Soft and round, often with a gentle creaminess. Moderate to low carbonation.

**Comments:** The Czech name of the style is *polotmavé pivo*, which translates as *half dark*. This style is a combination of the Czech styles *polotmavý ležák* (11–12.9 °P) and *polotmavé speciální pivo* (13–14.9 °P).

**History:** A Vienna-style lager which has continued to be brewed in the Czech Republic. A resurgence of small breweries opening in the Czech Republic has increased the number of examples of this style.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pilsner and caramel malts, but Vienna and Munich malts may also be used. Low mineral content water, Saazer-type hops, Czech lager yeast.

**Style Comparison:** The style can be similar to a Vienna lager but with Saazer-type hop character, or that approaching an English bitter but significantly richer with more of a deep caramel character. Large brewery versions are generally similar to Czech Premium Pale Lager with slightly darker malt flavours and less hop, while smaller breweries often make versions with considerable hop character, malt complexity, or residual sweetness.

**Vital Statistics:**

OG:	1.044 – 1.060
IBUs:	20 – 35
SRM:	10 – 16
FG:	1.013 – 1.017
ABV:	4.4 – 5.8%

**Commercial Examples:** Bernard Jantarový ležák, Pivovar Vysoký Chlumec Démon, Primátor polotmavý 13°, Strakonický Dudák Klostermann polotmavý ležák 13°

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Tags:** standard-strength, amber-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, amber-lager-family, balanced

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### 3.3. MUNICH DUNKEL

**Overall Impression:** Characterized by depth, richness and complexity typical of darker Munich malts with the accompanying Maillard products. Deeply bready-toasty, often with chocolate-like flavours in the freshest examples, but never harsh, roasty, or astringent; a decidedly malt-balanced beer, yet still easily drinkable.

**Aroma:** Rich, elegant, deep malt sweetness, typically like bread crusts (often toasted bread crusts). Hints of chocolate, nuts, caramel, and/or toffee are also acceptable, with fresh traditional versions often showing higher levels of chocolate. Clean fermentation profile. A slight spicy, floral, or herbal hop aroma is acceptable.

**Appearance:** Deep copper to dark brown, often with a red or garnet tint. Creamy, light to medium tan head. Usually clear, although murky unfiltered versions exist.

**Flavour:** Dominated by the soft, rich, and complex flavour of darker Munich malts, usually with overtones reminiscent of toasted bread crusts, but without a burnt-harsh-grainy toastiness. The palate can be moderately malty, although it should not be overwhelming or cloyingly sweet. Mild caramel, toast or nuttiness may be present. Very fresh examples often have a pleasant malty-chocolate character that isn't roasty or sweet. Burnt or bitter flavours from roasted malts are inappropriate, as are pronounced caramel flavours from crystal malt. Hop bitterness is moderately low but perceptible, with the balance tipped firmly towards maltiness. Hop flavour is low to none; if noted, should reflect floral, spicy, or herbal German-type varieties. Aftertaste remains malty, although the hop bitterness may become more apparent in the medium-dry finish. Clean fermentation profile and lager character.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium to medium-full body, providing a soft and dextrinous mouthfeel without being heavy or cloying. Moderate carbonation. The use of continental Munich-type malts should provide a richness, not a harsh or biting astringency.

**Comments:** Unfiltered versions from Germany can taste like liquid bread, with a yeasty, earthy richness not found in exported filtered examples.

**History:** The classic brown lager style of Munich which developed as a darker, more malt-accented beer than other regional lagers. While originating in Munich, the style became popular throughout Bavaria (especially Franconia). Franconian versions are often darker and more bitter.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Grist is traditionally made up of German Munich malt (up to 100% in some cases) with the remainder German Pilsner malt. Small amounts of crystal malt can add dextrins and colour but should not introduce excessive residual sweetness. Slight additions of roasted malts (such as Carafa or chocolate) may be

used to improve colour but should not add strong flavours. Traditional German hop varieties and German lager yeast strains should be used. Often decoction mashed (up to a triple decoction) to enhance the malt flavours and create the depth of colour.

**Style Comparison:** Not as intense in maltiness as a bock (and thus more drinkable in quantity). Lacking the more roasted flavours (and often hop bitterness) of a schwarzbier. Richer, more malt-centric, and less hoppy than a Czech Dark Lager.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.048 – 1.056  
IBUs: 18 – 28 FG: 1.010 – 1.016  
SRM: 14 – 28 ABV: 4.5 – 5.6%

**Commercial Examples:** Ayinger Altbairisch Dunkel, Chuckanut Dunkel Lager, Ettaler Kloster Dunkel, Hacker-Pschorr Alt Munich Dark, Weltenburger Kloster Barock-Dunkel

**Tags:** standard-strength, dark-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, malty, dark-lager-family

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### 3.4. VIENNA LAGER

**Overall Impression:** A moderate-strength amber lager with a soft, smooth maltiness and moderate bitterness, yet finishing relatively dry. The malt flavour is clean, bready-rich, and somewhat toasty, with an elegant impression derived from quality base malts and process, not specialty malts and adjuncts.

**Aroma:** Moderately-intense malt aroma, with toasty and malty-rich aromatics. Clean lager character. Floral, spicy hop aroma may be low to none. A significant caramel or roasted aroma is inappropriate.

**Appearance:** Light reddish amber to copper colour. Bright clarity. Large, off-white, persistent head.

**Flavour:** Soft, elegant malt complexity is in the forefront, with a firm enough hop bitterness to provide a balanced finish. The malt flavour tends towards a rich, toasty character, without significant caramel or roast flavours. Fairly dry, crisp finish, with both rich malt and hop bitterness present in the aftertaste. Floral, spicy hop flavour may be low to none. Clean lager fermentation character.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body, with a gentle creaminess. Moderate carbonation. Smooth.

**Comments:** A standard-strength everyday beer, not a beer brewed for festivals. American versions can be a bit stronger, drier and more bitter, while modern European versions tend to be sweeter. Many Mexican amber and dark lagers used to be more authentic, but unfortunately are now more like sweet, adjunct-laden Amber/Dark International Lagers. Regrettably, many modern examples use adjuncts which lessen the rich malt complexity characteristic of the best examples of this style. This style is on the watch list to move to the Historical category in future guidelines; that would allow the classic style to be described while moving the sweeter modern versions to the International Amber or Dark Lager styles.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**History:** Developed by Anton Dreher in Vienna in 1841, became popular in the mid-late 1800s. Now nearly extinct in its area of origin, the style continues in Mexico where it was brought by Santiago Graf and other Austrian immigrant brewers in the late 1800s. Authentic examples are increasingly hard to find (except perhaps in the craft beer industry) as formerly good examples become sweeter and use more adjuncts.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Vienna malt provides a lightly toasty and complex, Maillard-rich malt profile. As with Märzens, only the finest quality malt should be used, along with Continental hops (preferably Saazer types or Styrians). Can use some caramel malts and/or darker malts to add colour and sweetness, but caramel malts shouldn't add significant aroma and flavour and dark malts shouldn't provide any roasted character.

**Style Comparison:** Lighter malt character, slightly less body, and slightly more bitter in the balance than a Märzen, yet with many of the same malt-derived flavours. The malt character is similar to a Märzen, but less intense and more balanced. Lower in alcohol than Märzen or Festbier. Less rich, less malty and less hop-centered compared to Czech Amber Lager.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.048 – 1.055  
IBUs: 18 – 30 FG: 1.010 – 1.014  
SRM: 9 – 15 ABV: 4.7 – 5.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Cuauhtémoc Noche Buena, Chuckanut Vienna Lager, Devils Backbone Vienna Lager, Figueroa Mountain Danish-style Red Lager, Heavy Seas Cutlass Amber Lager, Schell's Firebrick

**Tags:** standard-strength, amber-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, amber-lager-family, balanced

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### 3.5. MÄRZEN

**Overall Impression:** An elegant, malty German amber lager with a clean, rich, toasty and bready malt flavour, restrained bitterness, and a dry finish that encourages another drink. The overall malt impression is soft, elegant, and complex, with a rich aftertaste that is never cloying or heavy.

**Aroma:** Moderate intensity aroma of German malt, typically rich, bready, somewhat toasty, with light bread crust notes. Clean lager fermentation character. No hop aroma. Caramel, dry-biscuity, or roasted malt aromas inappropriate. Very light alcohol might be detected, but should never be sharp. Clean, elegant malt richness should be the primary aroma.

**Appearance:** Amber-orange to deep reddish-copper colour; should not be golden. Bright clarity, with persistent, off-white foam stand.

**Flavour:** Initial malt flavour often suggests sweetness, but finish is moderately-dry to dry. Distinctive and complex maltiness often includes a bready, toasty aspect. Hop bitterness is moderate, and the hop flavour is low to none (German types: complex, floral, herbal, or spicy). Hops provide sufficient balance that the malty palate and finish do not seem sweet. The aftertaste is malty, with the

same elegant, rich malt flavours lingering. Noticeable caramel, biscuit, or roasted flavours are inappropriate. Clean lager fermentation profile.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium body, with a smooth, creamy texture that often suggests a fuller mouthfeel. Medium carbonation. Fully attenuated, without a sweet or cloying impression. May be slightly warming, but the strength should be relatively hidden.

**Comments:** Modern domestic German Oktoberfest versions are golden – see the *Festbier* style for this version. Export German versions (to the United States, at least) are typically orange-amber in colour, have a distinctive toasty malt character, and are most often labeled *Oktoberfest*. American craft versions of Oktoberfest are generally based on this style, and most Americans will recognize this beer as *Oktoberfest*. Historic versions of the beer tended to be darker, towards the brown colour range, but there have been many 'shades' of Märzen (when the name is used as a strength); this style description specifically refers to the stronger amber lager version. The modern *Festbier* can be thought of as a pale Märzen by these terms.

**History:** As the name suggests, brewed as a stronger "March beer" in March and lagered in cold caves over the summer. Modern versions trace back to the lager developed by Spaten in 1841, contemporaneous to the development of Vienna lager. However, the Märzen name is much older than 1841; the early ones were dark brown, and in Austria the name implied a strength band (14 °P) rather than a style. The German amber lager version (in the Viennese style of the time) was first served at Oktoberfest in 1872, a tradition that lasted until 1990 when the golden *Festbier* was adopted as the standard festival beer.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Grist varies, although traditional German versions emphasized Munich malt. The notion of elegance is derived from the finest quality ingredients, particularly the base malts. A decoction mash was traditionally used to develop the rich malt profile.

**Style Comparison:** Not as strong and rich as a Dunkles Bock. More malt depth and richness than a Festbier, with a heavier body and slightly less hops. Less hoppy and equally malty as a Czech Amber Lager.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.054 – 1.060  
IBUs: 18 – 24 FG: 1.010 – 1.014  
SRM: 8 – 17 ABV: 5.8 – 6.3%

**Commercial Examples:** Buergerliches Ur-Saalfelder, Hacker-Pschorr Original Oktoberfest, Paulaner Oktoberfest, Weltenburg Kloster Anno 1050

**Tags:** standard-strength, amber-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, amber-lager-family, malty

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### 3.6. CZECH DARK LAGER

**Overall Impression:** A rich, dark, malty Czech lager with a roast character that can vary from almost absent to quite prominent. Malty with an interesting and complex flavour profile, with

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

variable levels of hopping providing a range of possible interpretations.

**Aroma:** Medium to medium-high rich, deep, sometimes sweet maltiness, with optional qualities such as bread crusts, toast, nuts, cola, dark fruit, or caramel. Roasted malt characters such as chocolate or sweetened coffee can vary from moderate to none but should not overwhelm the base malt character. Low, spicy hop aroma is optional. Low diacetyl and low fruity esters (plums or berries) may be present.

**Appearance:** Dark copper to almost black colour, often with a red or garnet tint. Clear to bright clarity. Large, off-white to tan, persistent head.

**Flavour:** Medium to medium-high deep, complex maltiness dominates, typically with malty-rich Maillard products and a light to moderate residual malt sweetness. Malt flavours such as caramel, toast, nuts, licorice, dried dark fruit, chocolate and coffee may also be present, with very low to moderate roast character. Spicy hop flavour can be moderately-low to none. Hop bitterness may be moderate to medium-low but should be perceptible. Balance can vary from malty to relatively well-balanced to gently hop-forward. Low to moderate diacetyl and light plum or berry esters may be present.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium to medium-full body, considerable mouthfeel without being heavy or cloying. Moderately creamy in texture. Smooth. Moderate to low carbonation. Can have a slight alcohol warmth in stronger versions.

**Comments:** This style is a combination of the Czech styles *tmavý ležák* (11–12.9 °P) and *tmavé speciální pivo* (13–14.9 °P). More modern examples are drier and have higher bitterness while traditional versions often have IBUs in the 18–20 range with a sweeter balance.

**History:** The U Fleků brewery has been operating in Prague since 1499. Many small, new breweries are brewing this style.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pilsner and dark caramel malts with the addition of debittered roasted malts are most common, but additions of Vienna or Munich malt are also appropriate. Low mineral content water, Saazer-type hops, Czech lager yeast. Any fruity esters are typically from malt, not yeast.

**Style Comparison:** The beer is the Czech equivalent of a dark lager ranging in character from Munich Dunkel to Schwarzbier, but typically with greater malt richness and hop character (aroma, flavour, and/or bitterness).

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.044 – 1.060  
IBUs: 18 – 34 FG: 1.013 – 1.017  
SRM: 14 – 35 ABV: 4.4 – 5.8%

**Commercial Examples:** Bohemian Brewery Cherny Bock 4%, Budweiser Budvar B:Dark tmavý ležák, Devils Backbone Morana, Kout na Šumavě Koutský tmavý speciál 14°, Notch Černé Pivo, Pivovar Březnice Herold, U Fleků Flekovský tmavý 13° ležák

**Tags:** standard-strength, dark-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, dark-lager-family, balanced

### 3.7. SCHWARZBIER

**Overall Impression:** A dark German lager that balances roasted yet smooth malt flavours with moderate hop bitterness. The lighter body, dryness, and lack of a harsh, burnt, or heavy aftertaste helps make this beer quite drinkable.

**Aroma:** Low to moderate malt, with low aromatic malty sweetness and/or hints of roast malt often apparent. The malt can be clean and neutral or moderately rich and bready, and may have a hint of dark caramel. The roast character can be somewhat dark chocolate- or coffee-like but should never be burnt. A low spicy, floral, or herbal hop aroma is optional. Clean lager yeast character, although a light sulfur is possible.

**Appearance:** Medium to very dark brown in colour, often with deep ruby to garnet highlights, yet almost never truly black. Very clear. Large, persistent, tan-coloured head.

**Flavour:** Light to moderate malt flavour, which can have a clean, neutral character to a moderately rich, bread-malty quality. Light to moderate roasted malt flavours can give a bitter-chocolate palate that lasts into the finish, but which are never burnt. Medium-low to medium bitterness, which can last into the finish. Light to moderate spicy, floral, or herbal hop flavour. Clean lager character. Aftertaste tends to dry out slowly and linger, featuring hop bitterness with a complementary but subtle roastiness in the background. Some residual sweetness is acceptable but not required.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body. Moderate to moderately-high carbonation. Smooth. No harshness or astringency, despite the use of dark, roasted malts.

**Comments:** Literally means “black beer” in German. While sometimes called a “black Pils,” the beer is rarely as dark as black or as bitter as a Pils; don’t expect strongly roasted, porter-like flavours.

**History:** A regional specialty from Thuringia, Saxony and Franconia in Germany. History is a bit sketchy, but is suspected of being originally a top-fermented beer. Popularity grew after German reunification. Served as the inspiration for black lagers brewed in Japan.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** German Munich malt and/or Pilsner malts for the base, supplemented by a judicious use of roasted malts (such as Carafo types) for the dark colour and subtle roast flavours. Huskless dark roasted malts can add roast flavours without burnt flavours. German hop varieties and clean German lager yeasts are traditional.

**Style Comparison:** In comparison with a Munich Dunkel, usually darker in colour, drier on the palate, lighter in body, and with a noticeable (but not high) roasted malt edge to balance the malt base. Should not taste like an American Porter made with lager yeast. Drier, less malty, with less hop character than a Czech Dark Lager.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.046 – 1.052  
IBUs: 20 – 30 FG: 1.010 – 1.016  
SRM: 17 – 30 ABV: 4.4 – 5.4%

# 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Commercial Examples:** Devils Backbone Schwartz Bier, Einbecker Schwarzbier, Eisenbahn Dunkel, Köstritzer Schwarzbier, Mönchshof Schwarzbier, Nuezeller Original BADEBIER

**Tags:** standard-strength, dark-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, balanced, dark-lager-family

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## 3.8. CALIFORNIA COMMON

**Overall Impression:** A lightly fruity beer with firm, grainy maltiness, interesting toasty and caramel flavours, and showcasing rustic, traditional American hop characteristics.

**Aroma:** Typically showcases rustic, traditional American hops (often with woody, rustic or minty qualities) in moderate to high strength. Light fruitiness acceptable. Low to moderate caramel and/or toasty malt aromatics support the hops.

**Appearance:** Medium amber to light copper colour. Generally clear. Moderate off-white head with good retention.

**Flavour:** Moderately malty with a pronounced hop bitterness. The malt character is usually toasty (not roasted) and caramelly. Low to moderately high hop flavour, usually showing rustic, traditional American hop qualities (often woody, rustic, minty). Finish fairly dry and crisp, with a lingering hop bitterness and a firm, grainy malt flavour. Light fruity esters are acceptable, but otherwise clean.

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

**Comments:** This style is narrowly defined around the prototypical Anchor Steam example, although allowing other typical ingredients of the era. Northern Brewer hops are not a strict requirement for the style; modern American and New World-type hops (especially citrusy ones) are inappropriate, however.

**History:** American West Coast original, brewed originally as Steam Beer in the Gold Rush era. Large shallow open fermenters (coolships) were traditionally used to compensate for the absence of refrigeration and to take advantage of the cool ambient temperatures in the San Francisco Bay area. Fermented with a lager yeast, but one that was selected to ferment relatively clean beer at warmer temperatures. Modern versions are based on Anchor Brewing re-launching the style in the 1970s.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pale ale malt, non-citrusy hops (often Northern Brewer), small amounts of toasted malt and/or crystal malts. Lager yeast; however, some strains (often with the mention of “California” in the name) work better than others at the warmer fermentation temperatures (55 to 60 °F) typically used. Note that some German yeast strains produce inappropriate sulfury character.

**Style Comparison:** Superficially similar to an American Amber Ale, but with specific choices for malt and hopping – the hop flavour/aroma is traditional (not modern) American hops, malt flavours are more toasty, the hopping is always assertive, and a warm-fermented lager yeast is used.

Less attenuated, less carbonated and less fruity than Australian Sparkling ale.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.048 – 1.054

IBUs: 30 – 45 FG: 1.011 – 1.014  
SRM: 10 – 14 ABV: 4.5 – 5.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Anchor Steam, Flying Dog Old Scratch Amber Lager, Schlafly Pi Common, Steamworks Steam Engine Lager

**Tags:** standard-strength, amber-colour, bottom-fermented, north-america, traditional-style, amber-lager-family, bitter, hoppy

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## 3.9. DUNKLES BOCK

**Overall Impression:** A dark, strong, malty German lager beer that emphasizes the malty-rich and somewhat toasty qualities of continental malts without being sweet in the finish.

**Aroma:** Medium to medium-high bready-malty-rich aroma, often with moderate amounts of rich Maillard products and/or toasty overtones. Virtually no hop aroma. Some alcohol may be noticeable. Clean lager character, although the malts can provide a slight (low to none) dark fruit character, particularly in aged examples.

**Appearance:** Light copper to brown colour, often with attractive garnet highlights. Lagering should provide good clarity despite the dark colour. Large, creamy, persistent, off-white head.

**Flavour:** Complex, rich maltiness is dominated by the toasty-rich Maillard products. Some caramel notes may be present. Hop bitterness is generally only high enough to support the malt flavours, allowing a bit of sweetness to linger in the finish. Well-attenuated, not cloying. Clean fermentation profile, although the malt can provide a slight dark fruit character. No hop flavour. No roasted or burnt character.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium to medium-full bodied. Moderate to moderately low carbonation. Some alcohol warmth may be found, but should never be hot. Smooth, without harshness or astringency.

**Comments:** Decoction mashing and long boiling plays an important part of flavour development, as it enhances the caramel and Maillard flavour aspects of the malt. Any fruitiness is due to Munich and other specialty malts, not yeast-derived esters developed during fermentation.

**History:** Originated in the Northern German city of Einbeck, which was a brewing center and popular exporter in the days of the Hanseatic League (14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century). Recreated in Munich starting in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The name “bock” is based on a corruption of the name “Einbeck” in the Bavarian dialect, and was thus only used after the beer came to Munich. “Bock” also means “Ram” in German, and is often used in logos and advertisements.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Munich and Vienna malts, rarely a tiny bit of dark roasted malts for colour adjustment, never any non-malt adjuncts. Continental European hop varieties are used. Clean German lager yeast.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Style Comparison:** Darker, with a richer malty flavour and less apparent bitterness than a Helles Bock. Less alcohol and malty richness than a Doppelbock. Stronger malt flavours and higher alcohol than a Märzen. Richer, less attenuated, and less hoppy than a Czech Amber Lager.

**Vital Statistics:**

OG:	1.064 – 1.072
IBUs:	20 – 27
SRM:	14 – 22
FG:	1.013 – 1.019
ABV:	6.3 – 7.2%

**Commercial Examples:** Aass Bock, Einbecker Ur-Bock Dunkel, Great Lakes Rockefeller Bock, Kneiting Bock, New Glarus Uff-da Bock, Penn Brewery St. Nikolaus Bock

**Tags:** high-strength, amber-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, bock-family, malty

## 4. Pale ALE

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### 4.1. CREAM ALE

**Overall Impression:** A clean, well-attenuated, flavourful American “lawnmower” beer. Easily drinkable and refreshing, with more character than typical American lagers.

**Aroma:** Medium-low to low malt notes, with a sweet, corn-like aroma. Low levels of DMS are allowable, but are not required. Hop aroma medium low to none, and can be of any variety although floral, spicy, or herbal notes are most common. Overall, a subtle aroma with neither hops nor malt dominating. Low fruity esters are optional.

**Appearance:** Pale straw to moderate gold colour, although usually on the pale side. Low to medium head with medium to high carbonation. Fair head retention. Brilliant, sparkling clarity.

**Flavour:** Low to medium-low hop bitterness. Low to moderate maltiness and sweetness, varying with gravity and attenuation. Usually well-attenuated. Neither malt nor hops dominate the palate. A low to moderate corny flavour is commonly found, as is light DMS (optional). Finish can vary from somewhat dry to faintly sweet. Low fruity esters are optional. Low to medium-low hop flavour (any variety, but typically floral, spicy, or herbal).

**Mouthfeel:** Generally light and crisp, although body can reach medium. Smooth mouthfeel with medium to high attenuation; higher attenuation levels can lend a “thirst quenching” quality. High carbonation.

**Comments:** Pre-prohibition Cream Ales were slightly stronger, hoppier (including some dry hopping) and more bitter (25-30+ IBUs). These versions should be entered in the historical category. Most commercial examples are in the 1.050–1.053 OG range, and bitterness rarely rises above 20 IBUs.

**History:** A sparkling or present-use ale that existed in the 1800s and survived prohibition. An ale version of the American lager style. Produced by ale brewers to compete with lager brewers in Canada and the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Midwest states. Originally known as sparkling or present use ales, lager strains were (and sometimes still are) used by some brewers, but were not historically mixed with ale strains. Many examples are kräusened to achieve carbonation. Cold conditioning isn't traditional, although modern brewers sometimes use it.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** American ingredients most commonly used. A grain bill of six-row malt, or a combination of six-row and North American two-row, is common. Adjuncts can include up to 20% maize in the mash, and up to 20% glucose or other sugars in the boil. Any variety of hops can be used for bittering and finishing.

**Style Comparison:** Similar to a Standard American Lager, but with more character.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.042 – 1.055  
IBUs: 8 – 20 FG: 1.006 – 1.012

SRM: 2.5 – 5

ABV: 4.2 – 5.6%

**Commercial Examples:** Genesee Cream Ale, Liebotschaner Cream Ale, Little Kings Cream Ale, New Glarus Spotted Cow, Old Style, Sleeman Cream Ale

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, any-fermentation, north-america, traditional-style, pale-ale-family, balanced

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### 4.2. BLONDE ALE

**Overall Impression:** Easy-drinking, approachable, malt-oriented American craft beer, often with interesting fruit, hop, or character malt notes. Well-balanced and clean, is a refreshing pint without aggressive flavours.

**Aroma:** Light to moderate sweet malty aroma, possibly with a light bready or caramelly note. Low to moderate fruitiness is optional, but acceptable. May have a low to medium hop aroma, and can reflect almost any hop variety although citrusy, floral, fruity, and spicy notes are common.

**Appearance:** Light yellow to deep gold in colour. Clear to brilliant. Low to medium white head with fair to good retention.

**Flavour:** Initial soft malty sweetness, but optionally some light character malt flavour (e.g., bread, toast, biscuit, wheat) can also be present. Caramel flavours typically absent; if present, they are typically low-colour caramel notes. Low to medium fruity esters optional, but are welcome. Light to moderate hop flavour (any variety), but shouldn't be overly aggressive. Medium-low to medium bitterness, but the balance is normally towards the malt or even between malt and hops. Finishes medium-dry to slightly malty-sweet; impression of sweetness is often an expression of lower bitterness than actual residual sweetness.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body. Medium to high carbonation. Smooth without being heavy.

**Comments:** Brewpub alternative to standard American lagers, typically offered as an entry-level craft beer.

**History:** An American craft beer style produced by many microbreweries and brewpubs, particularly those who cannot produce lagers. Regional variations exist (many US West Coast brewpub examples are more assertive, like pale ales) but in most areas this beer is designed as the least challenging beer in their lineup.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Generally all malt, but can include up to 25% wheat malt and some sugar adjuncts. Any hop variety can be used. Clean American, lightly fruity English, or Kölsch yeast. May also be made with lager yeast, or cold-conditioned. Some versions may have honey, spices and/or fruit added, although if any of these ingredients are stronger than a background flavour



## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

they should be entered in those specialty categories instead.

**Style Comparison:** Typically has more flavour than American Lagers and Cream Ales. Less bitterness than an American Pale Ale.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.038 – 1.054  
IBUs: 15 – 28 FG: 1.008 – 1.013  
SRM: 3 – 6 ABV: 3.8 – 5.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Kona Big Wave Golden Ale, Pelican Kiwanda Cream Ale, Russian River Aud Blonde, Victory Summer Love, Widmer Citra Summer Blonde Brew

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, any-fermentation, north-america, craft-style, pale-ale-family, balanced

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### 4.3. KÖLSCH

**Overall Impression:** A clean, crisp, delicately-balanced beer usually with a very subtle fruit and hop character. Subdued maltiness throughout leads into a pleasantly well-attenuated and refreshing finish. Freshness makes a huge difference with this beer, as the delicate character can fade quickly with age. Brilliant clarity is characteristic.

**Aroma:** Low to very low malt aroma, with a grainy-sweet character. A pleasant, subtle fruit aroma from fermentation (apple, cherry or pear) is acceptable, but not always present. A low floral, spicy or herbal hop aroma is optional but not out of style. Some yeast strains may give a slight winy or sulfury character (this characteristic is also optional, but not a fault). Overall, the intensity of aromatics is fairly subtle but generally balanced, clean, and fresh.

**Appearance:** Very pale gold to light gold. Very clear (authentic commercial versions are filtered to a brilliant clarity). Has a delicate white head that may not persist.

**Flavour:** Soft, rounded palate comprised of a delicate flavour balance between soft yet attenuated malt, an almost imperceptible fruity sweetness from fermentation, and a medium-low to medium bitterness with a delicate dryness and slight crispness in the finish (but no harsh aftertaste). The malt tends to be grainy-sweet, possibly with a very light bready or honey quality. The hop flavour is variable, and can range from low to moderately-high; most are medium-low to medium intensity and have a floral, spicy, or herbal character. May have a malty-sweet impression at the start, but this is not required. No noticeable residual sweetness. May have a slightly winy, mineral, or sulfury accent that accentuates the dryness and flavour balance. A slight wheat taste is rare but not a fault. Otherwise, very clean.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body (most are medium-light). Medium to medium-high carbonation. Smooth and generally crisp and well-attenuated.

**Comments:** Characterized in Germany as a top-fermented, lagered beer. Each Köln brewery produces a beer of different character, and each interprets the *Kölsch Konvention* slightly

differently. Allow for a range of variation within the style when judging. Note that drier versions may seem hoppier or more bitter than the IBU specifications might suggest. Due to its delicate flavour profile, Kölsch tends to have a relatively short shelf-life; older examples and imports can easily show some oxidation defects. Served in Köln in a tall, narrow 200ml glass called a *Stange*.

**History:** Cologne, Germany (Köln) has a top-fermenting brewing tradition since the Middle Ages, but developed the beer now known as Kölsch in the late 1800s to combat encroaching bottom-fermented pale lagers. Kölsch is an appellation protected by the *Kölsch Konvention* (1986), and is restricted to the 20 or so breweries in and around Köln. The *Konvention* simply defines the beer as a “light, highly attenuated, hop-accentuated, clear, top-fermenting *Vollbier*.”

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Traditional German hops (Hallertau, Tettnang, Spalt or Hersbrucker). German Pils or pale malt. Attenuative, clean ale yeast. Up to 20% wheat malt may be used, but this is quite rare in authentic versions. Current commercial practice is to ferment warm, cold condition for a short period of time, and serve young.

**Style Comparison:** To the untrained taster, easily mistaken for a cream ale or somewhat subtle Pils.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.044 – 1.050  
IBUs: 18 – 30 FG: 1.007 – 1.011  
SRM: 3.5 – 5 ABV: 4.4 – 5.2%

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### 4.4. BELGIAN PALE ALE

**Overall Impression:** A moderately malty, somewhat fruity, easy-drinking, copper-coloured Belgian ale that is somewhat less aggressive in flavour profile than many other Belgian beers. The malt character tends to be a bit biscuity with light toasty, honey-like, or caramelly components; the fruit character is noticeable and complementary to the malt. The bitterness level is generally moderate, but may not seem as high due to the flavourful malt profile.

**Aroma:** Moderate malt aroma, which can be a combination of toasty, biscuity, or nutty, possibly with a touch of light caramel or honey. Moderate to moderately high fruitiness with an orange- or pear-like character. Low to moderate strength hop character (spicy, herbal, or floral) optionally blended with background level peppery, spicy phenols. The hop character is lower in balance than the malt and fruitiness.

**Appearance:** Amber to copper in colour. Clarity is very good. Creamy, rocky, white head often fades more quickly than other Belgian beers.

**Flavour:** Has an initial soft, smooth, moderately malty flavour with a variable profile of toasty, biscuity, nutty, light caramel and/or honey notes. Moderate to moderately high fruitiness, sometimes orange- or pear-like. Relatively light (medium-low to low) spicy, herbal, or floral hop character. The hop bitterness is medium-high to medium-low, and is optionally enhanced by low to very low amounts of peppery phenols. There is a dry to balanced

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

finish, with hops becoming more pronounced in the aftertaste of those with a drier finish. Fairly well balanced overall, with no single component being high in intensity; malt and fruitiness are more forward initially with a supportive bitterness and drying character coming on late.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium to medium-light body. Smooth palate. Alcohol level is restrained, and any warming character should be low if present. Medium to medium-high carbonation.

**Comments:** Most commonly found in the Flemish provinces of Antwerp and Brabant. Considered “everyday” beers (Category I). Compared to their higher alcohol Category S cousins, they are Belgian “session beers” for ease of drinking. Nothing should be too pronounced or dominant; balance is the key. Yeast character generally more subtle than many Belgian beers, with some of the fruitiness being hop-driven.

**History:** Produced by breweries with roots as far back as the mid-1700s, the most well-known examples were perfected after the Second World War with some influence from Britain, including hops and yeast strains.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pilsner or pale ale malt contributes the bulk of the grist with (cara) Vienna and Munich malts adding colour, body and complexity. Sugar is not commonly used as high gravity is not desired. Saazer-type hops, Styrian Goldings, East Kent Goldings or Fuggles are commonly used. Yeasts prone to moderate production of phenols are often used but fermentation temperatures should be kept moderate to limit this character.

**Style Comparison:** Fairly similar to pale ales from England (*Strong Bitter* category), typically with a slightly different yeast character and a more varied malt profile. Less yeast character than many other Belgian beers, though.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.048 – 1.054  
IBUs: 20 – 30 FG: 1.010 – 1.014  
SRM: 8 – 14 ABV: 4.8 – 5.5%

**Commercial Examples:** De Koninck, De Ryck Special, Palm Dobbie, Palm Speciale

**Tags:** standard-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, western-europe, traditional-style, pale-ale-family, balanced

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### 4.5. AUSTRALIAN SPARKLING ALE

**Overall Impression:** Smooth and balanced, all components merge together with similar intensities. Moderate flavours showcasing Australian ingredients. Large flavour dimension. Very drinkable, suited to a hot climate. Relies on yeast character.

**Aroma:** Fairly soft, clean aroma with a balanced mix of esters, hops, malt, and yeast – all moderate to low in intensity. The esters are frequently pears and apples, possibly with a very light touch of banana (optional). The hops are earthy, herbaceous, or might show the characteristic iron-like Pride of Ringwood nose. The malt can range from neutral grainy to moderately sweet to lightly bready; no

caramel should be evident. Very fresh examples can have a lightly yeasty, sulfury nose.

**Appearance:** Deep yellow to light amber in colour, often medium gold. Tall, frothy, persistent white head with tiny bubbles. Noticeable effervescence due to high carbonation. Brilliant clarity if decanted, but typically poured with yeast to have a cloudy appearance. Not typically cloudy unless yeast roused during the pour.

**Flavour:** Medium to low rounded, grainy to bready malt flavour, initially mild to malty-sweet but a medium to medium-high bitterness rises mid-palate to balance the malt. Caramel flavours typically absent. Highly attenuated, giving a dry finish with lingering bitterness, although the body gives an impression of fullness. Medium to medium-high hop flavour, somewhat earthy and possibly herbal, resinous, peppery, or iron-like but not floral, lasting into aftertaste. Medium-high to medium-low esters, often pears and apples. Banana is optional, but should never dominate. May be lightly mineral or sulfury, especially if yeast is present. Should not be bland.

**Mouthfeel:** High to very high carbonation, giving mouth-filling bubbles and a crisp, spritzy carbonic bite. Medium to medium-full body, tending to the higher side if poured with yeast. Smooth but gassy. Stronger versions may have a light alcohol warmth, but lower alcohol versions will not. Very well-attenuated; should not have any residual sweetness.

**Comments:** Coopers has been making their flagship Sparkling Ale since 1862, although the formulation has changed over the years. Presently the beer will have brilliant clarity if decanted, but publicans often pour most of the beer into a glass then swirl the bottle and dump in all the yeast. In some bars, the bottle is rolled along the bar! When served on draught, the brewery instructs publicans to invert the keg to rouse the yeast. A cloudy appearance for the style seems to be a modern consumer preference. Always naturally carbonated, even in the keg. A present-use ale, best enjoyed fresh.

**History:** Brewing records show that the majority of Australian beer brewed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was draught XXX (Mild) and porter. Ale in bottle was originally developed to compete with imported bottled pale ales from British breweries, such as Bass and Wm Younger’ Monk. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, bottled pale ale went out of fashion and “lighter” lager beers were in vogue. Many Australian Sparkling and Pale Ales were labeled as ales, but were actually bottom-fermented lagers with very similar grists to the ales that they replaced. Coopers of Adelaide, South Australia is the only surviving brewer producing the Sparkling Ale style.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Lightly kilned Australian 2-row pale malt, lager varieties may be used. Small amounts of crystal malt for colour adjustment only. Modern examples use no adjuncts, cane sugar for priming only. Historical examples using 45% 2 row, 30% higher protein malt (6 row) would use around 25% sugar to dilute the nitrogen content. Traditionally used Australian hops, Cluster, and Goldings until replaced from mid-1960s by Pride of Ringwood. Highly attenuative

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

Burton-type yeast (Australian-type strain typical).  
Variable water profile, typically with low carbonate and moderate sulfate.

**Style Comparison:** Superficially similar to English Pale Ales, although much more highly carbonated, with less caramel, less late hops, and showcasing the signature yeast strain and hop variety. More bitter than IBUs might suggest due to high attenuation, low final gravity, and somewhat coarse hops.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.038 – 1.050

IBUs: 20 – 35  
SRM: 4 – 7

FG: 1.004 – 1.006  
ABV: 4.5 – 6.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Coopers Original Pale Ale, Coopers Sparkling Ale

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, top-fermented, pacific, traditional-style, pale-ale-family, bitter

## 5. AMERICAN PALE ALE

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### 5.1. AMERICAN PALE ALE

**Overall Impression:** A pale, refreshing and hoppy ale, yet with sufficient supporting malt to make the beer balanced and drinkable. The clean hop presence can reflect classic or modern American or New World hop varieties with a wide range of characteristics. An average-strength hop-forward pale American craft beer, generally balanced to be more accessible than modern American IPAs.

**Aroma:** Moderate to strong hop aroma from American or New World hop varieties with a wide range of possible characteristics, including citrus, floral, pine, resinous, spicy, tropical fruit, stone fruit, berry, or melon. None of these specific characteristics are required, but hops should be apparent. Low to moderate maltiness supports the hop presentation, and may optionally show small amounts of specialty malt character (bready, toasty, biscuit, caramelly). Fruity esters vary from moderate to none. Dry hopping (if used) may add grassy notes, although this character should not be excessive.

**Appearance:** Pale golden to light amber. Moderately large white to off-white head with good retention. Generally quite clear, although dry-hopped versions may be slightly hazy.

**Flavour:** Moderate to high hop flavour, typically showing an American or New World hop character (citrus, floral, pine, resinous, spicy, tropical fruit, stone fruit, berry, melon, etc.). Low to moderate clean grainy-malt character supports the hop presentation, and may optionally show small amounts of specialty malt character (bready, toasty, biscuity). The balance is typically towards the late hops and bitterness, but the malt presence should be supportive, not distracting. Caramel flavours are often absent or fairly restrained (but are acceptable as long as they don't clash with the hops). Fruity yeast esters can be moderate to none, although many hop varieties are quite fruity. Moderate to high hop bitterness with a medium to dry finish. Hop flavour and bitterness often lingers into the finish, but the aftertaste should generally be clean and not harsh. Dry hopping (if used) may add grassy notes, although this character should not be excessive.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body. Moderate to high carbonation. Overall smooth finish without astringency and harshness.

**Comments:** New hop varieties and usage methods continue to be developed. Judges should allow for characteristics of modern hops in this style, as well as classic varieties. Becoming more of an international craft style, with local adaptations appearing in many countries with an emerging craft beer market. Hopping styles can vary from the classic large bitterness addition, to more modern late hop-burst examples; all variations are allowable.

**History:** A modern American craft beer era adaptation of English pale ale, reflecting indigenous ingredients (hops, malt, yeast, and water). Prior to the explosion in popularity of IPAs, was traditionally the most well-known and popular of American craft beers.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pale ale malt, typically North American two-row. American or New World hops, with a wide range of allowable characteristics. American or English ale yeast (neutral to lightly fruity). Specialty grains may add character and complexity, but generally make up a relatively small portion of the grist. Grains that add malt flavour and richness, light sweetness, and toasty or bready notes are often used (along with late hops) to differentiate brands.

**Style Comparison:** Typically lighter in colour, cleaner in fermentation by-products, and having less caramel flavours than English counterparts. There can be some overlap in colour between American pale ale and American amber ale. The American pale ale will generally be cleaner, have a less caramelly malt profile, less body, and often more finishing hops. Less bitterness in the balance and alcohol strength than an American IPA. More balanced and drinkable, and less intensely hop-focused and bitter than session-strength American IPAs (aka Session IPAs).

**Vital Statistics:**

OG:	1.045 – 1.060
IBUs:	30 – 50
SRM:	5 – 10
FG:	1.010 – 1.015
ABV:	4.5 – 6.2%

**Commercial Examples:** Ballast Point Grunion Pale Ale, Firestone Walker Pale 31, Great Lakes Burning River, Sierra Nevada Pale Ale, Stone Pale Ale, Tröegs Pale Ale

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, top-fermented, north-america, craft-style, pale-ale-family, bitter, hoppy

## 6. BITTER ALE

### 6.1. AUSTRALIAN BITTER ALE [AABC]

**Overall Impression:** A crisp, light flavoured, thirst-quenching Bitter, ideally suited to a hot climate. Traditionally served well chilled and highly carbonated, accentuating the characteristic tangy hop bitterness.

**Aroma:** Light fruity esters with a background caramel note. Hop aroma low to none. No diacetyl.

**Appearance:** Amber to pale copper; bright clarity; moderate white head supported by very high carbonation.

**Flavour:** Moderately fruity, with a light caramel malt flavour. A distinctive peppery, herbaceous note from Pride of Ringwood hops should be noticed. Malty sweetness should be low, tipping the balance firmly towards bitterness, without being aggressively bitter. Medium-dry finish, with a predominantly fruity/bitter aftertaste. Trace fusels/phenols from high sucrose fermentation may contribute a “tangy” flavour note, often considered characteristic of Australian style beer. If present this character should not be perceived as sharp or solventy.

**Mouthfeel:** Light to medium-light body, with a noticeable carbonation prickle, particularly when served chilled.

**History:** Definitive Australian style, evolved directly from colonial era Pale Ale/Sparkling Ale as crystal malt was introduced during early 20th century. Originated independently of English Bitter, and remained a bottled style exclusively. Developed as a narrow style, typified by a handful of State-based brands, using a high proportion of cane sugar, high-alpha domestic hops, and standard Australian ale yeast (originally isolated 1888 at Victoria Brewery in Melbourne). Dominant bottled style by mid-century, with major brands exported. Converted to lager yeast during late 20th century, as megabrewers standardized production with draught lagers. Modern Bitter remains by far Australia’s biggest selling packaged beer style, and following draught release in 1992, market leader Victoria Bitter now accounts for one quarter of total Australian beer sales.

**Comments:** Style refers to the traditional ale version of Australian Bitter, commonly labelled “Bitter Ale” prior to lager conversion during late 20th century. *Note: 2005 heritage release VB Original Ale is an all-malt English style Bitter and should not be considered prototypical of the Australian style.*

**Ingredients:** Australian 2-row lager malt. Restrained use of crystal malt for colour and flavour. Substantial proportion of cane sugar, typically around 30%, for light body and signature fermentation profile. Pride of Ringwood hops, bittering addition only. CUB ale yeast or similar. Attenuative English or American strains most suitable. *Note: Whitelabs WLP009 Australian Ale*

*yeast (Coopers strain) is unsuitable.* Variable water profile, soft Pilsen type preferred.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.038 – 1.048  
IBUs: 25 – 40 FG: 1.005 – 1.008  
SRM: 8 – 14 ABV: 4.2 – 5.2%

**Commercial Examples:** The major Bitter Ale brand names have survived but the modern versions are all lagers and the term “Ale” has been dropped from labelling (eg. Victoria Bitter, Melbourne Bitter, Castlemaine XXXX Bitter, Toohey’s Red Bitter, West End Bitter, Emu Bitter, Cascade Bitter, Boags Strongarm Bitter).

### 6.2. BRITISH GOLDEN ALE

**Overall Impression:** A hop-forward, average-strength to moderately-strong pale bitter. Drinkability and a refreshing quality are critical components of the style.

**Aroma:** Hop aroma is moderately low to moderately high, and can use any variety of hops – floral, herbal, or earthy English hops and citrusy American hops are most common. Frequently a single hop varietal will be showcased. Little to no malt aroma; no caramel. Medium-low to low fruity aroma from the hops rather than esters. Little to no diacetyl.

**Appearance:** Straw to golden in colour. Good to brilliant clarity. Low to moderate white head. A low head is acceptable when carbonation is also low.

**Flavour:** Medium to medium-high bitterness. Hop flavour is moderate to moderately high of any hop variety, although citrus flavours are increasingly common. Medium-low to low malt character, generally bready with perhaps a little biscuity flavour. Caramel flavours are typically absent. Little to no diacetyl. Hop bitterness and flavour should be pronounced. Moderately-low to low esters. Medium-dry to dry finish. Bitterness increases with alcohol level, but is always balanced.

**Mouthfeel:** Light to medium body. Low to moderate carbonation on draught, although bottled commercial versions will be higher. Stronger versions may have a slight alcohol warmth, but this character should not be too high.

**Comments:** Well-hopped, quenching beer with an emphasis on showcasing hops. Served colder than traditional bitters, this style was originally positioned as a refreshing summer beer, but is now often brewed year-round. Although early on the beers were brewed with English hops, increasingly American citrus-flavoured hops are used. Golden Ales are also called Golden Bitters, Summer Ales, or British Blonde Ales. Can be found in cask, keg, and bottle.

**History:** Modern golden ales were developed in England to take on strongly-marketed lagers. While it is difficult to identify the first, Hop Back’s Summer Lightning, first brewed in 1986, is thought by many to have got the style off the ground.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Low-colour pale or lager malt acting as a blank canvas for the hop character. May use sugar adjuncts, corn or wheat. English hops frequently used, although citrusy American varieties are becoming more common. Somewhat clean-fermenting British yeast.

**Style Comparison:** More similar to an American Pale Ale than anything else, although it is often lower in alcohol and usually features British ingredients. Has no caramel and fewer esters compared to British bitters and pale ales. Dry as bitters but with less malt character to support the hops, giving a different balance. Often uses (and features) American hops, more so than most other modern British styles.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.038 – 1.053  
IBUs: 20 – 45 FG: 1.006 – 1.012  
SRM: 2 – 6 ABV: 3.8 – 5.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Crouch Vale Brewers Gold, Fuller's Discovery, Golden Hill Exmoor Gold, Hop Back Summer Lightning, Kelham Island Pale Rider, Morland Old Golden Hen, Oakham JHB

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, craft-style, pale-ale-family, bitter, hoppy

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pale ale, amber, and/or crystal malts. May use a touch of dark malt for colour adjustment. May use sugar adjuncts, corn or wheat. English finishing hops are most traditional, but any hops are fair game; if American hops are used, a light touch is required. Characterful British yeast.

**Style Comparison:** More alcohol than an ordinary bitter, and often using higher-quality ingredients. Less alcohol than a strong bitter. More caramel or base malt character and colour than a British Golden Ale. Emphasis is on the bittering hop addition as opposed to the aggressive middle and late hopping seen in American ales.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.040 – 1.048  
IBUs: 25 – 40 FG: 1.008 – 1.012  
SRM: 8 – 16 ABV: 3.8 – 4.6%

**Commercial Examples:** Adnams SSB, Coniston Bluebird Bitter, Fuller's London Pride, Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter, Shepherd Neame Master Brew Kentish Ale, Timothy Taylor Landlord, Young's Special

**Tags:** standard-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, amber-ale-family, bitter

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### 6.3. BEST BITTER

**Overall Impression:** A flavourful, yet refreshing, session beer. Some examples can be more malt balanced, but this should not override the overall bitter impression. Drinkability is a critical component of the style.

**Aroma:** Low to moderate malt aroma, often (but not always) with a low to medium-low caramel quality. Bready, biscuit, or lightly toasty malt complexity is common. Mild to moderate fruitiness. Hop aroma can range from moderate to none, typically with a floral, earthy, resinous, and/or fruity character. Generally no diacetyl, although very low levels are allowed.

**Appearance:** Pale amber to medium copper colour. Good to brilliant clarity. Low to moderate white to off-white head. May have very little head due to low carbonation.

**Flavour:** Medium to moderately high bitterness. Moderately low to moderately high fruity esters. Moderate to low hop flavour, typically with an earthy, resinous, fruity, and/or floral character. Low to medium maltiness with a dry finish. The malt profile is typically bready, biscuity, or lightly toasty. Low to moderate caramel or toffee flavours are optional. Balance is often decidedly bitter, although the bitterness should not completely overpower the malt flavour, esters and hop flavour. Generally no diacetyl, although very low levels are allowed.

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

**Comments:** More evident malt flavour than in an ordinary bitter, this is a stronger, session-strength ale.

**History:** See comments in category introduction.

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### 6.4. AMERICAN AMBER ALE

**Overall Impression:** An amber, hoppy, moderate-strength American craft beer with a caramel malty flavour. The balance can vary quite a bit, with some versions being fairly malty and others being aggressively hoppy. Hoppy and bitter versions should not have clashing flavours with the caramel malt profile.

**Aroma:** Low to moderate hop aroma with characteristics typical of American or New World hop varieties (citrus, floral, pine, resinous, spicy, tropical fruit, stone fruit, berry, or melon). A citrusy hop character is common, but not required. Moderately-low to moderately-high maltiness (usually with a moderate caramel character), which can either support, balance, or sometimes mask the hop presentation. Esters vary from moderate to none.

**Appearance:** Amber to coppery-brown in colour. Moderately large off-white head with good retention. Generally quite clear, although dry-hopped versions may be slightly hazy.

**Flavour:** Moderate to high hop flavour with characteristics typical of American or New World hop varieties (citrus, floral, pine, resinous, spicy, tropical fruit, stone fruit, berry, or melon). A citrusy hop character is common, but not required. Malt flavours are moderate to strong, and usually show an initial malty sweetness followed by a moderate caramel flavour (and sometimes other character malts in lesser amounts). Malt and hop bitterness are usually balanced and mutually supportive, but can vary either way. Fruity esters can be moderate to none. Caramel sweetness and hop flavour/bitterness can linger somewhat into the medium to full finish.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium to medium-full body. Medium to high carbonation. Overall smooth finish

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

without astringency. Stronger versions may have a slight alcohol warmth.

**Comments:** Can overlap in colour with darker American pale ales, but with a different malt flavour and balance. Regional variations exist with some being fairly mainstream and others being quite aggressive in hopping. Stronger and more bitter versions are now split into the *Red IPA* style.

**History:** A modern American craft beer style developed as a variation from American Pale Ales. Known simply as Red Ales in some regions, these beers were popularized in the hop-loving Northern California and the Pacific Northwest areas before spreading nationwide.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pale ale malt, typically North American two-row. Medium to dark crystal malts. May also contain specialty grains which add additional character and uniqueness. American or New World hops, often with citrusy flavours, are common but others may also be used.

**Style Comparison:** Darker, more caramelly, more body, and generally less bitter in the balance than American Pale Ales. Less alcohol, bitterness, and hop character than Red IPAs. Less strength, malt, and hop character than American Strong Ales. Should not have a strong chocolate or roast character that might suggest an American brown ale (although small amounts are OK).

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.045 – 1.060  
IBUs: 25 – 40 FG: 1.010 – 1.015  
SRM: 10 – 17 ABV: 4.5 – 6.2%

**Commercial Examples:** Deschutes Cinder Cone Red, Full Sail Amber, Kona Lavaman Red Ale, North Coast Ruedrich's Red Seal Ale, Rogue American Amber Ale, Tröegs HopBack Amber Ale

**Tags:** standard-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, north-america, craft-style, amber-ale-family, balanced, hoppy

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### 6.5. ALTBIER

**Overall Impression:** A well-balanced, well-attenuated, bitter yet malty, clean, and smooth, amber- to copper-coloured German beer. The bitterness is balanced by the malt richness, but the malt intensity and character can range from moderate to high (the bitterness increases with the malt richness).

**Aroma:** Clean yet robust and complex aroma of grainy-rich malt and spicy hops with restrained (low to medium-low) fruity esters. The malt character reflects German base malt varieties, with rich baked bread and nutty-toasty bread crust notes. The hop aroma may vary from moderate to low, and can have a peppery, spicy, floral, herbal or perfumy character associated with Saazer-type hops.

**Appearance:** The colour ranges from light amber to deep copper colour, stopping short of brown; bronze-orange is most common. Brilliant clarity. Thick, creamy, long-lasting off-white head.

**Flavour:** Assertive hop bitterness well balanced by a sturdy yet clean and crisp malt character. The malt presence is moderated by medium-high to high

attenuation, but considerable rich, complex, and somewhat grainy malt flavours can remain. Some fruity esters (especially cherry-like) may survive the lagering period. A long-lasting, medium-dry to dry, bittersweet or nutty finish reflects both the hop bitterness and malt complexity. Spicy, peppery or floral hop flavour can be moderate to low. No roasted malt flavours or harshness. The apparent bitterness level is sometimes masked by the malt character; the bitterness can seem as low as moderate if the finish is not very dry. Light sulfury or mineral character optional.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-bodied. Smooth. Medium to medium-high carbonation, although can be lower when served from the cask. Astringency low to none. Despite being very full of flavour, is light-bodied enough to be consumed as a gravity-fed session beer in its home brewpubs in Düsseldorf.

**Comments:** A top-fermented lagered beer, fermented at cool ale temperature (59–68 °F), often conditioned at bottom-fermentation temperatures (about 50 °F) and then lagered at cold temperatures to produce a cleaner, smoother palate than is typical for most ales. Zum Uerige is a wonderful beer, but much more aggressively bitter and complex than most other German examples. It may be like the Fuller's ESB of the strong bitter category – well-known but somewhat of a stylistic outlier. Do not judge all Altbiers as if they were Zum Uerige clones; allow for a more balanced bitterness in the beer (25–35 IBUs is more typical for most other German examples). Stronger *sticke* and *doppelsticke* beers should not be entered here.

**History:** The traditional style of beer from Düsseldorf. "Alt" refers to the "old" style of brewing (i.e., using top-fermenting yeast) that was common before bottom-fermenting lager brewing became popular. Predates the isolation of bottom-fermenting yeast strains, though it approximates many characteristics of bottom-fermenting lager beers. Many of the classic examples can be found in brewpubs in the Altstadt ("old town") section of Düsseldorf.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Grists vary, but usually consist of German base malts (usually Pils, sometimes Munich) with small amounts of crystal, chocolate, and/or black malts used to adjust colour. Occasionally will include some wheat, including roasted wheat. Spalt hops are traditional, but other Saazer-type hops can also be used. Clean, highly attenuative ale yeast. A step mash or decoction mash program is traditional.

**Style Comparison:** More bitter and malty than international amber lagers. Somewhat similar to California Common, both in production technique and finished flavour and colour, though not in ingredients.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.044 – 1.052  
IBUs: 25 – 50 FG: 1.008 – 1.014  
SRM: 11 – 17 ABV: 4.3 – 5.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Bolten Alt, Diebels Alt, Füchschen Alt, Original Schlüssel Alt, Schlösser Alt, Schumacher Alt, Uerige Altbier

**Tags:** standard-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, amber-ale-family, bitter

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

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### 6.6. STRONG BITTER

**Overall Impression:** An average-strength to moderately-strong British bitter ale. The balance may be fairly even between malt and hops to somewhat bitter. Drinkability is a critical component of the style. A rather broad style that allows for considerable interpretation by the brewer.

**Aroma:** Hop aroma moderately-high to moderately-low, typically with a floral, earthy, resinous, and/or fruity character. Medium to medium-high malt aroma, optionally with a low to moderate caramel component. Medium-low to medium-high fruity esters. Generally no diacetyl, although very low levels are allowed.

**Appearance:** Light amber to deep copper colour. Good to brilliant clarity. Low to moderate white to off-white head. A low head is acceptable when carbonation is also low.

**Flavour:** Medium to medium-high bitterness with supporting malt flavours evident. The malt profile is typically bready, biscuity, nutty, or lightly toasty, and optionally has a moderately low to moderate caramel or toffee flavour. Hop flavour moderate to moderately high, typically with a floral, earthy, resinous, and/or fruity character. Hop bitterness and flavour should be noticeable, but should not totally dominate malt flavours. Moderately-low to high fruity esters. Optionally may have low amounts of

alcohol. Medium-dry to dry finish. Generally no diacetyl, although very low levels are allowed.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium-full body. Low to moderate carbonation, although bottled versions will be higher. Stronger versions may have a slight alcohol warmth but this character should not be too high.

**Comments:** In England today, “ESB” is a Fullers trademark, and no one thinks of it as a generic class of beer. It is a unique (but very well-known) beer that has a very strong, complex malt profile not found in other examples, often leading judges to overly penalize traditional English strong bitters. In America, ESB has been co-opted to describe a malty, bitter, reddish, standard-strength (for the US) British-type ale, and is a popular craft beer style. This may cause some judges to think of US brewpub ESBs as representative of this style.

**History:** See comments in category introduction. Strong bitters can be seen as a higher-gravity version of best bitters (although not necessarily “more premium” since best bitters are traditionally the brewer’s finest product). British pale ales are generally considered a premium, export-strength pale, bitter beer that roughly approximates a strong bitter, although reformulated for bottling (including increasing carbonation levels). While modern British pale ale is considered a bottled bitter, historically the styles were different.



## 7. BROWN ALE

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### 7.1. SCOTTISH HEAVY

**Overall Impression:** A malt-focused, generally caramelly beer with perhaps a few esters and occasionally a butterscotch aftertaste. Hops only to balance and support the malt. The malt character can range from dry and grainy to rich, toasty, and caramelly, but is never roasty and especially never has a peat smoke character.

**Aroma:** Low to medium maltiness, often with flavours of toasted breadcrumbs, lady fingers, and English biscuits. Low to medium caramel and low butterscotch is allowable. Light pome fruitiness in best examples. May have low traditional English hop aroma (earthy, floral, orange-citrus, spicy, etc.). Peat smoke is inappropriate.

**Appearance:** Pale copper to very dark brown. Clear. Low to moderate, creamy off-white.

**Flavour:** Entirely malt-focused, with flavours ranging from pale, bready malt with caramel overtones to rich-toasty malt with roasted accents (but never roasty) or a combination thereof. Fruity esters are not required but add depth yet are never high. Hop bitterness to balance the malt. No to low hop flavour is also allowed and should of traditional English character (earthy, floral, orange-citrus, spicy, etc.). Finish ranges from rich and malty to dry and grainy. A subtle butterscotch character is acceptable; however, burnt sugars are not. The malt-hop balance tilts toward malt. Peat smoke is inappropriate.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-low to medium body. Low to moderate carbonation. Can be relatively rich and creamy to dry and grainy.

**Comments:** Malt-focused ales that gain the vast majority of their character from specialty malts, never the process. Burning malt or wort sugars via 'kettle caramelization' is not traditional nor is any blatantly 'butterscotch' character. Most frequently a draught product. Smoke character is inappropriate as any found traditionally would have come from the peat in the source water. Scottish ales with smoke character should be entered as a *Classic Style Smoked Beer*.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Originally used Scottish pale malt, grits or flaked maize, and brewers caramel for colour. Later adapted to use additional ingredients, such as amber and brown malts, crystal and wheat malts, and roasted grains or dark sugars for colour but not for the 'roasty' flavour. Sugar adjuncts are traditional. Clean or slightly fruity yeast. Peat-smoked malt is inauthentic and inappropriate.

**Style Comparison:** Similar character to a Wee Heavy, but much smaller.

**Vital Statistics:**  
 OG: 1.035 – 1.040  
 IBUs: 10 – 20                      FG: 1.010 – 1.015  
 SRM: 13 – 22                      ABV: 3.2 – 3.9%

**Commercial Examples:** Broughton Greenmantle Ale, Caledonia Smooth, McEwan's 70, Orkney Raven Ale, Tennent's Special Ale

**Tags:** session-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, amber-ale-family, malty

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### 7.2. SCOTTISH EXPORT

**Overall Impression:** A malt-focused, generally caramelly beer with perhaps a few esters and occasionally a butterscotch aftertaste. Hops only to balance and support the malt. The malt character can range from dry and grainy to rich, toasty, and caramelly, but is never roasty and especially never has a peat smoke character.

**Aroma:** Low to medium maltiness, often with flavours of toasted breadcrumbs, lady fingers, and English biscuits. Low to medium caramel and low butterscotch is allowable. Light pome fruitiness in best examples. May have low traditional English hop aroma (earthy, floral, orange-citrus, spicy, etc.). Peat smoke is inappropriate.

**Appearance:** Pale copper to very dark brown. Clear. Low to moderate, creamy off-white.

**Flavour:** Entirely malt-focused, with flavours ranging from pale, bready malt with caramel overtones to rich-toasty malt with roasted accents (but never roasty) or a combination thereof. Fruity esters are not required but add depth yet are never high. Hop bitterness to balance the malt. No to low hop flavour is also allowed and should of traditional English character (earthy, floral, orange-citrus, spicy, etc.). Finish ranges from rich and malty to dry and grainy. A subtle butterscotch character is acceptable; however, burnt sugars are not. The malt-hop balance tilts toward malt. Peat smoke is inappropriate.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-low to medium body. Low to moderate carbonation. Can be relatively rich and creamy to dry and grainy.

**Comments:** Malt-focused ales that gain the vast majority of their character from specialty malts, never the process. Burning malt or wort sugars via 'kettle caramelization' is not traditional nor is any blatantly 'butterscotch' character. Most frequently a draught product. Smoke character is inappropriate as any found traditionally would have come from the peat in the source water. Scottish ales with smoke character should be entered as a *Classic Style Smoked Beer*.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Originally used Scottish pale malt, grits or flaked maize, and brewers caramel for colour. Later adapted to use additional ingredients, such as amber and brown malts, crystal and wheat malts, and roasted grains or dark sugars for colour but not for the 'roasty' flavour. Sugar adjuncts are traditional. Clean or slightly fruity yeast. Peat-smoked malt is inauthentic and inappropriate.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Style Comparison:** Similar character to a Wee Heavy, but much smaller.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.040 – 1.060  
IBUs: 15 – 30 FG: 1.010 – 1.016  
SRM: 13 – 22 ABV: 3.9 – 6.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Belhaven Scottish Ale, Broughton Exciseman's Ale, Orkney Dark Island, Pelican MacPelican's Scottish Style Ale, Weasel Boy Plaid Ferret Scottish Ale

**Tags:** standard-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, amber-ale-family, malty

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### 7.3. IRISH RED ALE

**Overall Impression:** An easy-drinking pint, often with subtle flavours. Slightly malty in the balance sometimes with an initial soft toffee/caramel sweetness, a slightly grainy-biscuity palate, and a touch of roasted dryness in the finish. Some versions can emphasize the caramel and sweetness more, while others will favor the grainy palate and roasted dryness.

**Aroma:** Low to moderate malt aroma, either neutral-grainy or with a lightly caramelly-toasty-toffee character. May have a very light buttery character (although this is not required). Hop aroma is low earthy or floral to none (usually not present). Quite clean.

**Appearance:** Medium amber to medium reddish-copper colour. Clear. Low off-white to tan coloured head, average persistence.

**Flavour:** Moderate to very little caramel malt flavour and sweetness, rarely with a light buttered toast or toffee-like quality. The palate often is fairly neutral and grainy, or can take on a lightly toasty or biscuity note as it finishes with a light taste of roasted grain, which lends a characteristic dryness to the finish. A light earthy or floral hop flavour is optional. Medium to medium-low hop bitterness. Medium-dry to dry finish. Clean and smooth. Little to no esters. The balance tends to be slightly towards the malt, although light use of roasted grains may increase the perception of bitterness slightly.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body, although examples containing low levels of diacetyl may have a slightly slick mouthfeel (not required). Moderate carbonation. Smooth. Moderately attenuated.

**Comments:** Several variations exist within the style, which causes the guidelines to be somewhat broad to accommodate them. Traditional Irish examples are relatively low in hops, are grainy with a slight roast dryness in the finish, fairly neutral in general. Modern export Irish examples are more caramelly and sweet, and might have more esters. American craft versions are often more alcoholic versions of the Irish export examples. An emerging Irish craft beer scene is exploring more bitter versions of traditional examples. Finally, there are some commercial examples that sound Irish but are essentially International Amber Lagers, with sweetish palates and little bitterness. These guidelines are written around the traditional Irish

examples, with slight extensions for export Irish versions and modern craft Irish versions.

**History:** While Ireland has a long ale brewing heritage, the modern Irish Red Ale style is essentially an adaptation or interpretation of the popular English Bitter style with less hopping and a bit of roast to add colour and dryness. Rediscovered as a craft beer style in Ireland, today it is an essential part of most brewery lineups, along with a pale ale and a stout.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Generally has a bit of roasted barley or black malt to provide reddish colour and dry roasted finish. Pale base malt. Caramel malts were historically imported and more expensive, so not all brewers would use them.

**Style Comparison:** A less-bitter and hoppy Irish equivalent to an English Bitter, with a dryish finish due to roasted barley. More attenuated with less caramel flavour and body than equivalent-strength Scottish ales.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.036 – 1.046  
IBUs: 18 – 28 FG: 1.010 – 1.014  
SRM: 9 – 14 ABV: 3.8 – 5.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Caffrey's Irish Ale, Franciscan Well Rebel Red, Kilkenny Irish Beer, O'Hara's Irish Red Ale, Porterhouse Red Ale, Samuel Adams Irish Red, Smithwick's Irish Ale

**Tags:** standard-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, amber-ale-family, balanced

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### 7.4. AUSTRALIAN DARK/OLD ALE

#### [AABC]

**Overall Impression:** A dry, mildly flavoured session beer. Malt evident but evenly balanced by hop bitterness.

**Aroma:** Mild malt aroma, with low to moderate fruitiness and toasty or light roasty notes. No to low hop aroma, caramel or diacetyl. Any yeasty notes or phenolics should be penalized, as should any excessive fruitiness or sweet caramel characters. Slight chocolate is acceptable. Clean aroma is essential.

**Appearance:** Mid-brown to dark brown, sometimes almost black and opaque. Low to medium carbonation. Excessive carbonation or flatness should be penalized.

**Flavour:** Mild maltiness with no hop flavour or diacetyl. Low to moderate fruitiness, light roastiness can be evident. Dry maltiness on the finish. Clean and quaffable. Low to medium carbonation. Any phenolics, diacetyl, yeasty flavours, astringency, harshness, or noticeable sweetness or alcohol, should be penalized.

**Mouthfeel:** Light to medium body. Low to medium carbonation.

**Ingredients:** Pale and chocolate malt, clean bittering hop such as Pride of Ringwood.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.040 – 1.050  
IBUs: 15 – 25 FG: 1.010 – 1.016  
SRM: 15 – 25 ABV: 4.5 – 5.3%

**Commercial Examples:** Toohey's Old Ale

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## 7.5. BRITISH BROWN ALE

**Overall Impression:** A malty, brown caramel-centric British ale without the roasted flavours of a Porter.

**Aroma:** Light, sweet malt aroma with toffee, nutty, or light chocolate notes, and a light to heavy caramel quality. A light but appealing floral or earthy hop aroma may also be noticed. A light fruity aroma may be evident, but should not dominate.

**Appearance:** Dark amber to dark reddish-brown colour. Clear. Low to moderate off-white to light tan head.

**Flavour:** Gentle to moderate malt sweetness, with a light to heavy caramel character and a medium to dry finish. Malt may also have a nutty, toasted, biscuity, toffee, or light chocolate character. Medium to medium-low bitterness. Malt-hop balance ranges from even to malt-focused; hop flavour low to none (floral or earthy qualities). Low to moderate fruity esters can be present.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body. Medium to medium-high carbonation.

**Comments:** A wide-ranging category with different interpretations possible, ranging from lighter-coloured to hoppy to deeper, darker, and caramel-focused; however, none of the versions have strongly roasted flavours. A stronger Double Brown Ale was more popular in the past, but is very hard to find now. While London Brown Ales are marketed using the name Brown Ale, we list those as a different judging style due to the significant difference in balance (especially sweetness) and alcohol strength; that doesn't mean that they aren't in the same family, though.

**History:** Brown ale has a long history in Great Britain, although several different types of products used that name at various times. Modern brown ale is a 20<sup>th</sup> century creation as a bottled product; it is not the same as historical products of the same name. A wide range of gravities were brewed, but modern brown ales are generally of the stronger (by current UK standards) interpretation. This style is based on the modern stronger British brown ales, not historical versions or the sweeter London Brown Ale. Predominately but not exclusively a bottled product currently.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** British mild ale or pale ale malt base with caramel malts. May also have small amounts darker malts (e.g., chocolate) to provide colour and the nutty character. English hop varieties are most authentic.

**Style Comparison:** More malty balance than British Bitters, with more malt flavours from darker grains. Stronger than a Dark Mild. Less roast than an English Porter. Stronger and much less sweet than London Brown Ale.

**Vital Statistics:**

OG:	1.040 – 1.052
IBUs:	20 – 30
SRM:	12 – 22
FG:	1.008 – 1.013
ABV:	4.2 – 5.4%

**Commercial Examples:** Maxim Double Maxim, Newcastle Brown Ale, Riggwelter Yorkshire Ale, Samuel Smith's Nut Brown Ale, Wychwood Hobgoblin

**Tags:** standard-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, brown-ale-family, malty

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## 7.6. AMERICAN BROWN ALE

**Overall Impression:** A malty but hoppy beer frequently with chocolate and caramel flavours. The hop flavour and aroma complements and enhances the malt rather than clashing with it.

**Aroma:** Moderate malty-sweet to malty-rich aroma with chocolate, caramel, nutty, and/or toasty qualities. Hop aroma is typically low to moderate, of almost any variety that complements the malt. Some interpretations of the style may feature a stronger hop aroma, an American or New World hop character (citrusy, fruity, tropical, etc.), and/or a fresh dry-hopped aroma (all are optional). Fruity esters are moderate to very low. The dark malt character is more robust than other brown ales, yet stops short of being overly porter-like. The malt and hops are generally balanced.

**Appearance:** Light to very dark brown colour. Clear. Low to moderate off-white to light tan head.

**Flavour:** Medium to moderately-high malty-sweet or malty-rich flavour with chocolate, caramel, nutty, and/or toasty malt complexity, with medium to medium-high bitterness. The medium to medium-dry finish provides an aftertaste having both malt and hops. Hop flavour can be light to moderate, and may optionally have a citrusy, fruity, or tropical character, although any hop flavour that complements the malt is acceptable. Very low to moderate fruity esters.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium to medium-full body. More bitter versions may have a dry, resinous impression. Moderate to moderately-high carbonation.

**Comments:** Most commercial American Browns are not as aggressive as the original homebrewed versions, and some modern craft-brewed examples. This style reflects the current commercial offerings typically marketed as American Brown Ales rather than the hoppier, stronger homebrew versions from the early days of homebrewing. These IPA-strength brown ales should be entered in the *Specialty IPA* as Brown IPAs.

**History:** An American style from the modern craft beer era. Derived from English Brown Ales, but with more hops. Pete's Wicked Ale was one of the first and best known examples, and inspired many imitations. Popular with homebrewers, where very hoppy versions were sometimes called *Texas Brown Ales* (this is now more appropriately a Brown IPA).

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Well-modified pale malt, plus crystal and darker malts (typically chocolate). American hops are typical, but continental or New World hops can also be used.

**Style Comparison:** More chocolate and caramel type flavours than American Pale or Amber Ales, typically with less prominent bitterness in the balance. Less bitterness, alcohol, and hop character than Brown IPAs. More bitter and generally hoppier than English Brown Ales, with a richer malt presence, usually higher alcohol, and American/New World hop character.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.045 – 1.060  
IBUs: 20 – 30 FG: 1.010 – 1.016  
SRM: 18 – 35 ABV: 4.3 – 6.2%  
**Commercial Examples:** Anchor Brekle's Brown,  
Big Sky Moose Drool Brown Ale, Brooklyn Brown  
Ale, Bell's Best Brown, Cigar City Maduro Brown

Ale, Smuttynose Old Brown Dog Ale, Telluride Face  
Down Brown

**Tags:** standard-strength, dark-colour, top-  
fermented, north-america, craft-style, brown-ale-  
family, balanced, hoppy

## 8. PORTER

### 8.1. ENGLISH PORTER

*Simply called “Porter” in Britain, the name “English Porter” is used to differentiate it from other porters described in these guidelines.*

**Overall Impression:** A moderate-strength brown beer with a restrained roasty character and bitterness. May have a range of roasted flavours, generally without burnt qualities, and often has a chocolate-caramel-malty profile.

**Aroma:** Moderate to moderately low bready, biscuity, and toasty malt aroma with mild roastiness, and may have a chocolate quality. May also show some non-roasted malt character in support (caramelly, nutty, toffee-like and/or sweet). May have up to a moderate level of floral or earthy hops. Fruity esters moderate to none. Diacetyl low to none.

**Appearance:** Light brown to dark brown in colour, often with ruby highlights when held up to light. Good clarity, although may approach being opaque. Moderate off-white to light tan head with good to fair retention.

**Flavour:** Moderate bready, biscuity, and toasty malt flavour includes a mild to moderate roastiness (frequently with a chocolate character) and often a significant caramel, nutty, and/or toffee character. May have other secondary flavours such as coffee, licorice, biscuits or toast in support. Should not have a significant burnt or harsh roasted flavour, although small amounts may contribute a bitter chocolate complexity. Earthy or floral hop flavour moderate to none. Medium-low to medium hop bitterness will vary the balance from slightly malty to slightly bitter. Usually fairly well-attenuated, although can be somewhat sweet. Diacetyl moderately-low to none. Moderate to low fruity esters.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body. Moderately-low to moderately-high carbonation. Light to moderate creamy texture.

**Comments:** This style description describes the modern version of English porter, not every possible variation over time in every region where it existed. Historical re-creations should be entered in the Historical style category, with an appropriate description describing the profile of the beer. Modern craft examples in the UK are bigger and hoppier.

**History:** Originating in London around 300 years ago, porter evolved from earlier sweet, Brown Beer popular at the time. Evolved many times with various technological and ingredient developments and consumer preferences driving these changes. Became a highly-popular, widely-exported style in the 1800s before declining around WWI and disappearing in the 1950s. It was re-introduced in the mid-1970s with the start of the craft beer era. The name is said to have been derived from its popularity with the London working class

performing various load-carrying tasks of the day. Parent of various regional interpretations over time, and a predecessor to all stouts (which were originally called “stout porters”). ***There is no historic connection or relationship between Mild and Porter.***

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Grists vary, but something producing a dark colour is always involved. Chocolate or other dark-roasted malts, caramel malt, brewing sugars, and the like are common. London-type porters often use brown malt as a characteristic flavour.

**Style Comparison:** Differs from an American Porter in that it usually has softer, sweeter and more caramelly flavours, lower gravities, and usually less alcohol; the American Porter will also typically have more of a hop character. More substance and roast than a British Brown Ale. Higher in gravity than a dark mild.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.040 – 1.052  
IBUs: 18 – 35 FG: 1.008 – 1.014  
SRM: 20 – 30 ABV: 4.0 – 5.4%

**Commercial Examples:** Burton Bridge Burton Porter, Fuller’s London Porter, Nethergate Old Growler Porter, RCH Old Slug Porter, Samuel Smith Taddy Porter

**Tags:** standard-strength, dark-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, porter-family, malty, roasty

### 8.2. AMERICAN PORTER

**Overall Impression:** A substantial, malty dark beer with a complex and flavourful dark malt character.

**Aroma:** Medium-light to medium-strong dark malt aroma, often with a lightly burnt character. Optionally may also show some additional malt character in support (grainy, bready, toffee-like, caramelly, chocolate, coffee, rich, and/or sweet). Hop aroma low to high, often with a resinous, earthy, or floral character. May be dry-hopped. Fruity esters are moderate to none.

**Appearance:** Medium brown to very dark brown, often with ruby- or garnet-like highlights. Can approach black in colour. Clarity may be difficult to discern in such a dark beer, but when not opaque will be clear (particularly when held up to the light). Full, tan-coloured head with moderately good head retention.

**Flavour:** Moderately strong malt flavour usually features a lightly burnt malt character (and sometimes chocolate and/or coffee flavours) with a bit of grainy, dark malt dryness in the finish. Overall flavour may finish from dry to medium-sweet. May have a sharp character from dark roasted grains, but should not be overly acrid, burnt or harsh. Medium to high bitterness, which can be accentuated by the dark malt. Hop flavour can vary from low to high with a resinous, earthy, or floral

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

character, and balances the dark malt flavours. The dark malt and hops should not clash. Dry-hopped versions may have a resinous flavour. Fruity esters moderate to none.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium to medium-full body. Moderately low to moderately high carbonation. Stronger versions may have a slight alcohol warmth. May have a slight astringency from dark malts, although this character should not be strong.

**Comments:** Although a rather broad style open to brewer interpretation. Dark malt intensity and flavour can vary significantly. May or may not have a strong hop character, and may or may not have significant fermentation by-products; thus may seem to have an “American” or “British” character.

**History:** A stronger, more aggressive version of pre-prohibition porters and/or English porters developed in the modern craft beer era. Historical versions existed, particularly on the US East Coast, some of which are still being produced (see the Historical Beer, Pre-Prohibition Porter). This style describes the modern craft version.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** May contain several malts, prominently dark malts, which often include black malt (chocolate malt is also often used). American hops typically used for bittering, but US or UK finishing hops can be used; a clashing citrus quality is generally undesirable. Ale yeast can either be clean US versions or characterful English varieties.

**Style Comparison:** More bitter and often stronger with more dark malt qualities and dryness than English Porters or Pre-Prohibition Porters. Less strong and assertive than American Stouts.

**Vital Statistics:**

OG:	1.050 – 1.070
IBUs:	25 – 50
SRM:	22 – 40
FG:	1.012 – 1.018
ABV:	4.8 – 6.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Anchor Porter, Boulevard Bully! Porter, Deschutes Black Butte Porter, Founders Porter, Great Lakes Edmund Fitzgerald Porter, Smuttynose Robust Porter, Sierra Nevada Porter

**Tags:** standard-strength, dark-colour, top-fermented, north-america, craft-style, porter-family, bitter, roasty, hoppy

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### 8.3. BALTIC PORTER

**Overall Impression:** A Baltic Porter often has the malt flavours reminiscent of an English porter and the restrained roast of a schwarzbier, but with a higher OG and alcohol content than either. Very complex, with multi-layered malt and dark fruit flavours.

**Aroma:** Rich malty sweetness often containing caramel, toffee, nutty to deep toast, and/or licorice notes. Complex alcohol and ester profile of moderate strength, and reminiscent of plums, prunes, raisins, cherries or currants, occasionally with a vinous Port-like quality. Some darker malt character that is deep chocolate, coffee or molasses but never burnt. No hops. No sourness. Very smooth.

**Appearance:** Dark reddish-copper to opaque dark brown (not black). Thick, persistent tan-coloured head. Clear, although darker versions can be opaque.

**Flavour:** As with aroma, has a rich malty sweetness with a complex blend of deep malt, dried fruit esters, and alcohol. Has a prominent yet smooth schwarzbier-like roasted flavour that stops short of burnt. Mouth-filling and very smooth. Clean lager character. Starts sweet but darker malt flavours quickly dominates and persists through finish. Just a touch dry with a hint of roast coffee or licorice in the finish. Malt can have a caramel, toffee, nutty, molasses and/or licorice complexity. Light hints of black currant and dark fruits. Medium-low to medium bitterness from malt and hops, just to provide balance. Hop flavour from slightly spicy hops ranges from none to medium-low.

**Mouthfeel:** Generally quite full-bodied and smooth, with a well-aged alcohol warmth. Medium to medium-high carbonation, making it seem even more mouth-filling. Not heavy on the tongue due to carbonation level.

**Comments:** May also be described today as an Imperial Porter, although heavily roasted or hopped versions are not appropriate for this style. Most versions are in the 7–8.5% ABV range. Danish breweries often refer to them as Stouts, which indicates their historic lineage from the days when Porter was used as a generic name for Porter and Stout.

**History:** Traditional beer from countries bordering the Baltic Sea, developed indigenously after higher-gravity export brown or imperial stouts from England were established. Historically top-fermented, many breweries adapted the recipes for bottom-fermenting yeast along with the rest of their production.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Generally lager yeast (cold fermented if using ale yeast, as is required when brewed in Russia). Debittered chocolate or black malt. Munich or Vienna base malt. Continental hops (Saazer-type, typically). May contain crystal malts and/or adjuncts. Brown or amber malt common in historical recipes.

**Style Comparison:** Much less roasted and smoother than an Imperial Stout, typically with less alcohol. Lacks the roasty qualities of stouts in general, more taking on the roasted-but-not-burnt characteristics of a schwarzbier. Quite fruity compared to other porters. Higher alcohol than other porters.

**Vital Statistics:**

OG:	1.060 – 1.090
IBUs:	20 – 40
SRM:	17 – 30
FG:	1.016 – 1.024
ABV:	6.5 – 9.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Aldaris Porteris, Baltika #6 Porter, Devils Backbone Danzig, Okocim Porter, Sinebrychoff Porter, Zywiec Porter

**Tags:** high-strength, dark-colour, any-fermentation, lagered, eastern-europe, traditional-style, porter-family, malty

## 9. STOUT

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### 9.1. SWEET STOUT

**Overall Impression:** A very dark, sweet, full-bodied, slightly roasty ale that can suggest coffee-and-cream, or sweetened espresso.

**Aroma:** Mild roasted grain aroma, sometimes with coffee and/or chocolate notes. An impression of cream-like sweetness often exists. Fruitiness can be low to moderately high. Diacetyl low to none. Hop aroma low to none, with floral or earthy notes.

**Appearance:** Very dark brown to black in colour. Can be opaque (if not, it should be clear). Creamy tan to brown head.

**Flavour:** Dark roasted grain/malt impression with coffee and/or chocolate flavours dominate the palate. Hop bitterness is moderate. Medium to high sweetness provides a counterpoint to the roasted character and hop bitterness, and lasts into the finish. Low to moderate fruity esters. Diacetyl low to none. The balance between dark grains/malts and sweetness can vary, from quite sweet to moderately dry and somewhat roasty.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-full to full-bodied and creamy. Low to moderate carbonation. High residual sweetness from unfermented sugars enhances the full-tasting mouthfeel.

**Comments:** Gravities are low in England, higher in exported and US products. Variations exist, with the level of residual sweetness, the intensity of the roast character, and the balance between the two being the variables most subject to interpretation. Some versions in England are very sweet (low attenuation) and also low in ABV (Tennent's Sweetheart Stout is 2%), but is an outlier compared to the other examples. These guidelines mostly describe the higher gravity, more balanced, export versions rather than the low alcohol, very sweet versions that many find quite difficult to drink.

**History:** An English style of stout developed in the early 1900s. Historically known as "Milk" or "Cream" stouts, legally this designation is no longer permitted in England (but is acceptable elsewhere). The "milk" name is derived from the use of lactose, or milk sugar, as a sweetener. Originally marketed as a tonic for invalids and nursing mothers.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** The sweetness in most Sweet Stouts comes from a lower bitterness level than most other stouts and a high percentage of unfermentable dextrins. Lactose, an unfermentable sugar, is frequently added to provide additional residual sweetness. Base of pale malt, and may use roasted barley, black malt, chocolate malt, crystal malt, and adjuncts such as maize or brewing sugars.

**Style Comparison:** Much sweeter and less bitter than other stouts (except the stronger tropical stout). The roast character is mild, not burnt like other stouts. Somewhat similar in balance to oatmeal stouts, albeit with more sweetness.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.044 – 1.060

IBUs: 20 – 40

FG: 1.012 – 1.024

SRM: 30 – 40

ABV: 4.0 – 6.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Bristol Beer Factory Milk Stout, Left Hand Milk Stout, Lancaster Milk Stout, Mackeson's XXX Stout, Marston's Oyster Stout, Samuel Adams Cream Stout

**Tags:** standard-strength, dark-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, stout-family, malty, roasty, sweet

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### 9.2. IRISH STOUT

**Overall Impression:** A black beer with a pronounced roasted flavour, often similar to coffee. The balance can range from fairly even to quite bitter, with the more balanced versions having a little malty sweetness and the bitter versions being quite dry. Draught versions typically are creamy from a nitro pour, but bottled versions will not have this dispense-derived character. The roasted flavour can be dry and coffee-like to somewhat chocolaty.

**Aroma:** Moderate coffee-like aroma typically dominates; may have slight dark chocolate, cocoa and/or roasted grain secondary notes. Esters medium-low to none. Hop aroma low to none, may be lightly earthy or floral, but is typically absent.

**Appearance:** Jet black to very deep brown with garnet highlights in colour. According to Guinness, "Guinness beer may appear black, but it is actually a very dark shade of ruby." Opaque. A thick, creamy, long-lasting, tan- to brown-coloured head is characteristic when served on nitro, but don't expect the tight, creamy head on a bottled beer.

**Flavour:** Moderate roasted grain or malt flavour with a medium to high hop bitterness. The finish can be dry and coffee-like to moderately balanced with a touch of caramel or malty sweetness. Typically has coffee-like flavours, but also may have a bittersweet or unsweetened chocolate character in the palate, lasting into the finish. Balancing factors may include some creaminess, medium-low to no fruitiness, and medium to no hop flavour (often earthy). The level of bitterness is somewhat variable, as is the roasted character and the dryness of the finish; allow for interpretation by brewers.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium-full body, with a somewhat creamy character (particularly when served with a nitro pour). Low to moderate carbonation. For the high hop bitterness and significant proportion of dark grains present, this beer is remarkably smooth. May have a light astringency from the roasted grains, although harshness is undesirable.

**Comments:** When a brewery offered a stout and a porter, the stout was always the stronger beer (it was originally called a "Stout Porter"). Modern versions are brewed from a lower OG and no longer necessarily reflect a higher strength than porters. This is typically a draught product today; bottled versions are typically brewed from a higher OG and

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

are usually called Extra Stouts. Regional differences exist in Ireland, similar to variability in English Bitters. Dublin-type stouts use roasted barley, are more bitter, and are drier. Cork-type stouts are sweeter, less bitter, and have flavours from chocolate and specialty malts. Commercial examples of this style are almost always associated with a nitro pour. Do not expect traditional bottle-conditioned beers to have the full, creamy texture or very long-lasting head traditionally associated with nitrogen dispense.

**History:** The style evolved from attempts to capitalize on the success of London porters, but originally reflected a fuller, creamier, more “stout” body and strength. Guinness began brewing only porter in 1799, and a “stouter kind of porter” around 1810. Irish stout diverged from London single stout (or simply porter) in the late 1800s, with an emphasis on darker malts. Guinness was among the first breweries to use black patent malt for porters and stouts in the 1820s. Guinness began using roasted barley after WWII, while London brewers continued to use brown malt. Guinness started using flaked barley in the 1950s, also increasing attenuation greatly. Guinness Draught was launched as a brand in 1959. Draught cans and bottles were developed in the late 1980s and 1990s.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Guinness is made using roasted barley, flaked barley, and pale malt, but other breweries don’t necessarily use roasted barley; they can use chocolate or other dark and specialty malts. Whatever combination of malts or grains is used, the resulting product should be black. Cork-type stouts are perhaps closer to historical London-type stouts in composition with a varied grist not dominated by roasted barley.

**Style Comparison:** Lower strength than an Irish Extra Stout, but with similar flavours. Darker in colour (black) than an English porter (brown).

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.036 – 1.044  
IBUs: 25 – 45 FG: 1.007 – 1.011  
SRM: 25 – 40 ABV: 4.0 – 4.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Beamish Irish Stout, Guinness Draught, Harpoon Boston Irish Stout, Murphy’s Irish Stout, O’Hara’s Irish Stout, Porterhouse Wrasslers 4X

**Tags:** standard-strength, dark-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, stout-family, bitter, roasty

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### 9.3. OATMEAL STOUT

**Overall Impression:** A very dark, full-bodied, roasty, malty ale with a complementary oatmeal flavour. The sweetness, balance, and oatmeal impression can vary considerably.

**Aroma:** Mild roasted grain aromas, generally with a coffee-like character. A light malty sweetness can suggest a coffee-and-cream impression. Fruitiness should be low to medium-high. Diacetyl medium-low to none. Hop aroma medium-low to none, earthy or floral. A light grainy-nutty oatmeal aroma is optional.

**Appearance:** Medium brown to black in colour. Thick, creamy, persistent tan- to brown-coloured head. Can be opaque (if not, it should be clear).

**Flavour:** Similar to the aroma, with a mild roasted coffee to coffee-and-cream flavour, and low to moderately-high fruitiness. Oats and dark roasted grains provide some flavour complexity; the oats can add a nutty, grainy or earthy flavour. Dark grains can combine with malt sweetness to give the impression of milk chocolate or coffee with cream. Medium hop bitterness with the balance toward malt. Medium-sweet to medium-dry finish. Diacetyl medium-low to none. Hop flavour medium-low to none, typically earthy or floral.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-full to full body, with a smooth, silky, velvety, sometimes an almost oily slickness from the oatmeal. Creamy. Medium to medium-high carbonation.

**Comments:** Generally between Sweet and Irish Stouts in sweetness. Variations exist, from fairly sweet to quite dry, as well as English and American versions (American versions tend to be more hoppy, less sweet, and less fruity). The level of bitterness also varies, as does the oatmeal impression. Light use of oatmeal may give a certain silkiness of body and richness of flavour, while heavy use of oatmeal can be fairly intense in flavour with an almost oily mouthfeel, dryish finish, and slight grainy astringency. When judging, allow for differences in interpretation.

**History:** A variant of nourishing or invalid stouts of the late 1800s using oatmeal in the grist, similar to the development of sweet stout that used lactose. An original Scottish version used a significant amount of oat malt. Later went through a shady phase where some English brewers would throw a handful of oats into their parti-gyled stouts in order to legally produce a ‘healthy’ Oatmeal Stout for marketing purposes. Most popular in England between the World Wars, was revived in the craft beer era for export, which helped lead to its adoption as a popular modern American craft beer style that uses a noticeable (not symbolic) quantity of oats.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pale, caramel and dark roasted malts (often chocolate) and grains. Oatmeal or malted oats (5-20% or more) used to enhance fullness of body and complexity of flavour. Hops primarily for bittering. Can use brewing sugars or syrups. English ale yeast.

**Style Comparison:** Most are like a cross between an Irish Extra Stout and a Sweet Stout with oatmeal added. Several variations exist, with the sweeter versions more like a Sweet Stout with oatmeal instead of lactose, and the drier versions more like a more nutty, flavourful Irish Extra Stout. Both tend to emphasize the body and mouthfeel.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.045 – 1.065  
IBUs: 25 – 40 FG: 1.010 – 1.018  
SRM: 22 – 40 ABV: 4.2 – 5.9%

**Commercial Examples:** Anderson Valley Barney Flats Oatmeal Stout, Broughton Scottish Oatmeal Stout, Figueroa Mountain Stagecoach Stout, St-Ambroise Oatmeal Stout, Samuel Smith Oatmeal Stout, Young’s Oatmeal Stout



## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Tags:** standard-strength, dark-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, stout-family, balanced, roasty

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### 9.4. IRISH EXTRA STOUT

**Overall Impression:** A fuller-bodied black beer with a pronounced roasted flavour, often similar to coffee and dark chocolate with some malty complexity. The balance can range from moderately bittersweet to bitter, with the more balanced versions having up to moderate malty richness and the bitter versions being quite dry.

**Aroma:** Moderate to moderately high coffee-like aroma, often with slight dark chocolate, cocoa, biscuit, vanilla and/or roasted grain secondary notes. Esters medium-low to none. Hop aroma low to none, may be lightly earthy or spicy, but is typically absent. Malt and roast dominate the aroma.

**Appearance:** Jet black. Opaque. A thick, creamy, tan head is characteristic.

**Flavour:** Moderate to moderately high dark-roasted grain or malt flavour with a medium to medium-high hop bitterness. The finish can be dry and coffee-like to moderately balanced with up to moderate caramel or malty sweetness. Typically has roasted coffee-like flavours, but also often has a dark chocolate character in the palate, lasting into the finish. Background mocha, biscuit, or vanilla flavours are often present and add complexity. Medium-low to no fruitiness. Medium to no hop flavour (often earthy or spicy). The level of bitterness is somewhat variable, as is the roasted character and the dryness of the finish; allow for interpretation by brewers.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-full to full body, with a somewhat creamy character. Moderate carbonation. Very smooth. May have a light astringency from the

roasted grains, although harshness is undesirable. A slightly warming character may be detected.

**Comments:** Traditionally a bottled product. Consumers expect a stout to always have a black colour; the flavour intensity from whatever made it black is what consumers expect in their beer. Not all breweries make a dry, roasty version typical of Guinness; a more balanced and chocolaty version is equally acceptable.

**History:** Same roots as Irish stout, but as a stronger product. Guinness Extra Stout (Extra Superior Porter, later Double Stout) was first brewed in 1821, and was primarily a bottled product. Described by Guinness as a “more full-bodied beer with a deeper characteristic roasted bitterness and a rich, mature texture. Of all the types of Guinness available today, this is the closest to the porter originally brewed by Arthur Guinness.” Note that in modern times, Guinness Extra Stout has different strengths in different regions; the European version is around 4.2% and fits in the Irish Stout style.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Similar to Irish Stout.

**Style Comparison:** Midway between an Irish Stout and a Foreign Extra Stout in strength and flavour intensity, although with a similar balance. More body, richness, and often malt complexity than an Irish Stout. Black in colour, not brown like a porter.

**Vital Statistics:**

OG:	1.052 – 1.062
IBUs:	35 – 50
SRM:	25 – 40
FG:	1.010 – 1.014
ABV:	5.5 – 6.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Guinness Extra Stout (US version), O’Hara’s Leann Folláin, Sheaf Stout  
**Tags:** high-strength, dark-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, stout-family, bitter, roasty

## 10 STRONG STOUT

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### 10.1. TROPICAL STOUT

**Overall Impression:** A very dark, sweet, fruity, moderately strong ale with smooth roasty flavours without a burnt harshness.

**Aroma:** Sweetness evident, moderate to high intensity. Roasted grain aromas moderate to high, and can have coffee or chocolate notes. Fruitiness medium to high. May have a molasses, licorice, dried fruit, and/or vinous aromatics. Stronger versions can have a subtle clean aroma of alcohol. Hop aroma low to none. Diacetyl low to none.

**Appearance:** Very deep brown to black in colour. Clarity usually obscured by deep colour (if not opaque, should be clear). Large tan to brown head with good retention.

**Flavour:** Quite sweet with a smooth dark grain flavours, and restrained bitterness. Roasted grain and malt character can be moderate to high with a smooth coffee or chocolate flavour, although the roast character is moderated in the balance by the sweet finish. Moderate to high fruity esters. Can have a sweet, dark rum-like quality. Little to no hop flavour. Medium-low to no diacetyl.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-full to full body, often with a smooth, creamy character. May give a warming (but never hot) impression from alcohol presence. Moderate to moderately-high carbonation.

**Comments:** Sweetness levels can vary significantly. Surprisingly refreshing in a hot climate.

**History:** Originally high-gravity stouts brewed for tropical markets, became popular and imitated by local brewers often using local sugars and ingredients.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Similar to a sweet stout, but with more gravity. Pale and dark roasted malts and grains. Hops mostly for bitterness. May use adjuncts and sugar to boost gravity. Typically made with warm-fermented lager yeast.

**Style Comparison:** Tastes like a scaled-up sweet stout with higher fruitiness. Similar to some Imperial Stouts without the high bitterness, strong/burnt roastiness, and late hops, and with lower alcohol. Much more sweet and less hoppy than American Stouts. Much sweeter and less bitter than the similar-gravity Export Stouts.

**Vital Statistics:**  
OG: 1.056 – 1.075  
IBUs: 30 – 50                      FG: 1.010 – 1.018  
SRM: 30 – 40                      ABV: 5.5 – 8.0%

**Commercial Examples:** ABC Extra Stout, Dragon Stout, Jamaica Stout, Lion Stout, Royal Extra Stout

**Tags:** high-strength, dark-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, stout-family, malty, roasty, sweet

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### 10.2. FOREIGN EXTRA STOUT

**Overall Impression:** A very dark, moderately strong, fairly dry, stout with prominent roast flavours.

**Aroma:** Moderate to high roasted grain aromas, often with coffee, chocolate and/or lightly burnt notes. Low to medium fruitiness. May have a sweet aroma, or molasses, licorice, dried fruit, and/or vinous aromatics. Stronger versions can have a subtle, clean aroma of alcohol. Hop aroma moderately low to none, can be earthy, herbal or floral. Diacetyl low to none.

**Appearance:** Very deep brown to black in colour. Clarity usually obscured by deep colour (if not opaque, should be clear). Large tan to brown head with good retention.

**Flavour:** Moderate to high roasted grain and malt flavour with a coffee, chocolate, or lightly burnt grain character, although without a sharp bite. Moderately dry. Low to medium esters. Medium to high bitterness. Moderate to no hop flavour, can be earthy, herbal, or floral. Diacetyl medium-low to none.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-full to full body, often with a smooth, sometimes creamy character. May give a warming (but never hot) impression from alcohol presence. Moderate to moderately-high carbonation.

**Comments:** Also known as Foreign Stout, Export Stout, Foreign Export Stout. Historic versions (before WWI, at least) had the same OG as domestic Extra Stouts, but had a higher ABV because it had a long secondary with *Brettanomyces* chewing away at it. The difference between domestic and foreign versions were the hopping and length of maturation.

**History:** Stronger stouts brewed for the export market today, but with a history stretching back to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries when they were more heavily-hopped versions of stronger export stouts. Guinness Foreign Extra Stout (originally, West India Porter, later Foreign Extra Double Stout) was first brewed in 1801 according to Guinness with “extra hops to give it a distinctive taste and a longer shelf life in hot weather, this is brewed [today] in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. It [currently] makes up 40% of all the Guinness brewed around the world.”

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pale and dark roasted malts and grains, historically also could have used brown and amber malts. Hops mostly for bitterness, typically English varieties. May use adjuncts and sugar to boost gravity.

**Style Comparison:** Similar in balance to an Irish Extra Stout, but with more alcohol. Not as big or intense as a Russian Imperial Stout. Lacking the strong bitterness and high late hops of American Stouts. Similar gravity as Tropical Stout, but with a drier finish, higher bitterness, and less esters.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.056 – 1.075  
IBUs: 50 – 70 FG: 1.010 – 1.018  
SRM: 30 – 40 ABV: 6.3 – 8.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Coopers Best Extra Stout, Guinness Foreign Extra Stout, The Kernel Export Stout, Ridgeway Foreign Export Stout, Southwark Old Stout

**Tags:** high-strength, dark-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, stout-family, balanced, roasty

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### 10.3. AMERICAN STOUT

**Overall Impression:** A fairly strong, highly roasted, bitter, hoppy dark stout. Has the body and dark flavours typical of stouts with a more aggressive American hop character and bitterness.

**Aroma:** Moderate to strong aroma of roasted malts, often having a roasted coffee or dark chocolate quality. Burnt or charcoal aromas are acceptable at low levels. Medium to very low hop aroma, often with a citrusy or resinous character. Medium to no esters. Light alcohol-derived aromatics are also optional.

**Appearance:** Generally a jet black colour, although some may appear very dark brown. Large, persistent head of light tan to light brown in colour. Usually opaque.

**Flavour:** Moderate to very high roasted malt flavours, often tasting of coffee, roasted coffee beans, dark or bittersweet chocolate. May have the flavour of slightly burnt coffee grounds, but this character should not be prominent. Low to medium malt sweetness, often with rich chocolate or caramel flavours. Medium to high bitterness. Low to high hop flavour, generally citrusy or resinous. Low to no esters. Medium to dry finish, occasionally with a lightly burnt quality. Alcohol flavours can be present up to medium levels, but smooth.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium to full body. Can be somewhat creamy, particularly if a small amount of oats have been used to enhance mouthfeel. Can have a bit of roast-derived astringency, but this character should not be excessive. Medium-high to high carbonation. Light to moderately strong alcohol warmth, but smooth and not excessively hot.

**Comments:** Breweries express individuality through varying the roasted malt profile, malt sweetness and flavour, and the amount of finishing hops used. Generally has bolder roasted malt flavours and hopping than other traditional stouts (except Imperial Stouts).

**History:** A modern craft beer and homebrew style that applied an aggressive American hopping regime to a strong traditional English or Irish stout. The homebrew version was previously known as West Coast Stout, which is a common naming scheme for a more highly-hopped beer.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Common American base malts and yeast. Varied use of dark and roasted malts, as well as caramel-type malts. Adjuncts such as oatmeal may be present in low quantities. American hop varieties.

**Style Comparison:** Like a hoppy, bitter, strongly roasted Extra or Export Stout. Much more roast and body than a Black IPA. Bigger, stronger versions belong in the Russian Imperial Stout style. Stronger and more assertive, particularly in the dark malt/grain additions and hop character, than American Porter.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.050 – 1.075  
IBUs: 35 – 75 FG: 1.010 – 1.022  
SRM: 30 – 40 ABV: 5.0 – 7.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Avery Out of Bounds Stout, Deschutes Obsidian Stout, North Coast Old No. 38, Rogue Shakespeare Stout, Sierra Nevada Stout

**Tags:** high-strength, dark-colour, top-fermented, north-america, craft-style, stout-family, bitter, roasty, hoppy

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### 10.4. IMPERIAL STOUT

**Overall Impression:** An intensely-flavoured, big, dark ale with a wide range of flavour balances and regional interpretations. Roasty-burnt malt with deep dark or dried fruit flavours, and a warming, bittersweet finish. Despite the intense flavours, the components need to meld together to create a complex, harmonious beer, not a hot mess.

**Aroma:** Rich and complex, with variable amounts of roasted grains, maltiness, fruity esters, hops, and alcohol. The roasted malt character can take on coffee, dark chocolate, or slightly burnt tones and can be light to moderately strong. The malt aroma can be subtle to rich and barleywine-like. May optionally show a slight specialty malt character (e.g., caramel), but this should only add complexity and not dominate. Fruity esters may be low to moderately strong, and may take on a complex, dark fruit (e.g., plums, prunes, raisins) character. Hop aroma can be very low to quite aggressive, and may contain any hop variety. An alcohol character may be present, but shouldn't be sharp, hot, or solventy. Aged versions may have a slight vinous or port-like quality, but shouldn't be sour. The balance can vary with any of the aroma elements taking center stage. Not all possible aromas described need be present; many interpretations are possible. Aging affects the intensity, balance and smoothness of aromatics.

**Appearance:** Colour may range from very dark reddish-brown to jet black. Opaque. Deep tan to dark brown head. Generally has a well-formed head, although head retention may be low to moderate. High alcohol and viscosity may be visible in "legs" when beer is swirled in a glass.

**Flavour:** Rich, deep, complex and frequently quite intense, with variable amounts of roasted malt/grains, maltiness, fruity esters, hop bitterness and flavour, and alcohol. Medium to aggressively high bitterness. Medium-low to high hop flavour (any variety). Moderate to aggressively high roasted malt/grain flavours can suggest bittersweet or unsweetened chocolate, cocoa, and/or strong coffee. A slightly burnt grain, burnt currant or tarry character may be evident. Fruity esters may be low to intense, and can take on a dark fruit character

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

(raisins, plums, or prunes). Malt backbone can be balanced and supportive to rich and barleywine-like, and may optionally show some supporting caramel, bready or toasty flavours. The palate and finish can vary from relatively dry to moderately sweet, usually with some lingering roastiness, hop bitterness and warming character. The balance and intensity of flavours can be affected by aging, with some flavours becoming more subdued over time and some aged, vinous or port-like qualities developing.

**Mouthfeel:** Full to very full-bodied and chewy, with a velvety, luscious texture (although the body may decline with long conditioning). Gentle smooth warmth from alcohol should be present and noticeable, but not a primary characteristic; in well-conditioned versions, the alcohol can be deceptive. Should not be syrupy or under-attenuated. Carbonation may be low to moderate, depending on age and conditioning.

**Comments:** *Traditionally an English style, but it is currently much more popular and widely available in America where it is a craft beer favorite, not a curiosity.* Variations exist, with English and American interpretations (predictably, the American versions have more bitterness, roasted character, and finishing hops, while the English varieties reflect a more complex specialty malt character and a more forward ester profile). Not all Imperial Stouts have a clearly 'English' or 'American' character; anything in between the two variants are allowable as well, which is why it is counter-productive to designate a sub-type when entering a competition. The wide range of allowable characteristics allow for maximum brewer creativity. Judges must be aware of the broad range of the style, and not try to judge all examples as clones of a specific commercial beer.

**History:** A style with a long, although not necessarily continuous, heritage. Traces roots to strong English porters brewed for export in the 1700s, and said to have been popular with the Russian Imperial Court. After the Napoleonic wars interrupted trade, these beers were increasingly sold in England. The style eventually all but died out, until being popularly embraced in the modern craft beer era, both in England as a revival and in the United States as a reinterpretation or re-imagination by extending the style with American characteristics.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Well-modified pale malt, with generous quantities of roasted malts and/or grain. May have a complex grain bill using virtually any variety of malt. Any type of hops may be used. American or English ale yeast.

**Style Comparison:** Like a black barleywine with every dimension of flavour coming into play. More complex, with a broader range of possible flavours than lower-gravity stouts.

**Vital Statistics:**

OG:	1.075 – 1.115
IBUs:	50 – 90
SRM:	30 – 40
FG:	1.018 – 1.030
ABV:	8.0 – 12.0%

**Commercial Examples: American** – Bell's Expedition Stout, Cigar City Marshal Zhukov's Imperial Stout, Great Divide Yeti Imperial Stout, North Coast Old Rasputin Imperial Stout, Sierra Nevada Narwhal Imperial Stout;

**English** – Courage Imperial Russian Stout, Le Coq Imperial Extra Double Stout, Samuel Smith Imperial Stout

**Tags:** very-high-strength, dark-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, north-america, traditional-style, craft-style, stout-family, malty, bitter, roasty

## 11. INDIA PALE ALE

### 11.1. ENGLISH IPA

**Overall Impression:** A hoppy, moderately-strong, very well-attenuated pale British ale with a dry finish and a hoppy aroma and flavour. Classic British ingredients provide the best flavour profile.

**Aroma:** A moderate to moderately-high hop aroma of floral, spicy-peppery or citrus-orange in nature is typical. A slightly grassy dry-hop aroma is acceptable, but not required. A moderately-low caramel-like or toasty malt presence is optional. Low to moderate fruitiness is acceptable. Some versions may have a sulfury note, although this character is not mandatory.

**Appearance:** Colour ranges from golden to deep amber, but most are fairly pale. Should be clear, although unfiltered dry-hopped versions may be a bit hazy. Moderate-sized, persistent head stand with off-white colour.

**Flavour:** Hop flavour is medium to high, with a moderate to assertive hop bitterness. The hop flavour should be similar to the aroma (floral, spicy-peppery, citrus-orange, and/or slightly grassy). Malt flavour should be medium-low to medium, and be somewhat bready, optionally with light to medium-light biscuit-like, toasty, toffee-like and/or caramelly aspects. Medium-low to medium fruitiness. Finish is medium-dry to very dry, and the bitterness may linger into the aftertaste but should not be harsh. The balance is toward the hops, but the malt should still be noticeable in support. If high sulfate water is used, a distinctively mineral, dry finish, some sulfur flavour, and a lingering bitterness are usually present. Some clean alcohol flavour can be noted in stronger versions. Oak is inappropriate in this style.

**Mouthfeel:** Smooth, medium-light to medium-bodied mouthfeel without hop-derived astringency, although moderate to medium-high carbonation can combine to render an overall dry sensation despite a supportive malt presence. A low, smooth alcohol warming can and should be sensed in stronger (but not all) versions.

**Comments:** The attributes of IPA that were important to its arrival in good condition in India were that it was very well-attenuated, and heavily hopped. Simply because this is how IPA was shipped, doesn't mean that other beers such as Porter weren't also sent to India, that IPA was invented to be sent to India, that IPA was more heavily hopped than other keeping beers, or that the alcohol level was unusual for the time. Many modern examples labeled IPA are quite weak in strength. According to CAMRA, "so-called IPAs with strengths of around 3.5% are not true to style." English beer historian Martyn Cornell has commented that beers like this are "not really distinguishable from an ordinary bitter." So we choose to agree with these sources for our guidelines rather than what some modern British

breweries are calling an IPA; just be aware of these two main types of IPAs in the British market today.

**History:** Accounts of its origins vary, but most agree that what became later known as IPA was pale ale prepared for shipment to India in the late 1700s and early 1800s. George Hodgson of the Bow Brewery became well-known as an exporter of IPA during the early 1800s, and is the first name frequently mentioned with its popularity. As with all English beers with a long history, the popularity and formulation of the product changed over time. Burton breweries with their high-sulfate water were able to successfully brew IPA and began their domination of this market by the 1830s, around the time the name India Pale Ale was first used. Strength and popularity declined over time, and the style virtually disappeared in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The name was often used to describe pale ales and bitters, not anything special (a trend that continues in some modern British examples). The style underwent a craft beer rediscovery in the 1980s, and is what is described in these guidelines. Modern examples are inspired by classic versions, but shouldn't be assumed to have an unbroken lineage with the exact same profile. White Shield is probably the example with the longest lineage, tracing to the strong Burton IPAs of old and first brewed in 1829.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pale ale malt. English hops are traditional, particularly as finishing hops. Attenuative British ale yeast. Refined sugar may be used in some versions. Some versions may show a sulfate character from Burton-type water, but this is not essential to the style.

**Style Comparison:** Generally will have more finish hops and less fruitiness and/or caramel than British pale ales and bitters. Has less hop intensity and a more pronounced malt flavour than typical American versions.

**Vital Statistics:**

OG: 1.050 – 1.075
IBUs: 40 – 60
SRM: 6 – 14
FG: 1.010 – 1.018
ABV: 5.0 – 7.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Freeminer Trafalgar IPA, Fuller's Bengal Lancer IPA, Meantime India Pale Ale, Ridgeway IPA, Summit True Brit IPA, Thornbridge Jaipur, Worthington White Shield

**Tags:** high-strength, pale-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, ipa-family, bitter, hoppy

# 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

## 11.2. AMERICAN IPA

**Overall Impression:** A decidedly hoppy and bitter, moderately strong American pale ale, showcasing modern American or New World hop varieties. The balance is hop-forward, with a clean fermentation profile, dryish finish, and clean, supporting malt allowing a creative range of hop character to shine through.

**Aroma:** A prominent to intense hop aroma featuring one or more characteristics of American or New World hops, such as citrus, floral, pine, resinous, spicy, tropical fruit, stone fruit, berry, melon, etc. Many versions are dry hopped and can have an additional fresh hop aroma; this is desirable but not required. Grassiness should be minimal, if present. A low to medium-low clean, grainy-malty aroma may be found in the background. Fruitiness from yeast may also be detected in some versions, although a neutral fermentation character is also acceptable. A restrained alcohol note may be present, but this character should be minimal at best. Any American or New World hop character is acceptable; new hop varieties continue to be released and should not constrain this style.

**Appearance:** Colour ranges from medium gold to light reddish-amber. Should be clear, although unfiltered dry-hopped versions may be a bit hazy. Medium-sized, white to off-white head with good persistence.

**Flavour:** Hop flavour is medium to very high, and should reflect an American or New World hop character, such as citrus, floral, pine, resinous, spicy, tropical fruit, stone fruit, berry, melon, etc. Medium-high to very high hop bitterness. Malt flavour should be low to medium-low, and is generally clean and grainy-malty although some light caramel or toasty flavours are acceptable. Low yeast-derived fruitiness is acceptable but not required. Dry to medium-dry finish; residual sweetness should be low to none. The bitterness and hop flavour may linger into the aftertaste but should not be harsh. A very light, clean alcohol flavour may be noted in stronger versions. May be slightly sulfury, but most examples do not exhibit this character.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body, with a smooth texture. Medium to medium-high carbonation. No harsh hop-derived astringency.

Very light, smooth alcohol warming not a fault if it does not intrude into overall balance.

**Comments:** A modern American craft beer interpretation of the historical English style, brewed using American ingredients and attitude. The basis for many modern variations, including the stronger Double IPA as well as IPAs with various other ingredients. Those other IPAs should generally be entered in the Specialty IPA style. Oak is inappropriate in this style; if noticeably oaked, enter in wood-aged category.

**History:** The first modern American craft beer example is generally believed to be Anchor Liberty Ale, first brewed in 1975 and using whole Cascade hops; the style has pushed beyond that original beer, which now tastes more like an American Pale Ale in comparison. American-made IPAs from earlier eras were not unknown (particularly the well-regarded Ballantine's IPA, an oak-aged beer using an old English recipe). This style is based on the modern craft beer examples.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pale ale or 2-row brewers malt as the base, American or New World hops, American or English yeast with a clean or slightly fruity profile. Generally all-malt, but mashed at lower temperatures for high attenuation. Sugar additions to aid attenuation are acceptable. Restrained use of crystal malts, if any, as high amounts can lead to a sweet finish and clash with the hop character.

**Style Comparison:** Stronger and more highly hopped than an American Pale Ale. Compared to an English IPA, has less of the "English" character from malt, hops, and yeast (less caramel, bread, and toast; more American/New World hops than English; less yeast-derived esters), less body, and often has a more hoppy balance and is slightly stronger than most examples. Less alcohol than a Double IPA, but with a similar balance.

**Vital Statistics:**

OG:	1.056 – 1.070
IBUs:	40 – 70
SRM:	6 – 14
FG:	1.008 – 1.014
ABV:	5.5 – 7.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Alpine Duet, Bell's Two-Hearted Ale, Fat Heads Head Hunter IPA, Firestone Walker Union Jack, Lagunitas IPA, Russian River Blind Pig IPA, Stone IPA

**Tags:** high-strength, pale-colour, top-fermented, north-america, craft-style, ipa-family, bitter, hoppy

## 12. SPECIALTY IPA

**Specialty IPA** isn't a distinct style, but is more appropriately thought of as a competition entry category. Beers entered as this style are not experimental beers; they are a collection of currently produced types of beer that may or may not have any market longevity. This category also allows for expansion, so potential future IPA variants have a place to be entered without redoing the style guidelines. The only common element is that they have the balance and overall impression of an IPA (typically, an American IPA) but with some minor tweak.

The term 'IPA' is used as a singular descriptor of a type of hoppy, bitter beer. It is not meant to be spelled out as 'India Pale Ale' when used in the context of a Specialty IPA. None of these beers ever historically went to India, and many aren't pale. But the craft beer market knows what to expect in balance when a beer is described as an 'IPA' – so the modifiers used to differentiate them are based on that concept alone.

**Overall Impression:** Recognizable as an IPA by balance – a hop-forward, bitter, dryish beer – with something else present to distinguish it from the standard categories. Should have good drinkability, regardless of the form. Excessive harshness and heaviness are typically faults, as are strong flavour clashes between the hops and the other specialty ingredients.

**Aroma:** Detectable hop aroma is required; characterization of hops is dependent on the specific type of Specialty IPA. Other aromatics may be present; hop aroma is typically the strongest element.

**Appearance:** Colour depends on specific type of Specialty IPA. Most should be clear, although certain styles with high amounts of starchy adjuncts, or unfiltered dry-hopped versions may be slightly hazy. Darker types can be opaque making clarity irrelevant. Good, persistent head stand with colour dependent on the specific type of Specialty IPA.

**Flavour:** Hop flavour is typically medium-low to high, with qualities dependent on typical varieties used in the specific Specialty IPA. Hop bitterness is typically medium-high to very high, with qualities dependent on typical varieties used in the specific Specialty IPA. Malt flavour generally low to medium, with qualities dependent on typical varieties used in the specific Specialty IPA. Commonly will have a medium-dry to dry finish. Some clean alcohol flavour can be noted in stronger versions. Various types of Specialty IPAs can show additional malt and yeast characteristics, depending on the type.

**Mouthfeel:** Smooth, medium-light to medium-bodied mouthfeel. Medium carbonation. Some smooth alcohol warming can be sensed in stronger versions.

**Entry Instructions:** Entrant must specify a **strength** (session, standard, double); if no strength

is specified, standard will be assumed. Entrant must specify specific **type** of Specialty IPA from the library of known types listed in the Style Guidelines, or as amended by the BJCP web site; or the entrant must describe the type of Specialty IPA and its key characteristics in comment form so judges will know what to expect. Entrants may specify specific **hop varieties** used, if entrants feel that judges may not recognize the varietal characteristics of newer hops. Entrants may specify a combination of defined IPA types (e.g., Black Rye IPA) without providing additional descriptions. Entrants may use this category for a different strength version of an IPA defined by its own BJCP subcategory (e.g., session-strength American or English IPA) – except where an existing BJCP subcategory already exists for that style (e.g., double [American] IPA).

**Currently Defined Types:** Double IPA, Black IPA, Brown IPA, White IPA, Rye IPA, Belgian IPA, Red IPA

**Vital Statistics:** Variable by type

**Strength classifications:**

Session – ABV: 3.0 – 5.0%

Standard – ABV: 5.0 – 7.5%

Double – ABV: 7.5 – 10.0%

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### 12.1. SPECIALTY IPA: WHITE IPA

**Overall Impression:** A fruity, spicy, refreshing version of an American IPA, but with a lighter colour, less body, and featuring either the distinctive yeast and/or spice additions typical of a Belgian witbier.

**Aroma:** Moderate fruity esters – banana, citrus, perhaps apricot. May have light to moderate spice aroma such as coriander or pepper from actual spice additions and/or Belgian yeast. Hop aroma is moderately-low to medium, usually American or New World type with stone fruit, citrus and tropical aromas. Esters and spices may reduce hop aroma perception. Light clove-like phenolics may be present.

**Appearance:** Pale to deep golden colour, typically hazy. Moderate to large, dense white head that persists.

**Flavour:** Light malt flavour, perhaps a bit bready. Fruity esters are moderate to high, with citrus flavours similar to grapefruit and orange, or stone fruit like apricot. Sometimes banana-like flavours are present. Hop flavour is medium-low to medium-high with citrusy or fruity aspects. Some spicy clove-like flavours from Belgian yeast may be present. Coriander and orange peel flavours may be found as well. Bitterness is high which leads to a moderately dry, refreshing finish.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light body with medium to medium-high carbonation. Typically no astringency, although highly spiced examples may exhibit a light astringency which is not distracting.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Comments:** A craft beer interpretation of American IPA crossed with a witbier.

**History:** American craft brewers developed the style as a late winter/spring seasonal beer to appeal to Wit and IPA drinkers alike.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pale and wheat malts, Belgian yeast, citrusy American type hops.

**Style Comparison:** Similar to a Belgian Wit style except highly hopped to the level of an American IPA. Bitter and hoppy like the IPA but fruity, spicy and light like the Wit. Typically the hop aroma and flavour are not as prominent as in an American IPA.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.056 – 1.065  
IBUs: 40 – 70 FG: 1.010 – 1.016  
SRM: 5 – 8 ABV: 5.5 – 7.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Blue Point White IPA, Deschutes Chainbreaker IPA, Harpoon The Long Thaw, New Belgium Accumulation

**Tags:** high-strength, pale-colour, top-fermented, north-america, craft-style, ipa-family, specialty-family, bitter, hoppy, spice

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### 12.2. SPECIALTY IPA: RED IPA

**Overall Impression:** Hoppy, bitter, and moderately strong like an American IPA, but with some caramel, toffee, and/or dark fruit malt character. Retaining the dryish finish and lean body that makes IPAs so drinkable, a Red IPA is a little more flavourful and malty than an American IPA without being sweet or heavy.

**Aroma:** A moderate to strong fresh hop aroma featuring one or more characteristics of American or New World hops, such as tropical fruit, stone fruit, citrus, floral, spicy, berry, melon, pine, resinous, etc. Many versions are dry hopped and can have an additional fresh hop aroma; this is desirable but not required. Grassiness should be minimal, if present. A medium-low to medium malty-sweet aroma mixes in well with the hop selection, and often features caramel, toffee, toasty, and/or dark fruit character. Fruitiness from yeast may also be detected in some versions, although a neutral fermentation character is also acceptable. A restrained alcohol note may be present, but this character should be minimal at best. Any American or New World hop character is acceptable; new hop varieties continue to be released and should not constrain this style.

**Appearance:** Colour ranges from light reddish-amber to dark reddish-copper. Should be clear, although unfiltered dry-hopped versions may be a bit hazy. Medium-sized, off-white to cream-coloured head with good persistence.

**Flavour:** Hop flavour is medium to very high, and should reflect an American or New World hop character, such as citrus, floral, pine, resinous, spicy, tropical fruit, stone fruit, berry, melon, etc. Medium-high to very high hop bitterness. Malt flavour should be medium-low to medium, and is generally clean but malty-sweet up front with medium-dark caramel, toffee, toasty and/or dark fruit malt flavours. The character malt choices and the hop selections should complement and enhance

each other, not clash. The level of malt flavour should not adversely constrain the hop bitterness and flavour presentation. Low yeast-derived fruitiness is acceptable but not required. Dry to medium-dry finish; residual sweetness should be medium-low to none. The bitterness and hop flavour may linger into the aftertaste but should not be harsh. A very light, clean alcohol flavour may be noted in stronger versions.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body, with a smooth texture. Medium to medium-high carbonation. No harsh hop-derived astringency. Very light, smooth alcohol warming not a fault if it does not intrude into overall balance.

**Comments:** Previously might have been a sub-genre of American Amber Ales or Double Red Ales, hoppier and stronger than the normal products, but still maintaining the essential drinkability by avoiding sweet flavours or a heavy body or finish.

**History:** A modern American craft beer style, based on American IPA but with the malt flavours of an American Amber Ale.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Similar to an American IPA, but with medium or dark crystal malts, possibly some character malts with a light toasty aspect. May use sugar adjuncts. American or New World finishing hops with tropical, fruity, citrusy, piney, berry, or melon aspects; the choice of hops and character malts is synergistic – they very much have to complement each other and not clash.

**Style Comparison:** Similar to the difference between an American Amber Ale and an American Pale Ale, a Red IPA will differ from an American IPA with the addition of some darker crystal malts giving a slightly sweeter, more caramelly and dark fruit-based balance. A Red IPA differs from an American Strong Ale in that the malt profile is less intense and there is less body; a Red IPA still has an IPA balance and doesn't trend towards a barleywine-like malt character. A Red IPA is like a stronger, hoppier American Amber Ale, with the characteristic dry finish, medium-light body, and strong late hop character.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.056 – 1.070  
IBUs: 40 – 70 FG: 1.008 – 1.016  
SRM: 11 – 19 ABV: 5.5 – 7.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Green Flash Hop Head Red Double Red IPA (double), Midnight Sun Sockeye Red, Sierra Nevada Flipside Red IPA, Summit Horizon Red IPA, Odell Runoff Red IPA

**Tags:** high-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, north-america, craft-style, ipa-family, specialty-family, bitter, hoppy

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### 12.3. SPECIALTY IPA: BROWN IPA

**Overall Impression:** Hoppy, bitter, and moderately strong like an American IPA, but with some caramel, chocolate, toffee, and/or dark fruit malt character as in an American Brown Ale. Retaining the dryish finish and lean body that makes IPAs so drinkable, a Brown IPA is a little more flavourful and malty than an American IPA without being sweet or heavy.



## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Aroma:** A moderate to moderately-strong fresh hop aroma featuring one or more characteristics of American or New World hops, such as tropical fruit, stone fruit, citrus, floral, spicy, berry, melon, pine, resinous, etc. Many versions are dry hopped and can have an additional fresh hop aroma; this is desirable but not required. Grassiness should be minimal, if present. A medium-low to medium malty-sweet aroma mixes in well with the hop selection, and often features chocolate, nuts, dark caramel, toffee, toasted bread, and/or dark fruit character. Fruitiness from yeast may also be detected in some versions, although a neutral fermentation character is also acceptable. A restrained alcohol note may be present, but this character should be minimal at best. Any American or New World hop character is acceptable; new hop varieties continue to be released and should not constrain this style.

**Appearance:** Colour ranges from reddish-brown to dark brown but not black. Frequently opaque, but should be clear if visible. Unfiltered dry-hopped versions may be a bit hazy. Medium-sized, cream-coloured to tan head with good persistence.

**Flavour:** Hop flavour is medium to high, and should reflect an American or New World hop character, such as citrus, floral, pine, resinous, spicy, tropical fruit, stone fruit, berry, melon, etc. Medium-high to high hop bitterness. Malt flavour should be medium-low to medium, and is generally clean but malty-sweet up front with milk chocolate, cocoa, toffee, nutty, biscuity, dark caramel, toasted bread and/or dark fruit malt flavours. The character malt choices and the hop selections should complement and enhance each other, not clash. The level of malt flavour should nearly balance the hop bitterness and flavour presentation. Low yeast-derived fruitiness is acceptable but not required. Dry to medium finish; residual sweetness should be medium-low to none. The bitterness and hop flavour may linger into the aftertaste but should not be harsh. A very light, clean alcohol flavour may be noted in stronger versions. No roasted, burnt, or harsh-bitter malt character.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body, with a smooth texture. Medium to medium-high carbonation. No harsh hop-derived astringency. Very light, smooth alcohol warming not a fault if it does not intrude into overall balance.

**Comments:** Previously might have been a sub-genre of American Brown Ales, hoppier and stronger than the normal products, but still maintaining the essential drinkability by avoiding sweet flavours or a heavy body or finish. The hops and malt can combine to produce interesting interactions.

**History:** A more modern craft beer name for a style that has long been popular with US homebrewers, when it was known as a hoppier American Brown Ale or sometimes Texas Brown Ale (despite origins in California).

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Similar to an American IPA, but with medium or dark crystal malts, lightly roasted chocolate-type malts, or other intermediate colour character malts. May use sugar adjuncts, including brown sugar. American or New

World finishing hops with tropical, fruity, citrusy, piney, berry, or melon aspects; the choice of hops and character malts is synergistic – they very much have to complement each other and not clash.

**Style Comparison:** A stronger and more bitter version of an American Brown Ale, with the balance of an American IPA.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.056 – 1.070  
IBUs: 40 – 70 FG: 1.008 – 1.016  
SRM: 11 – 19 ABV: 5.5 – 7.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Dogfish Head Indian Brown Ale, Grand Teton Bitch Creek, Harpoon Brown IPA, Russian River Janet's Brown Ale

**Tags:** high-strength, dark-colour, top-fermented, north-america, craft-style, ipa-family, specialty-family, bitter, hoppy

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### 12.4. SPECIALTY IPA: RYE IPA

**Overall Impression:** A decidedly hoppy and bitter, moderately strong American pale ale, showcasing modern American and New World hop varieties and rye malt. The balance is hop-forward, with a clean fermentation profile, dry finish, and clean, supporting malt allowing a creative range of hop character to shine through.

**Aroma:** A prominent to intense hop aroma featuring one or more characteristics of American or New World hops, such as citrus, floral, pine, resinous, spicy, tropical fruit, stone fruit, berry, melon, etc. Many versions are dry hopped and can have an additional fresh hop aroma; this is desirable but not required. Grassiness should be minimal, if present. It may have low peppery rye malt aroma. A low to medium-low clean grainy-malty aroma may be found in the background. Fruitiness from yeast may also be detected in some versions, although a neutral fermentation character is also acceptable. A restrained alcohol note may be present, but this character should be minimal at best. Any American or New World hop character is acceptable; new hop varieties continue to be released and should not constrain this style.

**Appearance:** Colour ranges from medium gold to light reddish-amber. Should be clear, although unfiltered dry-hopped versions may be a bit hazy. Medium-sized, white to off-white head with good persistence.

**Flavour:** Hop flavour is medium to very high, and should reflect an American or New World hop character, such as citrus, floral, pine, resinous, spicy, tropical fruit, stone fruit, berry, melon, etc. Medium-high to very high hop bitterness. Malt flavour should be low to medium-low, and is generally clean and grainy-malty although some light caramel or toasty flavours are acceptable. A light grainy spiciness from rye malt should be present. Low yeast-derived fruitiness is acceptable but not required. Rye malt contributes to a dry finish; residual sweetness should be low to none. The bitterness, hop flavour and dryness may linger into the aftertaste but should not be harsh. A very light, clean alcohol flavour may be noted in stronger versions.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body, with a smooth texture. Medium to medium-high carbonation. No harsh hop-derived astringency. Very light, smooth alcohol warming not a fault if it does not intrude into overall balance.

**Comments:** A modern American craft beer variation of American IPA. Rye malt character should be noticeable, otherwise enter in American IPA. Oak is inappropriate in this style; if noticeably oaked, enter in wood-aged category.

**History:** Looking to add complexity and variety to their IPAs, craft brewers and homebrewers substituted rye malt for a portion of their base malt. Rye IPAs, RyePAs or RIPAs have found a place in many craft breweries seasonal rotations.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pale ale or 2-row brewers malt as the base, 15-20% Rye malt, American or New World hops, American or English yeast with a clean or slightly fruity profile. Generally all-malt, but mashed at lower temperatures for high attenuation. Sugar additions to aid attenuation are acceptable. Water character varies from soft to moderately sulfate. Restrained use of crystal malts, if any, as high amounts can lead to a sweet finish and clash with the hop character.

**Style Comparison:** Drier and slightly spicier than an American IPA. Bitterness and spiciness from rye lingers longer than an American IPA. Does not have the intense rye malt character of a Roggenbier. Some examples are stronger like a Double IPA.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.056 – 1.075  
IBUs: 50 – 75 FG: 1.008 – 1.014  
SRM: 6 – 14 ABV: 5.5 – 8.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Arcadia Sky High Rye, Bear Republic Hop Rod Rye, Founders Reds Rye, Great Lakes Rye of the Tiger, Sierra Nevada Ruthless Rye

**Tags:** high-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, north-america, craft-style, ipa-family, specialty-family, bitter, hoppy

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### 12.5. SPECIALTY IPA: BELGIAN IPA

**Overall Impression:** An IPA with the fruitiness and spiciness derived from the use of Belgian yeast. The examples from Belgium tend to be lighter in colour and more attenuated, similar to a tripel that has been brewed with more hops. This beer has a more complex flavour profile and may be higher in alcohol than a typical IPA.

**Aroma:** Moderate to high hop aroma, often tropical, stone fruit, citrus or pine-like typical of American or New World hop varieties. Floral and spicy aromas are also found indicating European hops. Grassy aroma due to dry hopping may be present. Gentle, grainy-sweet malt aroma, with little to no caramel. Fruity esters are moderate to high and may include aromas of bananas, pears and apples. Light clove-like phenols may be noticeable. Belgian candi sugar-like aromas are sometimes present.

**Appearance:** Light golden to amber in colour. Off-white head is moderate to large in size and has good

retention. Clarity is fair to quite hazy in dry hopped examples.

**Flavour:** Initial flavour is moderately spicy and estery associated with Belgian yeast strains. Clove-like and peppery flavours are common. Banana, pear and apple flavours are also typical. Hop flavours are moderate to high in intensity and may reflect tropical, stone fruit, melon, citrusy, or piney American/New World varieties or floral and spicy Saazer-type hop flavours. Malt flavour is light and grainy-sweet, sometimes with low toasted or caramel malt flavour but not required. Bitterness is high and may be accentuated by spicy yeast-derived flavours. The finish is dry to medium-dry although some examples have a slight sweetness mixed with the lingering bitterness.

**Mouthfeel:** The body is medium to light and varies due to carbonation level and adjunct use. Carbonation level is medium to high. Some higher alcohol versions may be warming although this may not be readily apparent.

**Comments:** The choice of yeast strain and hop varieties is critical since many choices will horribly clash.

**History:** A relatively new style, started showing up in the mid 2000s. Homebrewers and microbreweries simply substituted Belgian yeast in their American IPA recipes. Belgian breweries added more hops to their tripel and pale ale recipes.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Belgian yeast strains used in making tripels and golden strong ales. American examples tend to use American or New World hops while Belgian versions tend to use European hops and only pale malt.

**Style Comparison:** A cross between an American IPA/Imperial IPA with a Belgian Golden Strong Ale or Tripel. This style is may be spicier, stronger, drier and more fruity than an American IPA.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.058 – 1.080  
IBUs: 50 – 100 FG: 1.008 – 1.016  
SRM: 5 – 15 ABV: 6.2 – 9.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Brewery Vivant Triomphe, Houblon Chouffe, Epic Brainless IPA, Green Flash Le Freak, Stone Cali-Belgique, Urthel Hop It

**Tags:** high-strength, pale-colour, top-fermented, north-america, craft-style, ipa-family, specialty-family, bitter, hoppy

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### 12.6. SPECIALTY IPA: BLACK IPA

**Overall Impression:** A beer with the dryness, hop-forward balance, and flavour characteristics of an American IPA, only darker in colour – but without strongly roasted or burnt flavours. The flavour of darker malts is gentle and supportive, not a major flavour component. Drinkability is a key characteristic.

**Aroma:** A moderate to high hop aroma, often with a stone fruit, tropical, citrusy, resinous, piney, berry, or melon character. If dry hopped, can have an additional floral, herbal, or grassy aroma, although this is not required. Very low to moderate dark malt aroma, which can optionally include light

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

chocolate, coffee, or toast notes. Some clean or lightly caramelly malty sweetness may be found in the background. Fruitness, either from esters or from hops, may also be detected in some versions, although a neutral fermentation character is also acceptable.

**Appearance:** Colour ranges from dark brown to black. Should be clear, although unfiltered dry-hopped versions may be a bit hazy; if opaque, should not be murky. Good head stand with light tan to tan colour should persist.

**Flavour:** Medium-low to high hop flavour with tropical, stone fruit, melon, citrusy, berry, piney or resinous aspects. Medium-high to very high hop bitterness, although dark malts may contribute to the perceived bitterness. The base malt flavour is generally clean and of low to medium intensity, and can optionally have low caramel or toffee flavours. Dark malt flavours are low to medium-low; restrained chocolate or coffee flavours may be present, but the roasted notes should not be intense, ashy, or burnt, and should not clash with the hops. Low to moderate fruitiness (from yeast or hops) is acceptable but not required. Dry to slightly off-dry finish. The finish may include a light roast character that contributes to perceived dryness, although this is not required. The bitterness may linger into the aftertaste but should not be harsh. Some clean alcohol flavour can be noted in stronger versions.

**Mouthfeel:** Smooth, medium-light to medium-bodied mouthfeel without significant hop- or (especially) roasted malt-derived astringency. Dry-hopped versions may be a bit resinous. Medium carbonation. A bit of creaminess may be present but is not required. Some smooth alcohol warming can and should be sensed in stronger (but not all) versions.

**Comments:** Most examples are standard strength. Strong examples can sometimes seem like big, hoppy porters if made too extreme, which hurts their drinkability. The hops and malt can combine to produce interesting interactions.

**History:** A variation of the American IPA style first commercially produced by Greg Noonan as Blackwatch IPA around 1990. Popularized in the Pacific Northwest and Southern California of the US starting in the early-mid 2000s. This style is sometimes known as Cascadian Dark Ale (CDA), mainly in the Pacific Northwest.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Debittered roast malts for colour and some flavour without harshness and burnt qualities; American or New World hop varieties that don't clash with roasted malts. Hop characteristics cited are typical of these type of hops; others characteristics are possible, particularly if derived from newer varieties.

**Style Comparison:** Balance and overall impression of an American or Double IPA with restrained roast similar to the type found in Schwarzbiers. Not as roasty-burnt as American stouts and porters, and with less body and increased smoothness and drinkability.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.050 – 1.085  
IBUs: 50 – 90 FG: 1.010 – 1.018  
SRM: 25 – 40 ABV: 5.5 – 9.0%

**Commercial Examples:** 21st Amendment Back in Black (standard), Deschutes Hop in the Dark CDA (standard), Rogue Dad's Little Helper (standard), Southern Tier Iniquity (double), Widmer Pitch Black IPA (standard)

**Tags:** high-strength, dark-colour, top-fermented, north-america, craft-style, ipa-family, specialty-family, bitter, hoppy

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### 12.7. SPECIALTY IPA: DOUBLE IPA

**Overall Impression:** An intensely hoppy, fairly strong pale ale without the big, rich, complex maltiness and residual sweetness and body of an American barleywine. Strongly hopped, but clean, dry, and lacking harshness. Drinkability is an important characteristic; this should not be a heavy, sipping beer.

**Aroma:** A prominent to intense hop aroma that typically showcases American or New World hop characteristics (citrus, floral, pine, resinous, spicy, tropical fruit, stone fruit, berry, melon, etc.). Most versions are dry hopped and can have an additional resinous or grassy aroma, although this is not absolutely required. Some clean malty sweetness may be found in the background. Fruitness, either from esters or hops, may also be detected in some versions, although a neutral fermentation character is typical. Some alcohol can usually be noted, but it should not have a "hot" character.

**Appearance:** Colour ranges from golden to light orange-copper; most modern versions are fairly pale. Good clarity, although unfiltered dry-hopped versions may be a bit hazy. Moderate-sized, persistent, white to off-white head.

**Flavour:** Hop flavour is strong and complex, and can reflect the characteristics of modern American or New World hop varieties (citrus, floral, pine, resinous, spicy, tropical fruit, stone fruit, berry, melon, etc.). High to absurdly high hop bitterness. Low to medium malt flavour, generally clean and grainy-malty although low levels of caramel or toasty flavours are acceptable. Low to medium fruitiness is acceptable but not required. A long, lingering bitterness is usually present in the aftertaste but should not be harsh. Dry to medium-dry finish; should not finish sweet or heavy. A light, clean, smooth alcohol flavour is not a fault. Oak is inappropriate in this style. May be slightly sulfury, but most examples do not exhibit this character.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body, with a smooth texture. Medium to medium-high carbonation. No harsh hop-derived astringency. Restrained, smooth alcohol warming acceptable.

**Comments:** A showcase for hops, yet remaining quite drinkable. The adjective "double" is arbitrary and simply implies a stronger version of an IPA; "imperial," "extra," "extreme," or any other variety of adjectives would be equally valid, although the modern American market seems to have now coalesced around the "double" term.

**History:** An American craft beer innovation first developed in the mid-late 1990s reflecting the trend of American craft brewers "pushing the envelope" to satisfy the need of hop aficionados for increasingly

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

intense products. Became more mainstream and popular throughout the 2000s, and inspired additional IPA creativity.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Clean 2-row malt is typical as a base grain; an excessively complex grist can be distracting. Crystal-type malts often muddy the hop flavours, and are generally considered undesirable in significant quantities. Sugar or other highly fermentable adjuncts are often used to increase attenuation, as are lower-temperature mash rests. Can use a complex variety of hops, typically American or New World, often with cutting-edge profiles providing distinctive differences. Modern hops with unusual characteristics are not out of style. American yeast that can give a clean or slightly fruity profile.

**Style Comparison:** Bigger than either an English or American IPA in both alcohol strength and

overall hop level (bittering and finish). Less malty, lower body, less rich and a greater overall hop intensity than an American Barleywine. Typically not as high in gravity/alcohol as a barleywine, since high alcohol and malt tend to limit drinkability.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.065 – 1.085  
IBUs: 60 – 120 FG: 1.008 – 1.018  
SRM: 6 – 14 ABV: 7.5 – 10.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Avery Maharaja, Fat Heads Hop Juju, Firestone Walker Double Jack, Port Brewing Hop 15, Russian River Pliny the Elder, Stone Ruination IPA, Three Floyds Dreadnaught

**Tags:** very-high-strength, pale-colour, top-fermented, north-america, craft-style, ipa-family, bitter, hoppy

## 13. WHEAT & RYE ALE

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### 13.1. WEISSBIER

**Overall Impression:** A pale, refreshing German wheat beer with high carbonation, dry finish, a fluffy mouthfeel, and a distinctive banana-and-clove yeast character.

**Aroma:** Moderate to strong phenols (usually clove) and fruity esters (typically banana). The balance and intensity of the phenol and ester components can vary but the best examples are reasonably balanced and fairly prominent. The hop character ranges from low to none. A light to moderate wheat aroma (which might be perceived as bready or grainy) may be present but other malt characteristics should not. Optional, but acceptable, aromatics can include a light to moderate vanilla character, and/or a faint bubblegum aroma. None of these optional characteristics should be high or dominant, but often can add to the complexity and balance.

**Appearance:** Pale straw to gold in colour. A very thick, moussy, long-lasting white head is characteristic. The high protein content of wheat impairs clarity in an unfiltered beer, although the level of haze is somewhat variable.

**Flavour:** Low to moderately strong banana and clove flavour. The balance and intensity of the phenol and ester components can vary but the best examples are reasonably balanced and fairly prominent. Optionally, a very light to moderate vanilla character and/or faint bubblegum notes can accentuate the banana flavour, sweetness and roundness; neither should be dominant if present. The soft, somewhat bready or grainy flavour of wheat is complementary, as is a slightly grainy-sweet malt character. Hop flavour is very low to none, and hop bitterness is very low to moderately low. Well-rounded, flavourful palate with a relatively dry finish. The perception of sweetness is more due to the absence of hop bitterness than actual residual sweetness; a sweet or heavy finish would significantly impair drinkability.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body; never heavy. Suspended yeast may increase the perception of body. The texture of wheat imparts the sensation of a fluffy, creamy fullness that may progress to a light, spritzy finish aided by high to very high carbonation. Always effervescent.

**Comments:** These are refreshing, fast-maturing beers that are lightly hopped and show a unique banana-and-clove yeast character. These beers often don't age well and are best enjoyed while young and fresh. The version *mit hefe* is served with suspended yeast; the *krystal* version is filtered for excellent clarity. The character of a *krystal weizen* is generally fruitier and less phenolic than that of the *weissbier mit hefe*. May be known as *hefeweizen*, particularly in the United States.

**History:** While Bavaria has a wheat beer tradition dating back hundreds of years, brewing wheat beer used to be a monopoly reserved for Bavarian royalty. Modern *weissbier* dates from 1872 when Schneider began production. However, pale *weissbier* only became popular since the 1960s. It is quite popular today, particularly in southern Germany.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** By German brewing tradition, at least 50% of the grist must be malted wheat, although some versions use up to 70%; the remainder is typically Pilsner malt. A decoction mash is traditional, although modern brewers typically don't follow this practice. *Weizen* ale yeast produces the typical spicy and fruity character, although high fermentation temperatures can affect the balance and produce off-flavours.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.044 – 1.052  
IBUs: 8 – 15 FG: 1.010 – 1.014  
SRM: 2 – 6 ABV: 4.3 – 5.6%

**Commercial Examples:** Ayinger Bräu Weisse, Hacker-Pschorr Weisse, Paulaner Hefe-Weizen Naturtrüb, Schneider Weisse Unser Original, Weihenstephaner Hefeweissbier

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, top-fermented, central-europe, traditional-style, wheat-beer-family, malty

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### 13.2. WITBIER

**Overall Impression:** A refreshing, elegant, tasty, moderate-strength wheat-based ale.

**Aroma:** Moderate malty sweetness (often with light notes of honey and/or vanilla) with light, grainy, spicy wheat aromatics, often with a bit of tartness. Moderate perfumy coriander, often with a complex herbal, spicy, or peppery note in the background. Moderate zesty, citrusy-orangey fruitiness. A low spicy-herbal hop aroma is optional, but should never overpower the other characteristics. Vegetal, celery-like, or ham-like aromas are inappropriate. Spices should blend in with fruity, floral and sweet aromas and should not be overly strong.

**Appearance:** Very pale straw to very light gold in colour. The beer will be very cloudy from starch haze and/or yeast, which gives it a milky, whitish-yellow appearance. Dense, white, moussy head. Head retention should be quite good.

**Flavour:** Pleasant malty-sweet grain flavour (often with a honey and/or vanilla character) and a zesty, orange-citrusy fruitiness. Refreshingly crisp with a dry, often tart, finish. Can have a low bready wheat flavour. Optionally has a very light lactic-tasting sourness. Herbal-spicy flavours, which may include coriander and other spices, are common should be subtle and balanced, not overpowering. A spicy-earthly hop flavour is low to none, and if noticeable,

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

never gets in the way of the spices. Hop bitterness is low to medium-low, and doesn't interfere with refreshing flavours of fruit and spice, nor does it persist into the finish. Bitterness from orange pith should not be present. Vegetal, celery-like, ham-like, or soapy flavours are inappropriate.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body, often having a smoothness and light creaminess from unmalted wheat and the occasional oats. Despite body and creaminess, finishes dry and often a bit tart. Effervescent character from high carbonation. Refreshing, from carbonation, light acidity, and lack of bitterness in finish. No harshness or astringency from orange pith. Should not be overly dry and thin, nor should it be thick and heavy.

**Comments:** The presence, character and degree of spicing and lactic sourness varies. Overly spiced and/or sour beers are not good examples of the style. Coriander of certain origins might give an inappropriate ham or celery character. The beer tends to be fragile and does not age well, so younger, fresher, properly handled examples are most desirable. Most examples seem to be approximately 5% ABV.

**History:** A 400-year-old Belgian beer style that died out in the 1950s; it was later revived by Pierre Celis at Hoegaarden, and has grown steadily in popularity over time, both with modern craft brewers and mass-market producers who see it as a somewhat fruity summer seasonal beer.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** About 50% unmalted wheat and 50% pale barley malt (usually Pils malt) constitute the grist. In some versions, up to 5-10% raw oats may be used. Spices of freshly-ground coriander and Curaçao or sometimes sweet orange peel complement the sweet aroma and are quite characteristic. Other spices (e.g., chamomile, cumin, cinnamon, Grains of Paradise) may be used for complexity but are much less prominent. Ale yeast prone to the production of mild, spicy flavours is very characteristic. In some instances a very limited lactic fermentation, or the actual addition of lactic acid, is done.

**Style Comparison:** Low bitterness level with a balance similar to a Weissbier, but with spice and citrus character coming from additions rather than the yeast.

**Vital Statistics:**

OG:	1.044 – 1.052
IBUs:	8 – 20
SRM:	2 – 4
FG:	1.008 – 1.012
ABV:	4.5 – 5.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Allagash White, Blanche de Bruxelles, Celis White, Hoegaarden Wit, Ommegang Witte, St. Bernardus Witbier, Wittekerke

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### 13.3. DUNKLES WEISSBIER

**Overall Impression:** A moderately dark German wheat beer with a distinctive banana-and-clove yeast character, supported by a toasted bread or caramel malt flavour. Highly carbonated and refreshing, with a creamy, fluffy texture and light finish that encourages drinking.

**Aroma:** Moderate phenols (usually clove) and fruity esters (usually banana). The balance and

intensity of the phenol and ester components can vary but the best examples are reasonably balanced. Optionally, a low to moderate vanilla character and/or faint bubblegum notes may be present, but should not dominate. Hop aroma ranges from low to none, and may be lightly floral, spicy, or herbal. A light to moderate wheat aroma (which might be perceived as bready, doughy or grainy) may be present and is often accompanied by a caramel, bread crust, or richer malt aroma. The malt aroma may moderate the phenols and esters somewhat.

**Appearance:** Light copper to mahogany brown in colour. A very thick, moussy, long-lasting off-white head is characteristic. The high protein content of wheat impairs clarity in this traditionally unfiltered style, although the level of haze is somewhat variable. Suspended yeast sediment can contribute to cloudiness.

**Flavour:** Low to moderately strong banana and clove flavour. The balance and intensity of the phenol and ester components can vary but the best examples are reasonably balanced and fairly prominent. Optionally, a very light to moderate vanilla character and/or faint bubblegum notes can accentuate the banana flavour, sweetness and roundness; neither should be dominant if present. The soft, somewhat bready, doughy, or grainy flavour of wheat is complementary, as is a richer caramel, toast, or bread crust flavour. The malty richness can be low to medium-high, and supports the yeast character. A roasted malt character is inappropriate. A spicy, herbal, or floral hop flavour is very low to none, and hop bitterness is very low to low. Well-rounded, flavourful, often somewhat malty palate with a relatively dry finish.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium-full body. The texture of wheat as well as yeast in suspension imparts the sensation of a fluffy, creamy fullness that may progress to a lighter finish, aided by moderate to high carbonation. Effervescent.

**Comments:** The presence of Munich and/or Vienna-type barley malts gives this style a deep, rich barley malt character not found in a weissbier. Often known as *dunkelweizen*, particularly in the United States.

**History:** Bavaria has a wheat beer brewing traditional hundreds of years old, but the brewing right was reserved for Bavarian royalty until the late 1700s. Old-fashioned Bavarian wheat beer was often dark, as were most beer of the day. Pale weissbier started to become popular in the 1960s, but traditional dark wheat beer remained somewhat of an old person's drink.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** By German brewing tradition, at least 50% of the grist must be malted wheat, although some versions use up to 70%; the remainder is usually Munich, Vienna, or dark or caramel wheat malts, or Pilsner malt with colour malt. A decoction mash is traditional, but infrequently used today. Weizen ale yeasts produce the typical spicy and fruity character, although extreme fermentation temperatures can affect the balance and produce off-flavours.

**Style Comparison:** Reflecting the best yeast and wheat character of a weissbier blended with the malty richness of a Munich dunkel. The banana and

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

clove character is often less apparent than in a weissbier due to the increased maltiness.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.044 – 1.056  
IBUs: 10 – 18 FG: 1.010 – 1.014  
SRM: 14 – 23 ABV: 4.3 – 5.6%

**Commercial Examples:** Ayinger Ur-Weisse, Ettaler Weissbier Dunkel, Franziskaner Hefe-Weisse Dunkel, Hacker-Pschorr Weisse Dark, Tucher Dunkles Hefe Weizen, Weihenstephaner Hefeweissbier Dunkel

**Tags:** standard-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, central-europe, traditional-style, wheat-beer-family, malty

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### 13.4. ROGGENBIER

**Overall Impression:** A dunkelweizen made with rye rather than wheat, but with a greater body and light finishing hops.

**Aroma:** Light to moderate spicy rye aroma intermingled with light to moderate weizen yeast aromatics (spicy clove and fruity esters, either banana or citrus). Light spicy, floral, or herbal hops are acceptable.

**Appearance:** Light coppery-orange to very dark reddish or coppery-brown colour. Large creamy off-white to tan head, quite dense and persistent (often thick and rocky). Cloudy, hazy appearance.

**Flavour:** Grainy, moderately-low to moderately-strong spicy rye flavour, often having a hearty flavour reminiscent of rye or pumpernickel bread. Medium to medium-low bitterness allows an initial malt sweetness (sometimes with a bit of caramel) to be tasted before yeast and rye character takes over. Low to moderate weizen yeast character (banana, clove), although the balance can vary. Medium-dry, grainy finish with a lightly bitter (from rye) aftertaste. Low to moderate spicy, herbal, or floral hop flavour acceptable, and can persist into aftertaste.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium to medium-full body. High carbonation. Moderately creamy.

**Comments:** Rye is a huskless grain and is difficult to mash, often resulting in a gummy mash texture that is prone to sticking. Rye has been characterized as having the most assertive flavour of all cereal grains. It is inappropriate to add caraway seeds to a roggenbier (as some American brewers do); the rye character is traditionally from the rye grain only.

**History:** A specialty German rye beer originally brewed in Regensburg, Bavaria. Never a widely popular style, it has all but disappeared in modern times.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Malted rye typically constitutes 50% or greater of the grist (some versions have 60-65% rye). Remainder of grist can include pale malt, Munich malt, wheat malt, crystal malt and/or small amounts of debittered dark malts for colour adjustment. Weizen yeast provides distinctive banana esters and clove phenols. Light usage of Saazer-type hops in bitterness, flavour and aroma. Lower fermentation temperatures accentuate the clove character by suppressing ester

formation. Decoction mash traditionally used (as with weissbiers).

**Style Comparison:** A more distinctive variant of a dunkelweizen using malted rye instead of malted wheat. American Rye Beers will not have the weizen yeast character, and likely more hops.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.046 – 1.056  
IBUs: 10 – 20 FG: 1.010 – 1.014  
SRM: 14 – 19 ABV: 4.5 – 6.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Thurn und Taxis Roggen

**Tags:** standard-strength, amber-colour, top-fermenting, central-europe, historical-style, wheat-beer-family

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### 13.5. AMERICAN WHEAT BEER

**Overall Impression:** Refreshing wheat beers that can display more hop character and less yeast character than their German cousins. A clean fermentation character allows bready, doughy, or grainy wheat flavours to be complemented by hop flavour and bitterness rather than yeast qualities.

**Aroma:** Low to moderate grainy, bready, or doughy wheat character. A light to moderate malty sweetness is acceptable. Esters can be moderate to none, although should reflect relatively neutral yeast strains; banana is inappropriate. Hop aroma may be low to moderate, and can have a citrusy, spicy, floral, or fruity character. No clove phenols.

**Appearance:** Usually pale yellow to gold. Clarity may range from brilliant to hazy with yeast approximating the German weissbier style of beer. Big, long-lasting white head.

**Flavour:** Light to moderately-strong bready, doughy, or grainy wheat flavour, which can linger into the finish. May have a moderate malty sweetness or finish quite dry. Low to moderate hop bitterness, which sometimes lasts into the finish. Balance is usually even, but may be slightly bitter. Low to moderate hop flavour (citrusy, spicy, floral, or fruity). Esters can be moderate to none, but should not include banana. No clove phenols. May have a slightly crisp finish.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body. Medium-high to high carbonation. Slight creaminess is optional; wheat beers sometimes have a soft, 'fluffy' impression.

**Comments:** Different variations exist, from an easy-drinking fairly sweet beer to a dry, aggressively-hopped beer with a strong wheat flavour. American rye beers should be entered in the Alternative Fermentables specialty category.

**History:** An American craft beer adaptation of the German weissbier style using a cleaner yeast and more hops, first widely popularized by Widmer in the mid-1980s.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Clean American ale or lager yeast (German weissbier yeast is inappropriate). Large proportion of wheat malt (often 30-50%, which is lower than is typical in German weissbiers). American, German, or New World hops are typical.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Style Comparison:** More hop character and less yeast character than German weissbier. Never with the banana and clove character of German weissbier. Generally can have the same range and balance as Blonde Ales, but with a wheat character as the primary malt flavour.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.040 – 1.055  
IBUs: 15 – 30 FG: 1.008 – 1.013  
SRM: 3 – 6 ABV: 4.0 – 5.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Bell's Oberon, Boulevard Unfiltered Wheat Beer, Goose Island 312 Urban Wheat Ale, Widmer Hefeweizen

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, any-fermentation, north-america, craft-style, wheat-beer-family, balanced

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### 13.6. WEIZENBOCK

**Overall Impression:** A strong, malty, fruity, wheat-based ale combining the best malt and yeast flavours of a weissbier (pale or dark) with the malty-rich flavour, strength, and body of a Dunkles Bock or Doppelbock.

**Aroma:** Medium-high to high malty-rich character with a significant bready-grainy wheat component. Paler versions will have a bready-toasty malty richness, while darker versions will have a deeper, richer malt presence with significant Maillard products. The malt component is similar to a helles bock for pale versions (grainy-sweet-rich, lightly toasted) or a dunkles bock for dark versions (bready-malty-rich, highly toasted, optional caramel). The yeast contributes a typical weizen character of banana and spice (clove, vanilla), which can be medium-low to medium-high. Darker versions can have some dark fruit aroma (plums, prunes, grapes, raisins), particularly as they age. A low to moderate alcohol aroma is acceptable, but shouldn't be hot or solventy. No hop aroma. The malt, yeast, and alcohol intertwine to produce a complex, inviting, prominent bouquet.

**Appearance:** Pale and dark versions exist, with pale versions being light gold to light amber, and dark versions being dark amber to dark ruby-brown in colour. A very thick, moussy, long-lasting white to off-white (pale versions) or light tan (dark versions) head is characteristic. The high protein content of wheat impairs clarity in this traditionally unfiltered style, although the level of haze is somewhat variable. Suspended yeast sediment can contribute to the cloudiness.

**Flavour:** Similar to the aroma, a medium-high to high malty-rich flavour together with a significant bready-grainy wheat flavour. Paler versions will have a bready, toasty, grainy-sweet malt richness, while darker versions will have deeper, bready-rich or toasted malt flavours with significant Maillard products, optional caramel. Low to moderate banana and spice (clove, vanilla) yeast character. Darker versions can have some dark fruit flavour (plums, prunes, grapes, raisins), particularly as they age. A light chocolate character (but not roast) is optional in darker versions. No hop flavour. A low hop bitterness can give a slightly sweet palate impression, but the beer typically finishes dry

(sometimes enhanced by a light alcohol character). The interplay between the malt, yeast, and alcohol adds complexity and interest, which is often enhanced with age.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-full to full body. A fluffy or creamy texture is typical, as is the mild warming sensation of substantial alcohol content. Moderate to high carbonation.

**Comments:** A Weissbier brewed to bock or doppelbock strength. Schneider also produces an Eisbock version. Pale and dark versions exist, although dark are more common. Pale versions have less rich malt complexity and often more hops, as with doppelbocks. Lightly oxidized Maillard products can produce some rich, intense flavours and aromas that are often seen in aged imported commercial products; fresher versions will not have this character. Well-aged examples might also take on a slight sherry-like complexity.

**History:** Aventinus, the world's oldest top-fermented wheat doppelbock, was created in 1907 at the Schneider Weisse Brauhaus in Munich.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** A high percentage of malted wheat is used (by German brewing tradition must be at least 50%, although it may contain up to 70%), with the remainder being Munich- and/or Vienna-type barley malts in darker versions, and more Pils malt in paler versions. Some colour malts may be used sparingly. A traditional decoction mash can give the appropriate body without cloying sweetness. Weizen ale yeasts produce the typical spicy and fruity character. Too warm or too cold fermentation will cause the phenols and esters to be out of balance and may create off-flavours. Hop choice is essentially irrelevant, but German varieties are most traditional.

**Style Comparison:** Stronger and richer than a Weissbier or Dunkles Weissbier, but with similar yeast character. More directly comparable to the Doppelbock style, with the pale and dark variations. Can vary widely in strength, but most are in the bock to doppelbock range.

**Entry Instructions:** The entrant will specify whether the entry is a **pale** or a **dark** version.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.064 – 1.090  
IBUs: 15 – 30 FG: 1.015 – 1.022  
SRM: 6 – 25 ABV: 6.5 – 9.0%

**Commercial Examples:** **Dark** – Eisenbahn Weizenbock, Plank Bavarian Dunkler Weizenbock, Penn Weizenbock, Schneider Unser Aventinus; **Pale** – Plank Bavarian Heller Weizenbock, Weihenstephaner Vitus

**Tags:** high-strength, amber-colour, pale-colour, top-fermented, central-europe, traditional-style, wheat-beer-family, malty



## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

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### 13.7. WHEATWINE

**Overall Impression:** A richly textured, high alcohol sipping beer with a significant grainy, bready flavour and sleek body. The emphasis is first on the bready, wheaty flavours with interesting complexity from malt, hops, fruity yeast character and alcohol complexity.

**Aroma:** Hop aroma is mild and can represent just about any late hop aromatic. Moderate to moderately-strong bready, wheaty malt character, often with additional malt complexity such as honey and caramel. A light, clean, alcohol aroma may noted. Low to medium fruity notes may be apparent. Very low levels of diacetyl are acceptable but not required. Weizen yeast character (banana/clove) is inappropriate.

**Appearance:** Colour ranges from gold to deep amber, often with garnet or ruby highlights. Low to medium off-white head. The head may have creamy texture, and good retention. Chill haze is allowable, but usually clears up as the beer gets warmer. High alcohol and viscosity may be visible in “legs” when beer is swirled in a glass.

**Flavour:** Moderate to moderately-high wheaty malt flavour, dominant in the flavour balance over any hop character. Low to moderate bready, toasty, caramel, or honey malt notes are a welcome complexity note, although not required. Hop flavour is low to medium, and can reflect any variety. Moderate to moderately-high fruitiness, often with a dried-fruit character. Hop bitterness may range from low to moderate; balance therefore ranges from malty to evenly balanced. Should not be syrupy and under-attenuated. Some oxidative or vinous flavours may be present, as are light alcohol notes that are clean and smooth but complex. A complementary, supportive oak character is welcome, but not required.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-full to full bodied and chewy, often with a luscious, velvety texture. Low to moderate carbonation. Light to moderate smooth alcohol warming may also be present.

**Comments:** Dark malts should be used with restraint. Much of the colour arises from a lengthy boil. Some commercial examples may be larger than the Vital Statistics, and some may not be brewed every year.

**History:** A relatively recent American craft beer style that was first brewed at the Rubicon Brewing Company in 1988. Often a winter seasonal, vintage, or one-off release. Breweries frequently experiment with this style, leading to a range of interpretations.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Typically brewed with a combination of American two-row and American wheat. Style commonly uses 50% or more wheat malt. Any variety of hops may be used. May be oak-aged.

**Style Comparison:** More than simply a wheat-based barleywine, many versions have very expressive fruity and hoppy notes, while others develop complexity through oak aging. Less emphasis on the hops than American Barleywine. Has roots in American Wheat Beer rather than any German wheat styles, so should not have any German weizen yeast character.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.080 – 1.120  
IBUs: 30 – 60 FG: 1.016 – 1.030  
SRM: 8 – 15 ABV: 8.0 – 12.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Rubicon Winter Wheat Wine, Two Brothers Bare Trees Weiss Wine, Smuttynose Wheat Wine, Portsmouth Wheat Wine

**Tags:** very-high-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, north-america, craft-style, strong-ale-family, wheat-beer-family, balanced, hoppy

## 14. SOUR ALE

### 14.1. BERLINER WEISSE

**Overall Impression:** A very pale, refreshing, low-alcohol German wheat beer with a clean lactic sourness and a very high carbonation level. A light bread dough malt flavour supports the sourness, which shouldn't seem artificial. Any *Brettanomyces* funk is restrained.

**Aroma:** A sharply sour character is dominant (moderate to moderately-high). Can have up to a moderately fruity character (often lemony or tart apple). The fruitiness may increase with age and a light flowery character may develop. No hop aroma. The wheat may present as uncooked bread dough in fresher versions; combined with the acidity, may suggest sourdough bread. May optionally have a restrained funky *Brettanomyces* character.

**Appearance:** Very pale straw in colour. Clarity ranges from clear to somewhat hazy. Large, dense, white head with poor retention. Always effervescent.

**Flavour:** Clean lactic sourness dominates and can be quite strong. Some complementary doughy, bready or grainy wheat flavour is generally noticeable. Hop bitterness is undetectable; sourness provides the balance rather than hops. Never vinegary. A restrained citrusy-lemony or tart apple fruitiness may be detected. Very dry finish. Balance dominated by sourness, but some malt flavour should be present. No hop flavour. May optionally have a restrained funky *Brettanomyces* character.

**Mouthfeel:** Light body. Very high carbonation. No sensation of alcohol. Crisp, juicy acidity.

**Comments:** In Germany, it is classified as a *Schankbier* denoting a small beer of starting gravity in the range 7-8 °P. Often served with the addition of a shot of sugar syrups (*mit schuss*) flavoured with raspberry (*himbeer*), woodruff (*waldmeister*), or Caraway schnapps (*Kümmel*) to counter the substantial sourness. Has been described by some as the most purely refreshing beer in the world.

**History:** A regional specialty of Berlin; referred to by Napoleon's troops in 1809 as "the Champagne of the North" due to its lively and elegant character. At one point, it was smoked and there used to be Märzen-strength (14 °P) version. Increasingly rare in German, but some American craft breweries now regularly produce the style.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Wheat malt content is typically 50% of the grist (as is tradition with all German wheat beers) with the remainder typically being Pilsner malt. A symbiotic fermentation with top-fermenting yeast and *Lactobacillus* (various strains) provides the sharp sourness, which may be enhanced by blending of beers of different ages during fermentation and by extended cool aging. Hop bitterness is non-existent. Decoction mashing with mash hopping is traditional. German brewing scientists believe that *Brettanomyces* is essential to

get the correct flavour profile, but this character is never strong.

**Style Comparison:** Compared to a lambic, is generally not as acidic and has a clean lactic sourness with restrained to below sensory threshold funk. Also lower in alcohol content.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.028 – 1.032  
IBUs: 3 – 8 FG: 1.003 – 1.006  
SRM: 2 – 3 ABV: 2.8 – 3.8%

**Commercial Examples:** Bayerischer Bahnhof Berliner Style Weisse, Berliner Kindl Weisse, Nodding Head Berliner Weisse, The Bruery Hottenroth

**Tags:** session-beer, pale-colour, top-fermented, central-europe, traditional-style, wheat-beer-family, sour

### 14.2. GOSE

**Overall Impression:** A highly-carbonated, tart and fruity wheat ale with a restrained coriander and salt character and low bitterness. Very refreshing, with bright flavours and high attenuation.

**Aroma:** Light to moderately fruity aroma of pome fruit. Light sourness, slightly sharp. Noticeable coriander, which can have an aromatic lemony quality, and an intensity up to moderate. Light bready, doughy, yeasty character like uncooked sourdough bread. The acidity and coriander can give a bright, lively impression. The salt may be perceived as a very light, clean sea breeze character or just a general freshness, if noticeable at all.

**Appearance:** Unfiltered, with a moderate to full haze. Moderate to tall sized white head with tight bubbles and good retention. Effervescent. Medium yellow colour.

**Flavour:** Moderate to restrained but noticeable sourness, like a squeeze of lemon in iced tea. Moderate bready/doughy malt flavour. Light to moderate fruity character of pome fruit, stone fruit, or lemons. Light to moderate salt character, up to the threshold of taste; the salt should be noticeable (particularly in the initial taste) but not taste overtly salty. Low bitterness, no hop flavour. Dry, fully-attenuated finish, with acidity not hops balancing the malt. Acidity can be more noticeable in the finish, and enhance the refreshing quality of the beer. The acidity should be balanced, not forward (although historical versions could be very sour).

**Mouthfeel:** High to very high carbonation, effervescent. Medium-light to medium-full body. Salt may give a slightly tingly, mouthwatering quality, if perceived at all. The yeast and wheat can give it a little body, but it shouldn't have a heavy feel.

**Comments:** Served in traditional cylindrical glasses. Historical versions may have been more sour than modern examples due to spontaneous

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

fermentation, and may be blended with syrups as is done with Berliner Weisse, or *Kümmel*, a liqueur flavoured with caraway, cumin, and fennel. Modern examples are inoculated with lactobacillus, and are more balanced and generally don't need sweetening. Pronounced *GOH-zeh*.

**History:** Minor style associated with Leipzig but originating in the Middle Ages in the town of Goslar on the Gose River. Documented to have been in Leipzig by 1740. Leipzig was said to have 80 Gose houses in 1900. Production declined significantly after WWII, and ceased entirely in 1966. Modern production was revived in the 1980s, but the beer is not widely available.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pilsner and wheat malt, restrained use of salt and coriander seed, lactobacillus. The coriander should have a fresh, citrusy (lemon or bitter orange), bright note, and not be vegetal, celery-like, or ham-like. The salt should have a sea salt or fresh salt character, not a metallic, iodine note.

**Style Comparison:** Perceived acidity is not as intense as Berliner Weisse or Gueuze. Restrained use of salt, coriander, and lactobacillus – should not taste overtly salty. Coriander aroma can be similar to a witbier. Haziness similar to a Weissbier.

**Vital Statistics:**

OG: 1.036 – 1.056	
IBUs: 5 – 12	FG: 1.006 – 1.010
SRM: 3 – 4	ABV: 4.2 – 4.8%

**Commercial Examples:** Anderson Valley Gose, Bayerisch Bahnhof Leipziger Gose, Döllnitzer Ritterguts Gose

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, top-fermented, central-europe, historical-style, wheat-beer-family, sour, spice

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### 14.3. FLANDERS RED ALE

**Overall Impression:** A sour, fruity, red wine-like Belgian-style ale with interesting supportive malt flavours and fruit complexity. The dry finish and tannin completes the mental image of a fine red wine.

**Aroma:** Complex fruity-sour profile with supporting malt that often gives a wine-like impression. Fruitness is high, and reminiscent of black cherries, oranges, plums or red currants. There are often low to medium-low vanilla and/or chocolate notes. Spicy phenols can be present in low amounts for complexity. The sour aroma ranges from balanced to intense. Prominent vinegary acetic character is inappropriate. No hop aroma. Diacetyl is perceived only in very minor quantities, if at all, as a complementary aroma.

**Appearance:** Deep red, burgundy to reddish-brown in colour. Good clarity. White to very pale tan head. Average to good head retention.

**Flavour:** Intense fruitness commonly includes plum, orange, black cherry or red currant flavours. A mild vanilla and/or chocolate character is often present. Spicy phenols can be present in low amounts for complexity. Sour flavour ranges from complementary to intense, and can have an acidic bite. Malty flavours range from complementary to

prominent, and often have a soft toasty-rich quality. Generally as the sour character increases, the malt character blends to more of a background flavour (and vice versa). No hop flavour. Restrained hop bitterness. An acidic, tannic bitterness is often present in low to moderate amounts, and adds an aged red wine-like character and finish. Prominent vinegary acetic character is inappropriate. Diacetyl is perceived only in very minor quantities, if at all, as a complementary flavour. Balanced to the malt side, but dominated by the fruity, sour, wine-like impression.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium bodied. Low to medium carbonation. Low to medium astringency, like a well-aged red wine, often with a prickly acidity. Deceivingly light and crisp on the palate although a somewhat sweet finish is not uncommon.

**Comments:** Long aging and blending of young and well-aged beer often occurs, adding to the smoothness and complexity, though the aged product is sometimes released as a connoisseur's beer. Known as the Burgundy of Belgium, it is more wine-like than any other beer style. The reddish colour is a product of the malt although an extended, less-than-rolling portion of the boil may help add an attractive Burgundy hue. Aging will also darken the beer. The Flanders red is more acetic (but never vinegar-like) and the fruity flavours more reminiscent of a red wine than an Oud Bruin. Can have an apparent attenuation of up to 98%.

**History:** An indigenous beer of West Flanders, typified by the products of the Rodenbach brewery, established in 1820 in West Flanders but reflective of earlier brewing traditions. The beer is aged for up to two years, often in huge oaken barrels which contain the resident bacteria necessary to sour the beer. It was once common in Belgium and England to blend old beer with young to balance the sourness and acidity found in aged beer. While blending of batches for consistency is now common among larger breweries, this type of blending is a fading art.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** A base of Vienna and/or Munich malts, light to medium cara-malts, and a small amount of Special B are used with up to 20% maize. Low alpha acid continental hops are commonly used (avoid high alpha or distinctive American hops). *Saccharomyces*, *Lactobacillus* and *Brettanomyces* (and *acetobacter*) contribute to the fermentation and eventual flavour.

**Style Comparison:** Less malty-rich than an Oud Bruin, often with more of a fruity-tart profile.

**Vital Statistics:**

OG: 1.048 – 1.057	
IBUs: 10 – 25	FG: 1.002 – 1.012
SRM: 10 – 16	ABV: 4.6 – 6.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Cuvée des Jacobins Rouge, Duchesse de Bourgogne, Rodenbach Grand Cru, Rodenbach Klassiek, Vichtenaar Flemish Ale

**Tags:** standard-strength, amber-colour, top-fermenting, western-europe, traditional-style, sour-ale-family, balanced, sour, wood

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

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### 14.4. LAMBIC

**Overall Impression:** A fairly sour, often moderately funky wild Belgian wheat beer with sourness taking the place of hop bitterness in the balance. Traditionally spontaneously fermented in the Brussels area and served uncarbonated, the refreshing acidity makes for a very pleasant café drink.

**Aroma:** A decidedly sour aroma is often dominant in young examples, but may become more subdued with age as it blends with aromas described as barnyard, earthy, goaty, hay, horsey, and horse blanket. A mild citrus-fruity aroma is considered favorable. An enteric, smoky, cigar-like, or cheesy aroma is unfavorable. Older versions are commonly fruity with aromas of apples or even honey. No hop aroma.

**Appearance:** Pale yellow to deep golden in colour; age tends to darken the beer. Clarity is hazy to good. Younger versions are often cloudy, while older ones are generally clear. White coloured head generally has poor retention.

**Flavour:** Young examples are often noticeably lactic-sour, but aging can bring this character more in balance with the malt, wheat and barnyard characteristics. Fruity flavours are simpler in young lambics and more complex in the older examples, where they are reminiscent of apples or other light fruits, rhubarb, or honey. Some citrus flavour (often grapefruit) is occasionally noticeable, and is desirable. The malt and wheat character are typically low with some bready-grainy notes. An enteric, smoky or cigar-like character is undesirable. Hop bitterness is low to none, and generally undetectable; sourness provides the balance. Typically has a dry finish. No hop flavour.

**Mouthfeel:** Light to medium-light body. In spite of the low finishing gravity, the many mouth-filling flavours prevent the beer from feeling like water. As a rule of thumb, lambic dries with age, which makes dryness a reasonable indicator of age. Has a medium to high tart, puckering quality without being sharply astringent. Traditional versions are virtually to completely uncarbonated, but bottled examples can pick up moderate carbonation with age.

**Comments:** Straight lambics are single-batch, unblended beers. Since they are unblended, the straight lambic is often a true product of the “house character” of a brewery and will be more variable than a gueuze. They are generally served young (6 months) and on tap as cheap, easy-drinking beers without any filling carbonation. Younger versions tend to be one-dimensionally sour since a complex Brett character often takes upwards of a year to develop. An enteric character is often indicative of a lambic that is too young. A noticeable vinegary or cidery character is considered a fault by Belgian brewers. Since the wild yeast and bacteria will ferment ALL sugars, they are typically bottled only when they have completely fermented.

**History:** Spontaneously fermented wild ales from the area in and around Brussels (the Senne Valley) stem from a farmhouse brewing tradition several

centuries old. The number of producers is constantly dwindling.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Unmalted wheat (30-40%), Pilsner malt and aged hops (3 years) are used. The aged hops are used more for preservative effects than bitterness, and makes actual bitterness levels difficult to estimate. Traditionally these beers are spontaneously fermented with naturally occurring yeast and bacteria in predominately oaken barrels. The barrels used are neutral with little oak character, so don't expect a fresh or forward oak character – more neutral is typical. Home-brewed and craft-brewed versions are more typically made with pure cultures of yeast commonly including *Saccharomyces*, *Brettanomyces*, *Pediococcus* and *Lactobacillus* in an attempt to recreate the effects of the dominant microbiota of Brussels and the surrounding countryside of the Senne River valley. Cultures taken from bottles are sometimes used but there is no simple way of knowing what organisms are still viable.

**Style Comparison:** Generally has a more simple sourness and complexity than a gueuze.

Traditionally served uncarbonated from pitchers, while gueuze is bottled and very highly carbonated.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.040 – 1.054  
IBUs: 0 – 10 FG: 1.001 – 1.010  
SRM: 3 – 7 ABV: 5.0 – 6.5%

**Commercial Examples:** The only bottled version readily available is Cantillon Grand Cru Bruocsella of whatever single batch vintage the brewer deems worthy to bottle. De Cam sometimes bottles their very old (5 years) lambic. In and around Brussels there are specialty cafes that often have draught lambics from traditional brewers or blenders such as Boon, De Cam, Cantillon, Drie Fonteinen, Lindemans, Timmermans and Girardin.

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, wild-fermented, western-europe, traditional-style, wheat-beer-family, sour

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### 14.5. GUEUZE

**Overall Impression:** A complex, pleasantly sour but balanced wild Belgian wheat beer that is highly carbonated and very refreshing. The spontaneous fermentation character can provide a very interesting complexity, with a wide range of wild barnyard, horse blanket, or leather characteristics intermingling with citrusy-fruity flavours and acidity.

**Aroma:** A moderately sour aroma blends with aromas described as barnyard, leather, earthy, goaty, hay, horsey, and horse blanket. While some may be more dominantly sour, balance is the key and denotes a better gueuze. Commonly fruity with aromas of citrus fruits (often grapefruit), apples or other light fruits, rhubarb, or honey. A very mild oak aroma is considered favorable. An enteric, smoky, cigar-like, or cheesy aroma is unfavorable. No hop aroma.

**Appearance:** Golden colour, with excellent clarity and a thick, rocky, mousse-like, white head that seems to last forever. Always effervescent.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Flavour:** A moderately sour character is classically in balance with the malt, wheat and barnyard characteristics. A low, complementary sweetness may be present but higher levels are not traditional. While some may be more dominantly sour, balance is the key and denotes a better gueuze. A varied fruit flavour is common, and can have a honey-like character. A mild vanilla and/or oak flavour is occasionally noticeable. The malt is generally low and bready-grainy. An enteric, smoky or cigar-like character is undesirable. Hop bitterness is generally absent but a very low hop bitterness may occasionally be perceived; sourness provides most of the balance. Crisp, dry, and tart finish. No hop flavour.

**Mouthfeel:** Light to medium-light body. In spite of the low finishing gravity, the many mouth-filling flavours prevent the beer from feeling like water. Has a low to high tart, puckering quality without being sharply astringent. Some versions have a light warming character. Highly carbonated.

**Comments:** Gueuze is traditionally produced by mixing one, two, and three-year old lambic. “Young” lambic contains fermentable sugars while old lambic has the characteristic “wild” taste of the Senne River valley. A noticeable vinegary or cidery character is considered a fault by Belgian brewers. A good gueuze is not the most pungent, but possesses a full and tantalizing bouquet, a sharp aroma, and a soft, velvety flavour. Lambic is served uncarbonated, while gueuze is served effervescent. Products marked *oude* or *ville* are considered most traditional.

**History:** Spontaneously fermented wild ales from the area in and around Brussels (the Senne Valley) stem from a farmhouse brewing and blending tradition several centuries old. The number of producers is constantly dwindling and some producers are untraditionally sweetening their products (post-fermentation) to make them more palatable to a wider audience. These guidelines describe the traditional dry product.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Unmalted wheat (30-40%), Pilsner malt and aged hops (3 years) are used. The aged hops are used more for preservative effects than bitterness, and makes actual bitterness levels difficult to estimate. Traditionally these beers are spontaneously fermented with naturally occurring yeast and bacteria in predominately oaken barrels. The barrels used are old and have little oak character, so don't expect a fresh or forward oak character – more neutral is typical. Home-brewed and craft-brewed versions are more typically made with pure cultures of yeast commonly including *Saccharomyces*, *Brettanomyces*, *Pediococcus* and *Lactobacillus* in an attempt to recreate the effects of the dominant microbiota of Brussels and the surrounding countryside of the Senne River valley. Cultures taken from bottles are sometimes used but there is no simple way of knowing what organisms are still viable.

**Style Comparison:** More complex and carbonated than a lambic. The sourness isn't necessarily higher, but it tends to have more of a well-developed wild character.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.040 – 1.060  
IBUs: 0 – 10 FG: 1.000 – 1.006  
SRM: 3 – 7 ABV: 5.0 – 8.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Boon Oude Gueuze, Boon Oude Gueuze Mariage Parfait, Cantillon Gueuze, De Cam Gueuze, De Cam/Drei Fonteinen Millennium Gueuze, Drie Fonteinen Oud Gueuze, Girardin Gueuze (Black Label), Hanssens Oude Gueuze, Lindemans Gueuze Cuvée René, Mort Subite (Unfiltered) Gueuze, Oud Beersel Oude Gueuze

**Tags:** high-strength, pale-colour, wild-fermented, western-europe, traditional-style, wheat-beer-family, aged, sour

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### 14.6. FRUIT LAMBIC

**Overall Impression:** A complex, fruity, pleasantly sour, wild wheat ale fermented by a variety of Belgian microbiota, and showcasing the fruit contributions blended with the wild character. The type of fruit can sometimes be hard to identify as fermented and aged fruit characteristics can seem different from the more recognizable fresh fruit aromas and flavours.

**Aroma:** The specified fruit should be the dominant aroma. A low to moderately sour character blends with aromas described as barnyard, earthy, goaty, hay, horsey, and horse blanket (and thus should be recognizable as a lambic). The fruit aroma commonly blends well with the other aromas. An enteric, smoky, cigar-like, or cheesy aroma is unfavorable. No hop aroma.

**Appearance:** The variety of fruit generally determines the colour, although lighter-coloured fruit may have little effect on the colour. The colour intensity may fade with age. Clarity is often good, although some fruit will not drop bright. A thick rocky, mousse-like head, sometimes a shade of fruit, is generally long-lasting (carbonation-dependent). Carbonation is typically high, but must be specified.

**Flavour:** The specified fruit should be evident. Low to moderately sour flavour, often with an acidic bite in the finish. The classic barnyard characteristics may be low to high. When young, the beer will present its full fruity taste. As it ages, the lambic taste will become dominant at the expense of the fruit character—thus fruit lambics are not intended for long aging. The finish is commonly dry and tart, but a low, complementary sweetness may be present; higher sweetness levels are not traditional but can be included for personal preference (sweetness level must be specified). A mild vanilla and/or oak flavour is occasionally noticeable. An enteric, smoky or cigar-like character is undesirable. Hop bitterness is generally absent; acidity provides the balance. No hop flavour.

**Mouthfeel:** Light to medium-light body. In spite of the low finishing gravity, the many mouth-filling flavours prevent the beer from tasting like water. Has a low to high tart, puckering quality without being sharply astringent. Some versions have a light warming character. Carbonation can vary from sparkling to nearly still (must be specified).

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Comments:** Fruit-based lambics are often produced like gueuze by mixing one, two, and three-year old lambic. “Young” lambic contains fermentable sugars while old lambic has the characteristic “wild” taste of the Senne River valley. Fruit is commonly added halfway through aging and the yeast and bacteria will ferment all sugars from the fruit. Fruit may also be added to unblended lambic. The most traditional styles of fruit lambics include *kriek* (cherries), *framboise* (raspberries) and *druivenlambik* (muscat grapes). IBUs are approximate since aged hops are used; Belgians use hops for anti-bacterial properties more than bittering in lambics.

**History:** Spontaneously fermented wild ales from the area in and around Brussels (the Senne Valley) stem from a farmhouse brewing and blending tradition several centuries old. The number of producers is constantly dwindling and some are untraditionally sweetening their products (post-fermentation) with sugar or sweet fruit to make them more palatable to a wider audience. Fruit was traditionally added to lambic or gueuze, either by the blender or publican, to increase the variety of beers available in local cafes.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Unmalted wheat (30-40%), Pilsner malt and aged hops (3 years) are used. The aged hops are used more for preservative effects than bitterness, and makes actual bitterness levels difficult to estimate. Traditional products use 10-30% fruit (25%, if cherry). Fruits traditionally used include tart cherries (with pits), raspberries or Muscat grapes. More recent examples include peaches, apricots or merlot grapes. Tart or acidic fruit is traditionally used as its purpose is not to sweeten the beer but to add a new dimension. Traditionally these beers are spontaneously fermented with naturally occurring yeast and bacteria in predominately oaken barrels. The barrels used are old and have little oak character, so don't expect a fresh or forward oak character – more neutral is typical. Home-brewed and craft-brewed versions are more typically made with pure cultures of yeast commonly including *Saccharomyces*, *Brettanomyces*, *Pediococcus* and *Lactobacillus* in an attempt to recreate the effects of the dominant microbiota of Brussels and the surrounding countryside of the Senne River valley. Cultures taken from bottles are sometimes used but there is no simple way of knowing what organisms are still viable.

**Style Comparison:** A lambic with fruit, not just a fruit beer; the wild lambic character must be evident.

**Entry Instructions:** The *type of fruit* used **must** be specified. The brewer **must** declare a *carbonation* level (low, medium, high) and a *sweetness* level (low/none, medium, high).

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.040 – 1.060  
IBUs: 0 – 10 FG: 1.000 – 1.010  
SRM: 3 – 7 (varies w/ fruit) ABV: 5.0 – 7.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Boon Framboise Marriage Parfait, Boon Kriek Marriage Parfait, Boon Oude Kriek, Cantillon Fou' Foune, Cantillon Kriek, Cantillon Lou Pepe Kriek, Cantillon Lou Pepe Framboise, Cantillon Rose de Gambrinus, Cantillon

St. Lamvinus, Cantillon Vigneronne, De Cam Oude Kriek, Drie Fonteinen Kriek, Girardin Kriek, Hanssens Oude Kriek, Oud Beersel Kriek, Mort Subite Kriek

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, wild-fermented, western-europe, traditional-style, wheat-beer-family, sour, fruit

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### 14.7. OUD BRUIN

**Overall Impression:** A malty, fruity, aged, somewhat sour Belgian-style brown ale.

**Aroma:** Complex combination of fruity esters and rich malt character. Medium to medium-high esters commonly reminiscent of raisins, plums, figs, dates, black cherries or prunes. Medium low to medium high malt character of caramel, toffee, orange, treacle or chocolate. Spicy phenols can be present in low amounts for complexity. A sherry-like character may be present and generally denotes an aged example. A low sour aroma may be present, and can modestly increase with age but should not grow to a noticeable acetic/vinegary character. Hop aroma absent. Diacetyl is perceived only in very minor quantities, if at all, as a complementary aroma.

**Appearance:** Dark reddish-brown to brown in colour. Good clarity. Average to good head retention. Ivory to light tan head colour.

**Flavour:** Malty with fruity complexity and typically some caramel character. Medium to medium-high fruitiness commonly includes dark or dried fruit such as raisins, plums, figs, dates, black cherries or prunes. Medium low to medium high malt character of caramel, toffee, orange, treacle or chocolate. Spicy phenols can be present in low amounts for complexity. A slight sourness often becomes more pronounced in well-aged examples, along with some sherry-like character, producing a “sweet-and-sour” profile. The sourness should not grow to a notable acetic/vinegary character. Hop flavour absent. Restrained hop bitterness. Low oxidation is appropriate as a point of complexity. Diacetyl is perceived only in very minor quantities, if at all, as a complementary flavour. Balance is malty, but with fruitiness and sourness present. Sweet and tart finish

**Mouthfeel:** Medium to medium-full body. Low to moderate carbonation. No astringency.

**Comments:** Long aging and blending of young and aged beer may occur, adding smoothness and complexity and balancing any harsh, sour character. This style was designed to lay down so examples with a moderate aged character are considered superior to younger examples. As in fruit lambics, Oud Bruin can be used as a base for fruit-flavoured beers such as *kriek* (cherries) or *frambozen* (raspberries), though these should be entered in the *Classic-Style Fruit Beer* category.

**History:** An “old ale” tradition, indigenous to East Flanders, typified by the products of the Liefman brewery (now owned by Riva), which has roots back to the 1600s. Historically brewed as a “provision beer” that would develop some sourness as it aged. These beers were typically more sour than current commercial examples. While Flanders red beers are

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

aged in oak, the brown beers are warm aged in stainless steel.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** A base of Pils malt with judicious amounts of dark cara malts and a tiny bit of black or roast malt. Often includes maize. Low alpha acid continental hops are typical (avoid high alpha or distinctive American hops). *Saccharomyces* and *Lactobacillus* (and *acetobacter*) contribute to the fermentation and eventual flavour. *Lactobacillus* reacts poorly to elevated levels of alcohol. Water high in carbonates is typical of its home region and will buffer the acidity of darker malts and the lactic sourness. Magnesium in the water accentuates the sourness.

**Style Comparison:** A deeper malt character distinguishes these beers from Flanders red ales. The Oud Bruin is less acetic and maltier than a Flanders Red, and the fruity flavours are more malt-oriented.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.040 – 1.074  
IBUs: 20 – 25 FG: 1.008 – 1.012  
SRM: 15 – 22 ABV: 4.0 – 8.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Ichtegem Oud Bruin, Liefmans Goudenband, Liefmans Liefmans Oud Bruin, Petrus Oud Bruin, Riva Vondel, Vanderghinste Bellegems Bruin

**Tags:** standard-strength, dark-colour, top-fermented, western-europe, traditional-style, sour-ale-family, malty, sour

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### 14.8. BRETT BEER

**Overall Impression:** Most often drier and fruitier than the base style suggests. Funky notes range from low to high, depending on the age of the beer and strain(s) of Brett used. Funkiness is generally restrained in younger 100% Brett examples, but tends to increase with age. May possess a light acidity, although this does not come from Brett.

**Aroma:** Variable by base style. Young Brett-fermented beers will possess more fruity notes (e.g., tropical fruit, stone fruit, or citrus), but this is variable by the strain(s) of Brett used. For 100% Brett beers heavily hopped with American hop varieties, the fermentation-derived flavours are often difficult to tease from the hop aromatics. Older 100% Brett beers may start to develop a little funk (e.g., barnyard, wet hay, or slightly earthy or smoky notes), but this character should not dominate. If the beer is fermented with a brewer's yeast in addition to Brett, some of the character of the primary yeast may remain. A faint sourness is acceptable but should not be a prominent character.

**Appearance:** Variable by base style. Clarity can be variable, and depends on the base style and ingredients used. Some haze is not necessarily a fault.

**Flavour:** Variable by base style. Brett character may range from minimal to aggressive. Can be quite fruity (e.g., tropical fruit, berry, stone fruit, citrus), or have some smoky, earthy, or barnyard character. Should not be unpleasantly funky, such as Band-Aid, fetid, nail polish remover, cheese, etc. Light sourness is acceptable with the beer being lightly tart, but should not be truly sour. Always fruitier

when young, gaining more funk with age. May not be acetic or lactic. Malt flavours are often less pronounced than in the base style, leaving a beer most often dry and crisp due to high attenuation by the Brett.

**Mouthfeel:** Variable by base style. Generally a light body, lighter than what might be expected from the base style but an overly thin body is a fault. Generally moderate to high carbonation. Head retention is variable.

**Comments:** The base style describes most of the character of these beers, but the addition of Brett ensures a drier, thinner, and funkier product. Younger versions are brighter and fruitier, while older ones possess more depth of funk and may lose more of the base style character. Wood-aged versions should be entered in the Wild Specialty Beer style. The Brett character should always meld with the style; these beers should never be a 'Brett bomb'. Note that Brett does not produce lactic acid.

**History:** Modern American craft beer interpretations of Belgian wild ales, or experimentations inspired by Belgian wild ales or historical English beers with Brett. 100% Brett beers gained popularity after the year 2000; Port Brewing Mo Betta Bretta was one of the first celebrated examples.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Virtually any style of beer, fermented in any manner, then finished with one or more strains of Brett. Alternatively, a beer made with Brett as the sole fermentation strain.

**Style Comparison:** Compared to the same beer style without Brett, a Brett Beer will be drier, more highly attenuated, fruitier, lighter in body, and slightly funkier as it ages. Less sourness and depth than Belgian 'wild' ales.

**Entry Instructions:** The entrant **must** specify either a base beer style (Classic Style, or a generic style family) or provide a description of the ingredients/specs/desired character. The entrant **must** specify if a 100% Brett fermentation was conducted. The entrant **may** specify the strain(s) of *Brettanomyces* used.

**Vital Statistics:** Variable by base style.

**Commercial Examples:** Boulevard Saison Brett, Hill Farmstead Arthur, Logsdon Seizoen Bretta, Russian River Sanctification, The Bruery Saison Rue, Victory Helios

**Tags:** wild-fermentation, north-america, craft-style, specialty-beer

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### 14.9. MIXED-FERMENTATION SOUR BEER

**Overall Impression:** A sour and/or funky version of a base style of beer.

**Aroma:** Variable by base style. The contribution of non-*Saccharomyces* microbes should be noticeable to strong, and often contribute a sour and/or funky, wild note. The best examples will display a range of aromatics, rather than a single dominant character.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

The aroma should be inviting, not harsh or unpleasant.

**Appearance:** Variable by base style. Clarity can be variable; some haze is not a fault. Head retention can be poor due to high levels of acid or anti-foam properties of some lactobacillus strains.

**Flavour:** Variable by base style. Look for an agreeable balance between the base beer and the fermentation character. A range of results is possible from fairly high acidity/funk to a subtle, pleasant, harmonious beer. The best examples are pleasurable to drink with the esters and phenols complementing the malt and/or hops. The wild character can be prominent, but does not need to be dominating in a style with an otherwise strong malt/hop profile. Acidity should be firm yet enjoyable, but should not be biting or vinegary; prominent or objectionable/offensive acetic acid is a fault. Bitterness tends to be low, especially as sourness increases.

**Mouthfeel:** Variable by base style. Generally a light body, almost always lighter than what might be expected from the base style. Generally moderate to high carbonation, although often lower in higher alcohol examples.

**Comments:** These beers may be aged in wood, but any wood character should not be a primary or dominant flavour. Sour beers are typically not bitter as these flavours clash. The base beer style becomes

less relevant because the various yeast and bacteria tend to dominate the profile. Inappropriate characteristics include diacetyl, solvent, ropy/viscous texture, and heavy oxidation.

**History:** Modern American craft beer interpretations of Belgian sour ales, or experimentations inspired by Belgian sour ales.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Virtually any style of beer. Usually fermented by *Lactobacillus* and/or *Pediococcus*, often in conjunction with *Saccharomyces* and/or *Brettanomyces*. Can also be a blend of styles. Wood or barrel aging is very common, but not required.

**Style Comparison:** A sour and/or funky version of a base style.

**Entry Instructions:** The entrant **must** specify a description of the beer, identifying the yeast/bacteria used and either a base style or the ingredients/specs/target character of the beer.

**Vital Statistics:** Variable by style

**Commercial Examples:** Boulevard Love Child, Cascade Vlad the Imp Aler, Jester King Le Petit Prince, Jolly Pumpkin Calabaza Blanca, Russian River Temptation, The Bruery Rueuze, The Bruery Tart of Darkness

**Tags:** wild-fermentation, north-america, craft-style, specialty-beer, sour



## 15. BELGIAN ALE

## 15.1. SAISON

**Overall Impression:** Most commonly, a pale, refreshing, highly-attenuated, moderately-bitter, moderate-strength Belgian ale with a very dry finish. Typically highly carbonated, and using non-barley cereal grains and optional spices for complexity, as complements the expressive yeast character that is fruity, spicy, and not overly phenolic. Less common variations include both lower-alcohol and higher-alcohol products, as well as darker versions with additional malt character.

**Aroma:** Quite aromatic, with fruity, spicy, and hoppy characteristics evident. The esters can be fairly high (moderate to high), and are often reminiscent of citrus fruits such as oranges or lemons. The hops are low to moderate and are often spicy, floral, earthy, or fruity. Stronger versions can have a soft, spicy alcohol note (low intensity). Spicy notes are typically peppery rather than clove-like, and can be up to moderately-strong (typically yeast-derived). Subtle, complementary herb or spice additions are allowable, but should not dominate. The malt character is typically slightly grainy in character and low in intensity. Darker and stronger versions will have more noticeable malt, with darker versions taking characteristics associated with grains of that colour (toasty, biscuity, caramelly, chocolate, etc.). In versions where sourness is present instead of bitterness, some of the sour character can be detected (low to moderate).

**Appearance:** Pale versions are often a distinctive pale orange but may be pale golden to amber in colour (gold to amber-gold is most common). Darker versions may run from copper to dark brown. Long-lasting, dense, rocky white to ivory head resulting in characteristic Belgian lace on the glass as it fades. Clarity is poor to good, though haze is not unexpected in this type of unfiltered beer. Effervescent.

**Flavour:** Medium-low to medium-high fruity and spicy flavours, supported by a low to medium soft malt character, often with some grainy flavours. Bitterness is typically moderate to high, although sourness can be present in place of bitterness (both should not be strong flavours at the same time). Attenuation is extremely high, which gives a characteristic dry finish essential to the style; a Saison should never finish sweet. The fruity character is frequently citrusy (orange or lemon), and the spices are typically peppery. Allow for a range of balance in the fruity-spicy characteristics; this is often driven by the yeast selection. Hop flavour is low to moderate, and generally spicy or earthy in character. The balance is towards the fruity, spicy, hoppy character, with any bitterness or sourness not overwhelming these flavours. Darker versions will have more malt character, with a range of flavours derived from darker malts (toasty, bready, biscuity, chocolate, etc.) that support the fruity-spicy character of the beer (roasted flavours

are not typical). Stronger versions will have more malt flavour in general, as well as a light alcohol impression. Herbs and spices are completely optional, but if present should be used in moderation and not detract from the yeast character. The finish is very dry and the aftertaste is typically bitter and spicy. The hop bitterness can be restrained, although it can seem accentuated due to the high attenuation levels.

**Mouthfeel:** Light to medium body. Alcohol sensation varies with strength, from none in table version to light in standard versions, to moderate in super versions. However, any warming character should be fairly low. Very high carbonation with an effervescent quality. There is enough prickly acidity on the tongue to balance the very dry finish. In versions with sourness, a low to moderate tart character can add a refreshing bite, but not be puckering (optional).

**Comments:** Variations exist in strength and colour, but they all have similar characteristics and balance, in particularly the refreshing, highly-attenuated, dry character with high carbonation. There is no correlation between strength and colour. The balance can change somewhat with strength and colour variations, but the family resemblance to the original artisanal ale should be evident. Pale versions are likely to be more bitter and have more hop character, while darker versions tend to have more malt character and sweetness, yielding a more balanced presentations. Stronger versions often will have more malt flavour, richness, and body simply due to their higher gravity. Although they tend to be very well-attenuated, they may not be perceived to be as dry as standard-strength saisons due to their strength. The Saison yeast character is a must, although maltier and richer versions will tend to mask this character more. Often called *Farmhouse ales* in the US, but this term is not common in Europe where they are simply part of a larger grouping of *artisanal ales*.

**History:** A provision ale originally brewed in Wallonia, the French-speaking part of Belgium, for consumption during the active farming season. Originally a lower-alcohol product so as to not debilitate field workers, but tavern-strength products also existed. Higher-strength and different-coloured products appeared after WWII. The best known modern saison, Saison Dupont, was first produced in the 1920s. Originally a rustic, artisanal ale made with local farm-produced ingredients, it is now brewed mostly in larger breweries yet retains the image of its humble origins.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Not typically spiced, with the yeast, hops and grain providing the character; but spices are allowed if they provide a complementary character. Continental base malts are typical, but the grist frequently contains other grains such as wheat, oats, rye, or spelt. Adjuncts such as sugar and honey can also serve to add complexity and dry out the beer. Darker versions

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

will typically use richer, darker malts, but not typically roasted types. Saazer-type, Styrian or East Kent Golding hops are commonly used. A wide range of herbs or spices can add complexity and uniqueness, but should always meld well with the yeast and hop character. *Brettanomyces* is not typical for this style; Saisons with Brett should be entered in the *American Wild Ale* category.

**Style Comparison:** At standard strengths and pale colour (the most common variety), like a more highly-attenuated, hoppy, and bitter Belgian blond ale with a stronger yeast character. At super strength and pale colour, similar to a Belgian tripel, but often with more of a grainy, rustic quality and sometimes with a spicier yeast character.

**Entry Instructions:** The entrant **must** specify the *strength* (table, standard, super) and the *colour* (pale, dark).

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.048 – 1.065 (*standard*)  
FG: 1.002 – 1.008 (*standard*)

IBUs: 20 – 35

SRM: 5 – 14 (*pale*) ABV: 3.5 – 5.0% (*table*)  
15 – 22 (*dark*) 5.0 – 7.0% (*standard*)  
7.0 – 9.5% (*super*)

**Commercial Examples:** Ellezelloise Saison, Fantôme Saison, Lefebvre Saison 1900, Saison Dupont Vieille Provision, Saison de Pipaix, Saison Regal, Saison Voisin, Boulevard Tank 7 Farmhouse Ale

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, top-fermented, western-europe, traditional-style, bitter

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### 15.2. BIÈRE DE GARDE

**Overall Impression:** A fairly strong, malt-accentuated, lagered artisanal beer with a range of malt flavours appropriate for the colour. All are malty yet dry, with clean flavours and a smooth character.

**Aroma:** Prominent malty sweetness, often with a complex, light to moderate intensity toasty-bready-rich malt character. Low to moderate esters. Little to no hop aroma (may be a bit spicy, peppery, or herbal). Paler versions will still be malty but will lack richer, deeper aromatics and may have a bit more hops. Generally quite clean, although stronger versions may have a light, spicy alcohol note as it warms.

**Appearance:** Three main variations exist (blond, amber and brown), so colour can range from golden-blond to reddish-bronze to chestnut brown. Clarity is brilliant to fair, although haze is not unexpected in this type of often unfiltered beer. Well-formed head, generally white to off-white (varies by beer colour), average persistence.

**Flavour:** Medium to high malt flavour often with a toasty-rich, biscuity, toffee-like or light caramel-sweet character. Malt flavours and complexity tend to increase with beer colour. Low to moderate esters and alcohol flavours. Medium-low hop bitterness provides some support, but the balance is always tilted toward the malt. Darker versions will have more of an initial malty-sweet impression than paler versions, but all should be malty in the palate and finish. The malt flavour lasts into the finish,

which is medium-dry to dry, never cloying. Low to no hop flavour (spicy, peppery, or herbal), although paler versions can have slightly higher levels of herbal or spicy hop flavour (which can also come from the yeast). Smooth, well-lagered character, even if made with ale yeast. Aftertaste of malt (character appropriate for the colour) with some dryness and light alcohol.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium to medium-light (lean) body, often with a smooth, creamy-silky character. Moderate to high carbonation. Moderate alcohol warming, but should be very smooth and never hot.

**Comments:** Three main variations are included in the style: the **brown** (*brune*), the **blond** (*blonde*), and the **amber** (*ambrée*). The darker versions will have more malt character, while the paler versions can have more hops (but still are malt-focused beers). A related style is Bière de Mars, which is brewed in March (Mars) for present use and will not age as well. Attenuation rates are in the 80-85% range. Some fuller-bodied examples exist, but these are somewhat rare. Age and oxidation in imports often increases fruitiness, caramel flavours, and adds corked and musty notes; these are all signs of mishandling, not characteristic elements of the style.

**History:** Name literally means “beer which has been kept or lagered.” A traditional artisanal ale from Northern France brewed in early spring and kept in cold cellars for consumption in warmer weather. It is now brewed year-round.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** The “cellar” character commonly described in literature is more of a feature of mishandled commercial exports than fresh, authentic products. The somewhat moldy character comes from the corks and/or oxidation in commercial versions, and is incorrectly identified as “musty” or “cellar-like.” Base malts vary by beer colour, but usually include pale, Vienna and Munich types. Darker versions will have richer malt complexity and sweetness from crystal-type malts. Sugar may be used to add flavour and aid in the dry finish. Lager or ale yeast fermented at cool ale temperatures, followed by long cold conditioning. Floral, herbal or spicy continental hops.

**Style Comparison:** Related to the Belgian Saison style, the main difference is that the Bière de Garde is rounder, richer, malt-focused, and lacks the spicy, bitter character of a Saison.

**Entry Instructions:** Entrant **must** specify *blond*, *amber*, or *brown* bière de garde. If no colour is specified, the judge should attempt to judge based on initial observation, expecting a malt flavour and balance that matches the colour.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.060 – 1.080  
IBUs: 18 – 28 FG: 1.008 – 1.016  
SRM: 6 – 19 ABV: 6.0 – 8.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Ch’Ti (brown and blond), Jenlain (amber and blond), La Choulette (all 3 versions), St. Amand (brown), Saint Sylvestre 3 Monts (blond), Russian River Perdition

**Tags:** high-strength, pale-colour, amber-colour, any-fermentation, lagered, western-europe, traditional-style, amber-ale-family, malty

### 15.3. TRAPPIST SINGLE

**Overall Impression:** A pale, bitter, highly attenuated and well carbonated Trappist ale, showing a fruity-spicy Trappist yeast character, a spicy-floral hop profile, and a soft, supportive grainy-sweet malt palate.

**Aroma:** Medium-low to medium-high Trappist yeast character, showing a fruity-spicy character along with medium-low to medium spicy or floral hops, occasionally enhanced by light herbal/citrusy spice additions. Low to medium-low grainy-sweet malt backdrop, which may have a light honey or sugar quality. Fruit expression can vary widely (citrus, pome fruit, stone fruit). Light spicy, yeast-driven phenolics found in the best examples. Bubblegum inappropriate.

**Appearance:** Pale yellow to medium gold colour. Generally good clarity, with a moderate-sized, persistent, billowy white head with characteristic lacing.

**Flavour:** Fruity, hoppy, bitter, and dry. Initial malty-sweet impression, with a grainy-sweet soft malt palate, and a dry, hoppy finish. The malt may have a light honeyed biscuit or cracker impression. Moderate spicy or floral hop flavour. Esters can be citrus (orange, lemon, grapefruit), pome fruit (apple, pear), or stone fruit (apricot, peach). Light to moderate spicy, peppery, or clove phenolics. Bitterness rises towards the crisp, dry finish, with an aftertaste of light malt, moderate hops and yeast character.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body. Smooth. Medium-high to high carbonation, can be somewhat prickly. Should not have noticeable alcohol warmth.

**Comments:** Often not labeled or available outside the monastery, or infrequently brewed. Might also be called monk's beer or Brother's beer. Highly attenuated, generally 85% or higher.

**History:** While Trappist breweries have a tradition of brewing a lower-strength beer as a monk's daily ration, the bitter, pale beer this style describes is a relatively modern invention reflecting current tastes. Westvleteren first brewed theirs in 1999, but replaced older lower-gravity products.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pilsner malt, Belgian Trappist yeast, Saazer-type hops.

**Style Comparison:** Like a top-fermented Belgian/Trappist interpretation of a German Pils – pale, hoppy, and well-attenuated, but showing prototypical Belgian yeast character. Has less sweetness, higher attenuation, less character malt, and is more hop-centered than a Belgian Pale Ale. More like a much smaller, more highly hopped tripel than a smaller Belgian Blond Ale.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.044 – 1.054  
IBUs: 25 – 45 FG: 1.004 – 1.010  
SRM: 3 – 5 ABV: 4.8 – 6.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Achel 5° Blond, St. Bernardus

Extra 4, Westmalle Extra, Westvleteren Blond

**Tags:** standard-strength, pale-colour, top-fermenting, western-europe, craft-style, bitter, hoppy

### 15.4. BELGIAN BLOND ALE

**Overall Impression:** A moderate-strength golden ale that has a subtle fruity-spicy Belgian yeast complexity, slightly malty-sweet flavour, and dry finish.

**Aroma:** Light earthy or spicy hop nose, along with a lightly grainy-sweet malt character. Shows a subtle yeast character that may include spicy phenolics, perfumy or honey-like alcohol, or yeasty, fruity esters (commonly orange-like or lemony). Light sweetness that may have a slightly sugar-like character. Subtle yet complex.

**Appearance:** Light to deep gold colour. Generally very clear. Large, dense, and creamy white to off-white head. Good head retention with Belgian lace.

**Flavour:** Smooth, light to moderate grainy-sweet malt flavour initially, but finishes medium-dry to dry with some smooth alcohol becoming evident in the aftertaste. Medium hop and alcohol bitterness to balance. Light hop flavour, can be spicy or earthy. Very soft yeast character (esters and alcohols, which are sometimes perfumy or orange/lemon-like). Light spicy phenolics optional. Some lightly caramelized sugar or honey-like sweetness on palate.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-high to high carbonation, can give mouth-filling bubbly sensation. Medium body. Light to moderate alcohol warmth, but smooth. Can be somewhat creamy.

**Comments:** Often has an almost lager-like character, which gives it a cleaner profile in comparison to many other Belgian styles. Belgians use the term *Blond*, while the French spell it *Blonde*. Most commercial examples are in the 6.5 – 7% ABV range. Many Trappist or artisanal Belgian beers are called *Blond* but those are not representative of this style.

**History:** Relatively recent development to further appeal to European Pils drinkers, becoming more popular as it is heavily marketed and widely distributed.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Belgian Pils malt, aromatic malts, sugar, Belgian yeast strains that produce complex alcohol, phenolics and perfumy esters, Saazer-type, Styrian Goldings, or East Kent Goldings hops. Spices are not traditionally used, although the ingredients and fermentation by-products may give an impression of spicing (often reminiscent of oranges or lemons). If spices are present, should be a background character only.

**Style Comparison:** Similar strength as a Dubbel, similar character as a Belgian Strong Golden Ale or Tripel, although a bit sweeter and not as bitter.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.062 – 1.075  
IBUs: 15 – 30 FG: 1.008 – 1.018  
SRM: 4 – 7 ABV: 6.0 – 7.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Affligem Blond, Grimbergen Blond, La Trappe Blond, Leffe Blond, Val-Dieu Blond

**Tags:** high-strength, pale-colour, top-fermented, western-europe, traditional-style, balanced

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

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### 15.5. BELGIAN DUBBEL

**Overall Impression:** A deep reddish-copper, moderately strong, malty, complex Trappist ale with rich malty flavours, dark or dried fruit esters, and light alcohol blended together in a malty presentation that still finishes fairly dry.

**Aroma:** Complex, rich-sweet malty aroma, possibly with hints of chocolate, caramel and/or toast (but never roasted or burnt aromas). Moderate fruity esters (usually including raisins and plums, sometimes also dried cherries). Esters sometimes include banana or apple. Spicy phenols and higher alcohols are common (may include light clove and spice, peppery, rose-like and/or perfumy notes). Spicy qualities can be moderate to very low. Alcohol, if present, is soft and never hot or solventy. Low to no spicy, herbal, or floral hop aroma, typically absent. The malt is most prominent in the balance with esters and a touch of alcohol in support, blending together for a harmonious presentation.

**Appearance:** Dark amber to copper in colour, with an attractive reddish depth of colour. Generally clear. Large, dense, and long-lasting creamy off-white head.

**Flavour:** Similar qualities as aroma. Rich, complex medium to medium-full rich-sweet malt flavour on the palate yet finishes moderately dry. Complex malt, ester, alcohol and phenol interplay (raisiny flavours are common; dried fruit flavours are welcome; clove or pepper spiciness is optional). Balance is always toward the malt. Medium-low bitterness that doesn't persist into the aftertaste. Low spicy, floral, or herbal hop flavour is optional and not usually present.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-full body. Medium-high carbonation, which can influence the perception of body. Low alcohol warmth. Smooth, never hot or solventy.

**Comments:** Most commercial examples are in the 6.5 – 7% ABV range. Traditionally bottle-conditioned (or *refermented in the bottle*).

**History:** Originated at monasteries in the Middle Ages, and was revived in the mid-1800s after the Napoleonic era.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Belgian yeast strains prone to production of higher alcohols, esters, and phenolics are commonly used. Impression of complex grain bill, although traditional versions are typically Belgian Pils malt with caramelized sugar syrup or other unrefined sugars providing much of the character. Saazer-type, English-type or Styrian Goldings hops commonly used. No spices are traditionally used, although restrained use is allowable (background strength only).

**Style Comparison:** Should not be as malty as a bock and should not have crystal malt-type sweetness. Similar in strength and balance as a Belgian Blond, but with a richer malt and ester profile. Less strong and intense as a Belgian Dark Strong Ale.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.062 – 1.075  
IBUs: 15 – 25 FG: 1.008 – 1.018  
SRM: 10 – 17 ABV: 6.0 – 7.6%

**Commercial Examples:** Affligem Dubbel, Chimay Première, Corsendonk Pater, Grimbergen Double, La Trappe Dubbel, St. Bernardus Pater 6, Trappistes Rochefort 6, Westmalle Dubbel

**Tags:** high-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, western-europe, traditional-style, malty

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### 15.6. BELGIAN TRIPEL

**Overall Impression:** A pale, somewhat spicy, dry, strong Trappist ale with a pleasant rounded malt flavour and firm bitterness. Quite aromatic, with spicy, fruity, and light alcohol notes combining with the supportive clean malt character to produce a surprisingly drinkable beverage considering the high alcohol level.

**Aroma:** Complex bouquet with moderate to significant spiciness, moderate fruity esters and low alcohol and hop aromas. Generous spicy, peppery, sometimes clove-like phenols. Esters are often reminiscent of citrus fruits such as oranges, but may sometimes have a slight banana character. A low yet distinctive spicy, floral, sometimes perfumy hop character is usually found. Alcohols are soft, spicy and low in intensity. The malt character is light, with a soft, slightly grainy-sweet or slightly honey-like impression. The best examples have a seamless, harmonious interplay between the yeast character, hops, malt, and alcohol.

**Appearance:** Deep yellow to deep gold in colour. Good clarity. Effervescent. Long-lasting, creamy, rocky, white head resulting in characteristic *Belgian lace* on the glass as it fades.

**Flavour:** Marriage of spicy, fruity and alcohol flavours supported by a soft, rounded grainy-sweet malt impression, occasionally with a very light honey note. Low to moderate phenols are peppery in character. Esters are reminiscent of citrus fruit such as orange or sometimes lemon, and are low to moderate. A low to moderate spicy hop character is usually found. Alcohols are soft, spicy, and low in intensity. Bitterness is typically medium to high from a combination of hop bitterness and yeast-produced phenolics. Substantial carbonation and bitterness lends a dry finish with a moderately bitter aftertaste with substantial spicy-fruity yeast character. The grainy-sweet malt flavour does not imply any residual sweetness.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body, although lighter than the substantial gravity would suggest. Highly carbonated. The alcohol content is deceptive, and has little to no obvious warming sensation. Always effervescent.

**Comments:** High in alcohol but does not taste strongly of alcohol. The best examples are sneaky, not obvious. High carbonation and attenuation helps to bring out the many flavours and to increase the perception of a dry finish. Most Trappist versions have at least 30 IBUs and are very dry. Traditionally bottle-conditioned (or *refermented in the bottle*).

**History:** Originally popularized by the Trappist monastery at Westmalle.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pilsner malt, typically with pale sugar adjuncts. Saazer-type hops

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

or Styrian Goldings are commonly used. Belgian yeast strains are used – those that produce fruity esters, spicy phenolics and higher alcohols – often aided by slightly warmer fermentation temperatures. Spice additions are generally not traditional, and if used, should be a background character only. Fairly soft water.

**Style Comparison:** May resemble a Belgian Golden Strong Ale but slightly darker and somewhat fuller-bodied, with more emphasis on phenolics and less on esters. Usually has a more rounded malt flavour but should never be sweet.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.075 – 1.085  
IBUs: 20 – 40 FG: 1.008 – 1.014  
SRM: 4.5 – 7 ABV: 7.5 – 9.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Affligem Tripel, Chimay Cinq Cents, La Rulles Tripel, La Trappe Tripel, St. Bernardus Tripel, Unibroue La Fin Du Monde, Val-Dieu Triple, Watou Tripel, Westmalle Tripel

**Tags:** high-strength, pale-colour, top-fermented, western-europe, traditional-style, bitter

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### 15.7. BELGIAN GOLDEN STRONG ALE

**Overall Impression:** A pale, complex, effervescent, strong Belgian-style ale that is highly attenuated and features fruity and hoppy notes in preference to phenolics.

**Aroma:** Complex with significant fruity esters, moderate spiciness and low to moderate alcohol and hop aromas. Esters are reminiscent of lighter fruits such as pears, oranges or apples. Moderate to moderately low spicy, peppery phenols. A low to moderate yet distinctive perfumy, floral hop character is often present. Alcohols are soft, spicy, perfumy and low-to-moderate in intensity. No hot alcohol or solventy aromas. The malt character is light and slightly grainy-sweet to nearly neutral.

**Appearance:** Yellow to medium gold in colour. Good clarity. Effervescent. Massive, long-lasting, rocky, often beady, white head resulting in characteristic Belgian lace on the glass as it fades.

**Flavour:** Marriage of fruity, spicy and alcohol flavours supported by a soft malt character. Esters are reminiscent of pears, oranges or apples. Low to moderately low phenols are peppery in character. A low to moderate spicy hop character is often present. Alcohols are soft and spicy, and are low-to-moderate in intensity. Bitterness is typically medium to high from a combination of hop bitterness and yeast-produced phenolics.

Substantial carbonation and bitterness leads to a dry finish with a low to moderately bitter aftertaste.

**Mouthfeel:** Very highly carbonated; effervescent. Light to medium body, although lighter than the substantial gravity would suggest. Smooth but noticeable alcohol warmth. No hot alcohol or solventy character.

**Comments:** References to the devil are included in the names of many commercial examples of this style, referring to their potent alcoholic strength and as a tribute to the original example (Duvel). The best examples are complex and delicate. High carbonation helps to bring out the many flavours

and to increase the perception of a dry finish. Traditionally bottle-conditioned (or *referred in the bottle*).

**History:** Originally developed by the Moortgat brewery after WWI as a response to the growing popularity of Pilsner beers.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pilsner malt with substantial sugary adjuncts. Saazer-type hops or Styrian Goldings are commonly used. Belgian yeast strains are used – those that produce fruity esters, spicy phenolics and higher alcohols – often aided by slightly warmer fermentation temperatures. Fairly soft water. Spicing is not traditional; if present, should be a background character only.

**Style Comparison:** Strongly resembles a Tripel, but may be even paler, lighter-bodied and even crisper and drier; the drier finish and lighter body also serves to make the assertive hopping and yeast character more prominent. Tends to use yeast that favor ester development (particularly pome fruit) over spiciness in the balance.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.070 – 1.095  
IBUs: 22 – 35 FG: 1.005 – 1.016  
SRM: 3 – 6 ABV: 7.5 – 10.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Brigand, Delirium Tremens, Dulle Teve, Duvel, Judas, Lucifer, Piraat, Russian River Damnation

**Tags:** very-high-strength, pale-colour, top-fermented, western-europe, traditional-style, bitter

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### 15.8. BELGIAN DARK STRONG ALE

**Overall Impression:** A dark, complex, very strong Belgian ale with a delicious blend of malt richness, dark fruit flavours, and spicy elements. Complex, rich, smooth and dangerous.

**Aroma:** Complex, with a rich-sweet malty presence, significant esters and alcohol, and an optional light to moderate spiciness. The malt is rich and strong, and can have a deep bready-toasty quality often with a deep caramel complexity. The fruity esters are strong to moderately low, and can contain raisin, plum, dried cherry, fig or prune notes. Spicy phenols may be present, but usually have a peppery quality not clove-like; light vanilla is possible. Alcohols are soft, spicy, perfumy and/or rose-like, and are low to moderate in intensity. Hops are not usually present (but a very low spicy, floral, or herbal hop aroma is acceptable). No dark/roast malt aroma. No hot alcohols or solventy aromas.

**Appearance:** Deep amber to deep coppery-brown in colour (*dark* in this context implies *more deeply coloured than golden*). Huge, dense, moussy, persistent cream- to light tan-coloured head. Can be clear to somewhat hazy.

**Flavour:** Similar to aroma (same malt, ester, phenol, alcohol, and hop comments apply to flavour as well). Moderately malty-rich on the palate, which can have a sweet impression if bitterness is low. Usually moderately dry to dry finish, although may be up to moderately sweet. Medium-low to moderate bitterness; alcohol provides some of the balance to the malt. Generally malty-rich balance,

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

but can be fairly even with bitterness. The complex and varied flavours should blend smoothly and harmoniously. The finish should not be heavy or syrupy.

**Mouthfeel:** High carbonation but not sharp. Smooth but noticeable alcohol warmth. Body can range from medium-light to medium-full and creamy. Most are medium-bodied.

**Comments:** Authentic Trappist versions tend to be drier (Belgians would say *more digestible*) than Abbey versions, which can be rather sweet and full-bodied. Traditionally bottle-conditioned (or *refermented in the bottle*). Sometimes known as a Trappist Quadruple, most are simply known by their strength or colour designation.

**History:** Most versions are unique in character reflecting characteristics of individual breweries, produced in limited quantities and often highly sought-after.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Belgian yeast strains prone to production of higher alcohols, esters, and sometimes phenolics are commonly

used. Impression of a complex grain bill, although many traditional versions are quite simple, with caramelized sugar syrup or unrefined sugars and yeast providing much of the complexity. Saazer-type, English-type or Styrian Goldings hops commonly used. Spices generally not used; if used, keep subtle and in the background.

**Style Comparison:** Like a larger dubbel, with a fuller body and increased malt richness. Not as bitter or hoppy as a tripel, but of similar strength.

**Vital Statistics:**

OG:	1.075 – 1.110
IBUs:	20 – 35
SRM:	12 – 22
FG:	1.010 – 1.024
ABV:	8.0 – 12.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Achel Extra Brune, Boulevard The Sixth Glass, Chimay Grande Réserve, Gouden Carolus Grand Cru of the Emperor, Rochefort 8 & 10, St. Bernardus Abt 12, Westvleteren 12

**Tags:** very-high-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, western-europe, traditional-style, malty

## 16. STRONG ALES & LAGERS

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### 16.1. WEE HEAVY

**Overall Impression:** Rich, malty, dextrinous, and usually caramel-sweet, these beers can give an impression that is suggestive of a dessert. Complex secondary malt and alcohol flavours prevent a one-dimensional quality. Strength and maltiness can vary, but should not be cloying or syrupy.

**Aroma:** Deeply malty, with a strong caramel component. Lightly smoky secondary aromas may also be present, adding complexity; peat smoke is inappropriate. Diacetyl should be low to none. Low to moderate esters and alcohol are often present in stronger versions. Hops are very low to none, and can be slightly earthy or floral.

**Appearance:** Light copper to dark brown colour, often with deep ruby highlights. Clear. Usually has a large tan head, which may not persist. Legs may be evident in stronger versions.

**Flavour:** Richly malty with significant caramel (particularly in stronger versions). Hints of roasted malt may be present (sometimes perceived as a faint smoke character), as may some nutty character, all of which may last into the finish. Peat smoke is inappropriate. Hop flavours and bitterness are low to medium-low, so the malt presence should dominate the balance. Diacetyl should be low to none. Low to moderate esters and alcohol are usually present. Esters may suggest plums, raisins or dried fruit. The palate is usually full and sweet, but the finish may be sweet to medium-dry, sometimes with a light roasty-grainy note.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-full to full-bodied, with some versions (but not all) having a thick, chewy viscosity. A smooth, alcoholic warmth is usually present and is quite welcome since it balances the malty sweetness. Moderate carbonation.

**Comments:** Also known as “strong Scotch ale.” The term “wee heavy” means “small strong” and traces to the beer that made the term famous, Fowler’s Wee Heavy, a 12 Guinea Ale. Historically, the strongest beer from a Scottish ale parti-gyle.

**History:** More related to historical brews than modern lower-strength Scottish ales, these beers have their roots in the strong ales of the 1700s and 1800s, although formulations and methods have changed. A premium product, often produced for export. Modern versions have lower starting and finishing gravities than their historical ancestors.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Well-modified pale malt, with roasted barley for colour. May use some crystal malt for colour adjustment. Slight smoke character may be present in some versions, but derives from roasted grains or from the boil. Peated malt is absolutely not traditional.

**Style Comparison:** Somewhat similar to an English Barleywine.

**Vital Statistics:**  
 IBUs: 17 – 35  
 SRM: 14 – 25

OG: 1.070 – 1.130  
 FG: 1.018 – 1.040  
 ABV: 6.5 – 10.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Belhaven Wee Heavy, Gordon Highland Scotch Ale, Inveralmond Blackfriar, McEwan’s Scotch Ale, Orkney Skull Splitter, Traquair House Ale

**Tags:** high-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, strong-ale-family, malty

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### 16.2. DOPPELBOCK

**Overall Impression:** A strong, rich, and very malty German lager that can have both pale and dark variants. The darker versions have more richly-developed, deeper malt flavours, while the paler versions have slightly more hops and dryness.

**Aroma:** Very strong maltiness. Darker versions will have significant Maillard products and often some toasty aromas. A light caramel aroma is acceptable. Lighter versions will have a strong malt presence with some Maillard products and toasty notes. Virtually no hop aroma, although a light noble hop aroma is acceptable in pale versions. A moderately low malt-derived dark fruit character may be present (but is optional) in dark versions. A very slight chocolate-like aroma may be present in darker versions, but no roasted or burned aromatics should ever be present. Moderate alcohol aroma may be present.

**Appearance:** Deep gold to dark brown in colour. Darker versions often have ruby highlights. Lagering should provide good clarity. Large, creamy, persistent head (colour varies with base style: white for pale versions, off-white for dark varieties). Stronger versions might have impaired head retention, and can display noticeable legs.

**Flavour:** Very rich and malty. Darker versions will have significant Maillard products and often some toasty flavours. Lighter versions will have a strong malt flavour with some Maillard products and toasty notes. A very slight chocolate flavour is optional in darker versions, but should never be perceived as roasty or burnt. Clean lager character. A moderately low malt-derived dark fruit character is optional in darker versions. Invariably there will be an impression of alcoholic strength, but this should be smooth and warming rather than harsh or burning. Little to no hop flavour (more is acceptable in pale versions). Hop bitterness varies from moderate to moderately low but always allows malt to dominate the flavour. Most versions are fairly malty-sweet, but should have an impression of attenuation. The sweetness comes from low hopping, not from incomplete fermentation. Paler versions generally have a drier finish.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-full to full body. Moderate to moderately-low carbonation. Very smooth without harshness, astringency. A light alcohol warmth may be noted, but it should never burn.

**Comments:** Most versions are dark coloured and may display the caramelizing and Maillard products

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

of decoction mashing, but excellent pale versions also exist. The pale versions will not have the same richness and darker malt flavours of the dark versions, and may be a bit drier, hoppier and more bitter. While most traditional examples are in the lower end of the ranges cited, the style can be considered to have no upper limit for gravity, alcohol and bitterness (thus providing a home for very strong lagers).

**History:** A Bavarian specialty first brewed in Munich by the monks of St. Francis of Paula. Historical versions were less well-attenuated than modern interpretations, with consequently higher sweetness and lower alcohol levels (and hence was considered “liquid bread” by the monks). The term “doppel (double) bock” was coined by Munich consumers. Many commercial doppelbocks have names ending in “-ator,” either as a tribute to the prototypical Salvator or to take advantage of the beer’s popularity. Traditionally dark brown in colour; paler examples are a more recent development.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Pils and/or Vienna malt for pale versions (with some Munich), Munich and Vienna malts for darker ones and occasionally a tiny bit of darker colour malts (such as Carafo). Saazer-type hops. Clean lager yeast. Decoction mashing is traditional.

**Style Comparison:** A stronger, richer, more full-bodied version of either a Dunkles Bock or a Helles Bock. Pale versions will show higher attenuation and less dark fruity character than the darker versions.

**Entry Instructions:** The entrant will specify whether the entry is a **pale** or a **dark** variant.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.072 – 1.112  
IBUs: 16 – 26 FG: 1.016 – 1.024  
SRM: 6 – 25 ABV: 7.0 – 10.0%

**Commercial Examples: Dark Versions** – Andechser Doppelbock Dunkel, Ayinger Celebrator, Paulaner Salvator, Spaten Optimator, Tröegs Troegenator, Weihenstephaner Korbinian.; **Pale Versions** – Eggenberg Urbock 23°, ECU 28, Plank Bavarian Heller Doppelbock

**Tags:** high-strength, amber-colour, pale-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, bock-family, malty

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### 16.3. EISBOCK

**Overall Impression:** A strong, full-bodied, rich, and malty dark German lager often with a viscous quality and strong flavours. Even though flavours are concentrated, the alcohol should be smooth and warming, not burning.

**Aroma:** Dominated by a balance of rich, intense malt and a definite alcohol presence. No hop aroma. May have significant malt-derived dark fruit esters. Alcohol aromas should not be harsh or solventy.

**Appearance:** Deep copper to dark brown in colour, often with attractive ruby highlights. Lagering should provide good clarity. Head retention may be moderate to poor. Off-white to

deep ivory coloured head. Pronounced legs are often evident.

**Flavour:** Rich, sweet malt balanced by a significant alcohol presence. The malt can have Maillard products, toasty qualities, some caramel, and occasionally a slight chocolate flavour. No hop flavour. Hop bitterness just offsets the malt sweetness enough to avoid a cloying character. May have significant malt-derived dark fruit esters. The alcohol should be smooth, not harsh or hot, and should help the hop bitterness balance the strong malt presence. The finish should be of malt and alcohol, and can have a certain dryness from the alcohol. It should not be sticky, syrupy or cloyingly sweet. Clean lager character.

**Mouthfeel:** Full to very full-bodied. Low carbonation. Significant alcohol warmth without sharp hotness. Very smooth without harsh edges from alcohol, bitterness, fusels, or other concentrated flavours.

**Comments:** Extended lagering is often needed post-freezing to smooth the alcohol and enhance the malt and alcohol balance. Pronounced “ICE-bock.”

**History:** A traditional Kulmbach specialty brewed by freezing a doppelbock and removing the ice to concentrate the flavour and alcohol content (as well as any defects).

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Same as doppelbock. Commercial eisbocks are generally concentrated anywhere from 7% to 33% (by volume).

**Style Comparison:** Eisbocks are not simply stronger doppelbocks; the name refers to the process of freezing and concentrating the beer and is *not* a statement on alcohol; some doppelbocks are stronger than Eisbocks. Not as thick, rich, or sweet as a Wheatwine.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.078 – 1.120  
IBUs: 25 – 35 FG: 1.020 – 1.035  
SRM: 18 – 30 ABV: 9.0 – 14.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Kulmbacher Eisbock

**Tags:** very-high-strength, amber-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, bock-family, malty

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### 16.4. BRITISH STRONG ALE

**Overall Impression:** An ale of respectable alcoholic strength, traditionally bottled-conditioned and cellared. Can have a wide range of interpretations, but most will have varying degrees of malty richness, late hops and bitterness, fruity esters, and alcohol warmth. Judges should allow for a significant range in character, as long as the beer is within the alcohol strength range and has an interesting ‘British’ character, it likely fits the style. The malt and adjunct flavours and intensity can vary widely, but any combination should result in an agreeable palate experience.

**Aroma:** Malty-sweet with fruity esters, often with a complex blend of dried-fruit, caramel, nuts, toffee, and/or other specialty malt aromas. Some alcohol notes are acceptable, but shouldn’t be hot or solventy. Hop aromas can vary widely, but typically



## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

have earthy, resinous, fruity, and/or floral notes. The balance can vary widely, but most examples will have a blend of malt, fruit, hops, and alcohol in varying intensities.

**Appearance:** Deep gold to dark reddish-brown colour (many are fairly dark). Generally clear, although darker versions may be almost opaque. Moderate to low cream- to light tan-coloured head; average retention.

**Flavour:** Medium to high malt character often rich with nutty, toffee, or caramel flavours. Light chocolate notes are sometimes found in darker beers. May have interesting flavour complexity from brewing sugars. Balance is often malty, but may be well hopped, which affects the impression of maltiness. Moderate fruity esters are common, often with a dark fruit or dried fruit character. The finish may vary from medium dry to somewhat sweet. Alcoholic strength should be evident, though not overwhelming. Diacetyl low to none, and is generally not desirable.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium to full, chewy body. Alcohol warmth is often evident and always welcome. Low to moderate carbonation. Smooth texture.

**Comments:** As an entry category more than a style, the strength and character of examples can vary widely. Fits in the style space between normal gravity beers (strong bitters, brown ales, English porters) and barleywines. Can include pale malty-hoppy beers, English winter warmers, strong dark milds, smaller Burton ales, and other unique beers in the general gravity range that don't fit other categories. Traditionally a bottle-conditioned product suitable for cellaring.

**History:** The heritage varies since this category generally reflects a grouping of unrelated minor styles with limited production. Some are historical recreations while others are modern. Some directly descend from older styles such as Burton ales, while others maintain a historical connection with older beers. As a grouping, the notion is relatively modern since beers of this strength category would not have been abnormal in past centuries. Do not use this category grouping to infer historical relationships between examples; this is almost a modern British specialty category where the 'special' attribute is alcohol level.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Grists vary, often based on pale malt with caramel and specialty malts. Some darker examples suggest that dark malts (e.g., chocolate, black malt) may be appropriate, though sparingly so as to avoid an overly roasted character. Sugary adjuncts are common, as are starchy adjuncts (maize, flaked barley, wheat). Finishing hops are traditionally English.

**Style Comparison:** Significant overlap in gravity with old ales, but not having a stale or aged character. A wide range of interpretations is possible. Should not be as rich or strong as an English Barleywine. Stronger than the stronger everyday beers (strong bitters, brown ales, porters). More specialty malt and/or sugar character than American Strong Ales.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.055 – 1.080  
IBUs: 30 – 60 FG: 1.015 – 1.022

SRM: 8 – 22

ABV: 5.5 – 8.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Fuller's 1845, Harvey's Elizabethan Ale, J.W. Lees Manchester Star, Samuel Smith's Winter Welcome, Young's Winter Warmer

**Tags:** high-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, strong-ale-family, malty

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### 16.5. OLD ALE

**Overall Impression:** An ale of moderate to fairly significant alcoholic strength, bigger than standard beers, though usually not as strong or rich as barleywine. Often tilted towards a maltier balance. "It should be a warming beer of the type that is best drunk in half pints by a warm fire on a cold winter's night" – Michael Jackson.

**Aroma:** Malty-sweet with fruity esters, often with a complex blend of dried-fruit, vinous, caramelly, molasses, nutty, toffee, light treacle, and/or other specialty malt aromas. Some alcohol and oxidative notes are acceptable, akin to those found in Sherry or Port. Hop aromas not usually present due to extended aging.

**Appearance:** Light amber to very dark reddish-brown colour (most are fairly dark). Age and oxidation may darken the beer further. May be almost opaque (if not, should be clear). Moderate to low cream- to light tan-coloured head; may be adversely affected by alcohol and age.

**Flavour:** Medium to high malt character with a luscious malt complexity, often with nutty, caramelly and/or molasses-like flavours. Light chocolate or roasted malt flavours are optional, but should never be prominent. Balance is often malty-sweet, but may be well hopped (the impression of bitterness often depends on amount of aging). Moderate to high fruity esters are common, and may take on a dried-fruit or vinous character. The finish may vary from dry to somewhat sweet. Extended aging may contribute oxidative flavours similar to a fine old Sherry, Port or Madeira. Alcoholic strength should be evident, though not overwhelming. Diacetyl low to none. Some wood-aged or blended versions may have a lactic or Brettanomyces character; but this is optional and should not be too strong. Any acidity or tannin from age should be well-integrated and contribute to complexity in the flavour profile, not be a dominant experience.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium to full, chewy body, although older examples may be lower in body due to continued attenuation during conditioning. Alcohol warmth is often evident and always welcome. Low to moderate carbonation, depending on age and conditioning. Light acidity may be present, as well as some tannin if wood-aged; both are optional.

**Comments:** Strength and character varies widely. The predominant defining quality for this style is the impression of age, which can manifest itself in different ways (complexity, lactic, Brett, oxidation, leather, vinous qualities, etc.). Even if these qualities are otherwise faults, if the resulting character of the beer is still pleasantly drinkable and complex, then those characteristics are acceptable.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

In no way should those allowable characteristics be interpreted as making an undrinkably off beer as somehow in style. Old Peculier is a fairly unique type of beer that is quite different than other Old Ales.

**History:** Historically, an aged ale used as stock ales for blending or enjoyed at full strength (stale or stock refers to beers that were aged or stored for a significant period of time). There are at least two definite types in Britain today, weaker draught ones that are similar aged milds of around 4.5%, and stronger ones that are often 6-8% or more.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Composition varies, although generally similar to British Strong Ales. The age character is the biggest driver of the final style profile, which is more handling than brewing. May be aged in wood, but should not have a strong wood character.

**Style Comparison:** Roughly overlapping the British Strong Ale and the lower end of the English Barleywine styles, but always having an aged quality. The distinction between an Old Ale and a Barleywine is somewhat arbitrary above 7% ABV, and generally means having a more significant aged quality (particularly from wood). Barleywines tend to develop more of a 'mature' quality, while Old Ales can show more of the barrel qualities (lactic, Brett, vinous, etc.).

**Vital Statistics:**

OG:	1.055 – 1.088
IBUs:	30 – 60
FG:	1.015 – 1.022
SRM:	10 – 22
ABV:	5.5 – 9.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Burton Bridge Olde Expensive, Gale's Prize Old Ale, Greene King Strong Suffolk Ale, Marston Owd Roger, Theakston Old Peculier

**Tags:** high-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, strong-ale-family, malty, aged

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### 16.6. AMERICAN STRONG ALE

**Overall Impression:** A strong, full-flavoured American ale that challenges and rewards the palate with full malty and hoppy flavours and substantial bitterness. The flavours are bold but complementary, and are stronger and richer than average-strength pale and amber American ales.

**Aroma:** Medium to high hop aroma, most often presenting citrusy or resinous notes although characteristics associated with other American or New World varieties may be found (tropical, stone fruit, melon, etc.). Moderate to bold maltiness supports hop profile, with medium to dark caramel a common presence, breadly or toasty possible and background notes of light roast and/or chocolate noticeable in some examples. Generally exhibits clean to moderately fruity ester profile. Moderate alcohol aromatics may be noticeable, but should not be hot, harsh, or solventy.

**Appearance:** Medium amber to deep copper or light brown. Moderate-low to medium-sized off-white to light tan head; may have low head retention. Good clarity. Alcohol level and viscosity may present "legs" when glass is swirled.

**Flavour:** Medium to high dextrinous malt with a full range of caramel, toffee, dark fruit flavours. Low to medium toasty, breadly, or Maillard-rich malty flavours are optional, and can add complexity. Medium-high to high hop bitterness. The malt gives a medium to high sweet impression on the palate, although the finish may be slightly sweet to somewhat dry. Moderate to high hop flavour. Low to moderate fruity esters. The hop flavours are similar to the aroma (citrusy, resinous, tropical, stone fruit, melon, etc.). Alcohol presence may be noticeable, but sharp or solventy alcohol flavours are undesirable. Roasted malt flavours are allowable but should be a background note; burnt malt flavours are inappropriate. While strongly malty on the palate, the finish should seem bitter to bittersweet. Should not be syrupy and under-attenuated. The aftertaste typically has malt, hops, and alcohol noticeable.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium to full body. An alcohol warmth may be present, but not be excessively hot. Any astringency present should be attributable to bold hop bitterness and should not be objectionable on the palate. Medium-low to medium carbonation.

**Comments:** A fairly broad style that can describe beers labeled in various ways, including modern Double/Imperial Red/Amber Ales and other strong, malty-but-hoppy beers that aren't quite in the Barleywine class. Diverse enough to include what may be viewed as a strong American Amber Ale with room for more interpretations of other "Imperial" versions of lower gravity American Ale styles. Many "East Coast" type IPAs might fit better in this category if they have considerable crystal malt or otherwise more of a malty-sweet finish.

**History:** While modern craft versions were developed as "imperial" strength versions of American amber or red ales, the style has much in common with historic American stock ales. Strong, malty beers were highly hopped to keep as provision beers prior to prohibition. There is no continuous legacy of brewing stock ales in this manner, but the resemblance is considerable. Stone Arrogant Bastard was born out of a batch of pale ale that was mistakenly made with excess ingredients, thus creating what may have been the prototype for the imperial amber/red ale. Great Lakes first brewed Nosferatu in the early 1990s and called it a stock ale, although they now call it an imperial red ale. So whether by direct historical inspiration or by accident, the style developed independently in the craft beer era and has subsequently become quite popular.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Well-modified pale malt as a base; some character malts would be appropriate, medium to dark crystal malts are typical. Citrusy or piney American hops are common, although any American or New World varieties can be used in quantity, provided they do not clash with the malt character. Generally uses an attenuative American yeast.

**Style Comparison:** Generally not as strong and as rich as an American Barleywine. More malt balanced than an American or Double IPA with more American hop intensity than an English Strong Ale style would tolerate.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.062 – 1.090  
IBUs: 50 – 100 FG: 1.014 – 1.024  
SRM: 7 – 19 ABV: 6.3 – 10.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Bear Republic Red Rocket Ale, Great Lakes Nosferatu, Terrapin Big Hoppy Monster, Port Brewing Shark Attack Double Red, Stone Arrogant Bastard,

**Tags:** high-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, north-america, craft-style, strong-ale-family, bitter, hoppy

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### 16.7. ENGLISH BARLEYWINE

**Overall Impression:** A showcase of malty richness and complex, intense flavours. Chewy and rich in body, with warming alcohol and a pleasant fruity or hoppy interest. When aged, it can take on port-like flavours. A wintertime sipper.

**Aroma:** Very rich and strongly malty, often with a caramel-like aroma in darker versions or a light toffee character in paler versions. May have moderate to strong fruitiness, often with a dark- or dried-fruit character, particularly in dark versions. The hop aroma may range from mild to assertive, and is typically floral, earthy, or marmalade-like. Alcohol aromatics may be low to moderate, but are soft and rounded. The intensity of these aromatics often subsides with age. The aroma may have a rich character including bready, toasty, toffee, and/or molasses notes. Aged versions may have a sherry-like quality, possibly vinous or port-like aromatics, and generally more muted malt aromas.

**Appearance:** Colour may range from rich gold to very dark amber or even dark brown (often has ruby highlights, but should not be opaque). Low to moderate off-white head; may have low head retention. May be cloudy with chill haze at cooler temperatures, but generally clears to good to brilliant clarity as it warms. The colour may appear to have great depth, as if viewed through a thick glass lens. High alcohol and viscosity may be visible in “legs” when beer is swirled in a glass.

**Flavour:** Strong, intense, complex, multi-layered malt flavours ranging from bready, toffee, and biscuity in paler versions through nutty, deep toast, dark caramel, and/or molasses in darker versions. Moderate to high malty sweetness on the palate, although the finish may be moderately sweet to moderately dry (depending on aging). Some oxidative or vinous flavours may be present, and often complex alcohol flavours should be evident. Moderate to fairly high fruitiness, often with a dark- or dried-fruit character. Hop bitterness may range from just enough for balance to a firm presence; balance therefore ranges from malty to somewhat bitter. Pale versions are often more bitter, better attenuated, and might show more hop character than darker versions; however, all versions are malty in the balance. Low to moderately high hop flavour, often floral, earthy, or marmalade-like English varieties.

**Mouthfeel:** Full-bodied and chewy, with a velvety, luscious texture (although the body may decline with long conditioning). A smooth warmth from aged alcohol should be present. Carbonation may be

low to moderate, depending on age and conditioning.

**Comments:** The richest and strongest of modern English Ales. The character of these ales can change significantly over time; both young and old versions should be appreciated for what they are. The malt profile can vary widely; not all examples will have all possible flavours or aromas. Paler varieties won't have the caramel and richer malt flavours, nor will they typically have the darker dried fruits – don't expect flavours and aromatics that are impossible from a beer of that colour. Typically written as “Barley Wine” in the UK, and “Barleywine” in the US.

**History:** Strong ales of various formulations have long been brewed in England, and were known by several names. The modern barleywine traces back to Bass No. 1, which was first called a barleywine in 1872. Barleywines were darker beers until Tennant (now Whitbread) first produced Gold Label, a gold-coloured barleywine in 1951. Usually the strongest ale offered by a brewery, and in recent years many commercial examples are now vintage-dated and offered as a limited-release winter seasonal specialty. The original barleywine style that inspired derivative variations in Belgium, the United States, and elsewhere in the world.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** High-quality, well-modified pale malt should form the backbone of the grist, with judicious amounts of caramel malts. Dark malts should be used with great restraint, if at all, as most of the colour arises from a lengthy boil. English hops such as Northdown, Target, East Kent Goldings and Fuggles are typical. Characterful British yeast.

**Style Comparison:** Although often a hoppy beer, the English Barleywine places less emphasis on hop character than the American Barleywine and features English hops. English versions can be darker, maltier, fruitier, and feature richer specialty malt flavours than American Barleywines. Has some overlap British Old Ale on the lower end, but generally does not have the vinous qualities of age; rather, it tends to display the mature, elegant signs of age.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.080 – 1.120  
IBUs: 35 – 70 FG: 1.018 – 1.030  
SRM: 8 – 22 ABV: 8.0 – 12.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Adnams Tally-Ho, Burton Bridge Thomas Sykes Old Ale, Coniston No. 9 Barley Wine, Fuller's Golden Pride, J.W. Lee's Vintage Harvest Ale, Robinson's Old Tom

**Tags:** very-high-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, british-isles, traditional-style, strong-ale-family, malty

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### 16.8. AMERICAN BARLEYWINE

**Overall Impression:** A well-hopped American interpretation of the richest and strongest of the English ales. The hop character should be evident throughout, but does not have to be unbalanced. The alcohol strength and hop bitterness often combine to leave a very long finish.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Aroma:** Hop character moderate to assertive and often showcases citrusy, fruity, or resinous New World varieties (although other varieties, such as floral, earthy or spicy English varieties or a blend of varieties, may be used). Rich maltiness, with a character that may be sweet, caramelly, bready, or fairly neutral. Low to moderately-strong fruity esters and alcohol aromatics. However, the intensity of aromatics often subsides with age. Hops tend to be nearly equal to malt in the aroma, with alcohol and esters far behind.

**Appearance:** Colour may range from light amber to medium copper; may rarely be as dark as light brown. Often has ruby highlights. Moderately-low to large off-white to light tan head; may have low head retention. May be cloudy with chill haze at cooler temperatures, but generally clears to good to brilliant clarity as it warms. The colour may appear to have great depth, as if viewed through a thick glass lens. High alcohol and viscosity may be visible in “legs” when beer is swirled in a glass.

**Flavour:** Strong, rich malt flavour with a noticeable hop flavour and bitterness in the balance. Moderately-low to moderately-high malty sweetness on the palate, although the finish may be somewhat sweet to quite dry (depending on aging). Hop bitterness may range from moderately strong to aggressive. While strongly malty, the balance should always seem bitter. Moderate to high hop flavour (any variety, but often showing a range of New World hop characteristics). Low to moderate fruity esters. Noticeable alcohol presence, but well-integrated. Flavours will smooth out and decline over time, but any oxidized character should be muted (and generally be masked by the hop character). May have some bready or caramelly malt flavours, but these should not be high; roasted or burnt malt flavours are inappropriate.

**Mouthfeel:** Full-bodied and chewy, with a velvety, luscious texture (although the body may decline with long conditioning). Alcohol warmth should be noticeable but smooth. Should not be syrupy and under-attenuated. Carbonation may be low to moderate, depending on age and conditioning.

**Comments:** Sometimes known as “Barley Wine” or “Barleywine style ale” (the latter due to legal requirements, not brewery preference).

**History:** Usually the strongest ale offered by a brewery, often associated with the winter or holiday season and vintage-dated. As with many American craft beer styles, derived from English examples but using American ingredients and featuring a much more forward hop profile. One of the first American craft beer versions was Anchor Old Foghorn, first brewed in 1975. Sierra Nevada Bigfoot, first brewed in 1983, set the standard for the hop-forward style of today. The story goes that when Sierra Nevada first sent Bigfoot out for lab analysis, the lab called and said, “your barleywine is too bitter” – to which Sierra Nevada replied, “thank you.”

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Well-modified pale malt should form the backbone of the grist. Some specialty or character malts may be used. Dark malts should be used with great restraint, if at all, as most of the colour arises from a lengthy boil. New World hops are common, although any varieties can be used in quantity. Generally uses an attenuative American ale yeast.

**Style Comparison:** The American version of the Barleywine tends to have a greater emphasis on hop bitterness, flavour and aroma than the English Barleywine, and often features American hop varieties. Typically paler than the darker English Barleywines (and lacking in the deeper malt flavours) but darker than the golden English Barleywines. Differs from a Double IPA in that the hops are not extreme, the malt is more forward, and the body is fuller and often richer. An American Barleywine typically has more residual sweetness than a Double IPA, which affects the overall drinkability (sipping vs. drinking).

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.080 – 1.120  
IBUs: 50 – 100 FG: 1.016 – 1.030  
SRM: 10 – 19 ABV: 8.0 – 12.0%

**Commercial Examples:** Avery Hog Heaven Barleywine, Anchor Old Foghorn, Great Divide Old Ruffian, Rogue Old Crustacean, Sierra Nevada Bigfoot, Victory Old Horizontal

**Tags:** very-high-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, north-america, craft-style, strong-ale-family, bitter, hoppy

## 17. FRUIT/SPICE/HERB/VEGETABLE BEER

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### 17.1. FRUIT BEER

*See the Introduction to Specialty-Type Beer section for additional comments, particularly on evaluating the balance of added ingredients with the base beer.*

**Overall Impression:** A harmonious marriage of fruit and beer, but still recognizable as a beer. The fruit character should be evident but in balance with the beer, not so forward as to suggest an artificial product.

**Aroma:** The distinctive aromatics associated with the declared fruit should be noticeable in the aroma; however, note that some fruit (e.g., raspberries, cherries) have stronger aromas and are more distinctive than others (e.g., blueberries, strawberries) – allow for a range of fruit character and intensity from subtle to aggressive. The additional aromatics should blend well with whatever aromatics are appropriate for the declared base beer style.

**Appearance:** Appearance should be appropriate for the declared base beer and declared fruit. For lighter-coloured beers with fruits that exhibit distinctive colours, the colour should be noticeable. Note that the colour of fruit in beer is often lighter than the flesh of the fruit itself and may take on slightly different shades. Fruit beers may have some haze or be clear, although haze is a generally undesirable. The head may take on some of the colour of the fruit.

**Flavour:** As with aroma, the distinctive flavour character associated with the declared fruit should be noticeable, and may range in intensity from subtle to aggressive. The balance of fruit with the underlying beer is vital, and the fruit character should not be so artificial and/or inappropriately overpowering as to suggest a ‘fruit juice drink.’ Hop bitterness, flavour, malt flavours, alcohol content, and fermentation by-products, such as esters, should be appropriate to the base beer and be harmonious and balanced with the distinctive fruit flavours present. Remember that fruit generally add flavour not sweetness to fruit beers. The sugar found in fruit is usually fully fermented and contributes to lighter flavours and a drier finish than might be expected for the declared base style. However, residual sweetness is not necessarily a negative characteristic unless it has a raw, unfermented quality.

**Mouthfeel:** Mouthfeel may vary depending on the base beer selected and as appropriate to that base beer. Body and carbonation levels should be appropriate to the declared base beer style. Fruit generally adds fermentables that tend to thin out the beer; the resulting beer may seem lighter than expected for the declared base style. Smaller and darker fruit have a tendency to add a tannic depth that should overwhelm the base beer.

**Comments:** Overall balance is the key to presenting a well-made fruit beer. The fruit should

complement the original style and not overwhelm it. The key attributes of the underlying style will be different with the addition of fruit; do not expect the base beer to taste the same as the unadulterated version. Judge the beer based on the pleasantness and balance of the resulting combination.

**Entry Instructions:** The entrant **must** specify a base style, but the declared style does not have to be a Classic Style. The entrant **must** specify the type(s) of fruit used. Soured fruit beers that aren't lambics should be entered in the *American Wild Ale* category.

**Vital Statistics:** OG, FG, IBUs, SRM and ABV will vary depending on the underlying base beer, but the fruit will often be reflected in the colour.

**Commercial Examples:** Bell's Cherry Stout, Dogfish Head Aprihop, Ebulum Elderberry Black Ale, Founders Rübæus

**Tags:** specialty-beer, fruit

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### 17.2. SPICE, HERB, OR VEGETABLE BEER

*See the Introduction to Specialty-Type Beer section for additional comments, particularly on evaluating the balance of added ingredients with the base beer.*

**Overall Impression:** A harmonious marriage of SHV and beer, but still recognizable as a beer. The SHV character should be evident but in balance with the beer, not so forward as to suggest an artificial product.

**Aroma:** The character of the particular spices, herbs and/or vegetables (SHV) should be noticeable in the aroma; however, note that some SHV (e.g., ginger, cinnamon) have stronger aromas and are more distinctive than others (e.g., some vegetables) – allow for a range of SHV character and intensity from subtle to aggressive. The individual character of each SHV(s) may not always be identifiable when used in combination. Hop aroma may be absent or balanced with SHV, depending on the style. The SHV(s) should add an extra complexity to the beer, but not be so prominent as to unbalance the resulting presentation.

**Appearance:** Appearance should be appropriate to the declared base beer and declared special ingredients. For lighter-coloured beers with spices, herbs or vegetables that exhibit distinctive colours, the colours may be noticeable in the beer and possibly the head. May have some haze or be clear. Head formation may be adversely affected by some ingredients, such as chocolate.

**Flavour:** As with aroma, the distinctive flavour character associated with the particular SHV(s) should be noticeable, and may range in intensity from subtle to aggressive. The individual character of each SHV(s) may not always be identifiable when used in combination. The balance of SHV with the

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

underlying beer is vital, and the SHV character should not be so artificial and/or overpowering as to overwhelm the beer. Hop bitterness, flavour, malt flavours, alcohol content, and fermentation by-products, such as esters, should be appropriate to the base beer and be harmonious and balanced with the distinctive SHV flavours present. Some SHV(s) are inherently bitter and may result in a beer more bitter than the declared base style.

**Mouthfeel:** Mouthfeel may vary depending on the base beer selected and as appropriate to that base beer. Body and carbonation levels should be appropriate to the base beer style being presented. Some SHV(s) may add additional body, although fermentable additions may thin out the beer. Some SHV(s) may add a bit of astringency, although a “raw” spice character is undesirable.

**Comments:** Overall balance is the key to presenting a well-made spice, herb or vegetable (SHV) beer. The SHV(s) should complement the original style and not overwhelm it. The key attributes of the declared base style will be different with the addition of spices, herbs and/or vegetables; do not expect the base beer to taste the same as the unadulterated version. Judge the beer based on the pleasantness and balance of the resulting combination. The individual character of each SHV may not always be individually identifiable when used in combination.

**Entry Instructions:** The entrant **must** specify a base style, but the declared style does not have to be a *Classic Style*. The entrant **must** specify the type of spices, herbs, or vegetables used, but individual ingredients do not need to be specified if a well-known spice blend is used (e.g., apple pie spice, curry powder, chili powder).

**Vital Statistics:** OG, FG, IBUs, SRM and ABV will vary depending on the underlying base beer.

**Commercial Examples:** Alesmith Speedway Stout, Bell’s Java Stout, Elysian Avatar Jasmine IPA, Founders Breakfast Stout, Rogue Chipotle Ale, Traquair Jacobite Ale, Young’s Double Chocolate Stout,

**Tags:** specialty-beer, spice

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### 17.3. AUTUMN SEASONAL BEER

**Autumn Seasonal Beers** are beers that suggest cool weather and the autumn harvest season, and may include pumpkin or other squashes, and the associated spices. See the Introduction to Specialty-Type Beer section for additional comments, particularly on evaluating the balance of added ingredients with the base beer.

**Overall Impression:** An amber to copper, spiced beer that often has a moderately rich body and slightly warming finish suggesting a good accompaniment for the cool fall season, and often evocative of Thanksgiving traditions.

**Aroma:** A wide range of aromatics is possible, although many examples are reminiscent of pumpkin pie, candied yams, or similar harvest or (US) Thanksgiving themed dishes. Any combination of aromatics that suggests the fall season is welcome. The base beer style often has a malty

profile that supports the balanced presentation of the aromatics from spices and possibly other special ingredients. Additional fermentables (e.g., brown sugar, honey, molasses, maple syrup, etc.) may lend their own unique aromatics. Hop aromatics are often absent, subdued, or slightly spicy. Alcohol aromatics may be found in some examples, but this character should be restrained. The overall aroma should be balanced and harmonious, and is often fairly complex and inviting.

**Appearance:** Generally medium amber to coppery-brown (lighter versions are more common). Usually clear, although darker versions may be virtually opaque. Some chill haze is acceptable. Generally has a well-formed head that is often off-white to tan. Some versions with squashes will take on an unusual hue for beer, with orange-like hints.

**Flavour:** Many interpretations are possible; allow for brewer creativity as long as the resulting product is balanced and provides some spice (and optionally, sugar and vegetable) presentation. Spices associated with the fall season are typical (as mentioned in the Aroma section). The spices and optional fermentables should be supportive and blend well with the base beer style. Rich, malty and/or sweet malt-based flavours are common, and may include caramel, toasty, biscuity, or nutty flavours (toasted bread crust or cooked pie crust flavours are welcome). May include distinctive flavours from specific fermentables (molasses, honey, brown sugar, etc.), although these elements are not required. Flavour derived from squash-based vegetables are often elusive. The wide range of special ingredients should be supportive and balanced, not so prominent as to overshadow the base beer. Bitterness and hop flavour are generally restrained so as to not interfere with the spices and special ingredients. Generally finishes rather full and satisfying, and often has some alcohol flavour. Roasted malt characteristics are typically absent.

**Mouthfeel:** A wide range of interpretations is possible. Body is generally medium to full, and a certain malty and/or vegetable-based chewiness is often present. Moderately low to moderately high carbonation is typical. Many examples will show some well-aged, warming alcohol content, but without being overly hot. The beers do not have to be overly strong to show some warming effects.

**Comments:** Overall balance is the key to presenting a well-made Autumn Seasonal beer. The special ingredients should complement the base beer and not overwhelm it. The brewer should recognize that some combinations of base beer styles and special ingredients work well together while others do not make for harmonious combinations. If the base beer is a classic style, the original style should come through in aroma and flavour. Whenever spices, herbs or additional fermentables are declared, each should be noticeable and distinctive in its own way (although not necessarily individually identifiable; balanced with the other ingredients is still critical) – in other words, the beer should read as a spiced beer but without having to tell that specific spices are present (even if declared).

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Spices are required, and often include those evocative of the fall or Thanksgiving season (e.g., allspice, nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, ginger) but any combination is possible and creativity is encouraged. Flavourful adjuncts are often used (e.g., molasses, invert sugar, brown sugar, honey, maple syrup, etc.). Squash-type or gourd-type vegetables (most frequently pumpkin) are often used.

**Entry Instructions:** The entrant **must** specify a base style, but the declared style does not have to be a *Classic Style*. The entrant **must** specify the type of spices, herbs, or vegetables used; individual ingredients do not need to be specified if a well-known blend of spices is used (e.g., pumpkin pie spice). The beer must contain spices, and may contain vegetables and/or sugars.

**Vital Statistics:** OG, FG, IBUs, SRM and ABV will vary depending on the underlying base beer. ABV is generally above 5%, and most examples are somewhat amber-copper in colour.

**Commercial Examples:** Dogfish Head Punkin Ale, Schlafly Pumpkin Ale, Southampton Pumpkin Ale

**Tags:** specialty-beer, spice

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### 17.4. WINTER SEASONAL BEER

*Winter Seasonal Beers are beers that suggest cold weather and the Christmas holiday season, and may include holiday spices, specialty sugars, and other products that are reminiscent of mulling spices or Christmas holiday desserts. See the Introduction to Specialty-Type Beer section for additional comments, particularly on evaluating the balance of added ingredients with the base beer.*

**Overall Impression:** A stronger, darker, spiced beer that often has a rich body and warming finish suggesting a good accompaniment for the cold winter season.

**Aroma:** A wide range of aromatics is possible, although many examples are reminiscent of Christmas cookies, gingerbread, English-type Christmas pudding, evergreen trees, or mulling spices. Any combination of aromatics that suggests the holiday season is welcome. The base beer style often has a malty profile that supports the balanced presentation of the aromatics from spices and possibly other special ingredients. Additional fermentables (e.g., honey, molasses, maple syrup, etc.) may lend their own unique aromatics. Hop aromatics are often absent, subdued, or slightly spicy. Some fruit character (often of dried citrus peel, or dried fruit such as raisins or plums) is optional but acceptable. Alcohol aromatics may be found in some examples, but this character should be restrained. The overall aroma should be balanced and harmonious, and is often fairly complex and inviting.

**Appearance:** Generally medium amber to very dark brown (darker versions are more common). Usually clear, although darker versions may be virtually opaque. Some chill haze is acceptable.

Generally has a well-formed head that is often off-white to tan.

**Flavour:** Many interpretations are possible; allow for brewer creativity as long as the resulting product is balanced and provides some spice presentation. Spices associated with the holiday season are typical (as mentioned in the Aroma section). The spices and optional fermentables should be supportive and blend well with the base beer style. Rich, malty and/or sweet malt-based flavours are common, and may include caramel, toast, nutty, or chocolate flavours. May include some dried fruit or dried fruit peel flavours such as raisin, plum, fig, orange peel or lemon peel. May include distinctive flavours from specific fermentables (molasses, honey, brown sugar, etc.), although these elements are not required. A light evergreen tree character is optional but found in some examples. The wide range of special ingredients should be supportive and balanced, not so prominent as to overshadow the base beer. Bitterness and hop flavour are generally restrained so as to not interfere with the spices and special ingredients. Generally finishes rather full and satisfying, and often has some alcohol flavour. Roasted malt characteristics are rare, and not usually stronger than chocolate.

**Mouthfeel:** A wide range of interpretations is possible. Body is generally medium to full, and a certain malty chewiness is often present. Moderately low to moderately high carbonation is typical. Many examples will show some well-aged, warming alcohol content, but without being overly hot. The beers do not have to be overly strong to show some warming effects.

**Comments:** Overall balance is the key to presenting a well-made Winter Seasonal Beer. The special ingredients should complement the base beer and not overwhelm it. The brewer should recognize that some combinations of base beer styles and special ingredients work well together while others do not make for harmonious combinations. If the base beer is a classic style, the original style should come through in aroma and flavour. Whenever spices, herbs or additional fermentables are declared, each should be noticeable and distinctive in its own way (although not necessarily individually identifiable; balanced with the other ingredients is still critical). Whenever spices, herbs or additional fermentables are declared, each should be noticeable and distinctive in its own way (although not necessarily individually identifiable; balanced with the other ingredients is still critical) – in other words, the beer should read as a spiced beer but without having to tell that specific spices are present (even if declared).

**History:** Throughout history, beer of a somewhat higher alcohol content and richness has been enjoyed during the winter holidays, when old friends get together to enjoy the season. Many breweries produce unique seasonal offerings that may be darker, stronger, spiced, or otherwise more characterful than their normal beers. Spiced versions are an American or Belgian tradition, since English or German breweries traditionally do not use spices in their beer.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Generally ales, although some dark strong lagers exist. Spices are required, and often include those evocative of the Christmas season (e.g., allspice, nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, ginger) but any combination is possible and creativity is encouraged. Fruit peel (e.g., oranges, lemon) may be used, as may subtle additions of other fruits. Flavourful adjuncts are often used (e.g., molasses, treacle, invert sugar, brown sugar, honey, maple syrup, etc.).

**Entry Instructions:** The entrant **must** specify a base style, but the declared style does not have to be a *Classic Style*. The entrant **must** specify the type of spices, sugars, fruits, or additional fermentables

used; individual ingredients do not need to be specified if a well-known blend of spices is used (e.g., mulling spice).

**Vital Statistics:** OG, FG, IBUs, SRM and ABV will vary depending on the underlying base beer. ABV is generally above 6%, and most examples are somewhat dark in colour.

**Commercial Examples:** Anchor Our Special Ale, Goose Island Christmas Ale, Great Lakes Christmas Ale, Harpoon Winter Warmer, Lakefront Holiday Spice Lager Beer, Weyerbacher Winter Ale

**Tags:** specialty-beer, spice



## 18. SPECIALTY BEER

### INTRODUCTION TO SPECIALTY-TYPE BEER

**Specialty-Type Beer** is a broad term used to refer to the styles in this category. Apart from Rauchbier (a Classic Style), they involve some form of transformation of either a Classic Style or another base beer, either through adding additional ingredients, or handling the beer differently using an alternative process. The Specialty-Type Beer style descriptions cannot completely describe a style on their own, as Classic Style write-ups do. Rather, the Specialty-Type Beer style descriptions discuss how the additional ingredient or process affects the base beer style.

This introduction section is assumed to be part of every Specialty-Type Beer style. It describes in general how to enter and judge a Specialty-Type Beer. Specific instructions for a style will be contained within the individual guidelines.

In general, when submitting a Specialty-Type Beer with a food-type ingredient, keep in mind that we use the culinary definition of ingredients rather than the botanical definition of ingredients. Look for the detailed lists of ingredients in the style category descriptions rather than making an assumption.

#### 1. Entering Specialty-Type Beers

Since additional information must be furnished with every entry in a Specialty-Type Beer category, it is critical that entrants closely examine the **Entry Instructions** section of each style description. This section describes the information that judges will expect. Don't assume that judges will be able to recognize your beer without any additional information; some might, but most won't. You will almost certainly receive a lower score if you omit this information than if you specify it properly. Put yourself in the position of the judge; write down the useful information needed to properly judge the beer. Judges won't care if you picked the cherries in your grandmother's yard, so don't put down useless information – tell them the variety of cherry or how they taste.

When specifying a base beer style, read the Entry Instructions for the style carefully. Some may say that a Classic Style is required – this means that the beer should be listed as one of the styles in the guidelines (including historical beers, or beers with enumerated alternatives). Some may say that a base style must be described, but that it does not have to be a Classic Style – this is free license to describe the beer style in any way you want. If your base is loosely a porter, but wouldn't score well as an English, American, or Baltic Porter, then don't be overly specific – simply call it a porter. Some beers that are designed to showcase the specialty ingredient will often have a fairly neutral base.

When specifying the specialty ingredient, keep in mind that the more specific you are, the more judges will look for a signature characteristic. So be sure to taste your beer and decide how specific you need to be. If you are showcasing an unusual or expensive ingredient, that may be a good time to be specific. However, if the ingredient seems somewhat generic, then just use a generic name. If you use a combination of ingredients, such as spices, you can refer to the blend by a common name (e.g., pumpkin pie spice, curry powder, etc.). If you list every individual ingredient, judges will expect to detect each one. But if the nature of a mixture of ingredients is that the specific character of each ingredient contributes to a greater character, then just describe the resulting character. Understand how judges will use the information you provide.

Deciding where to enter a Specialty-Type Beer is often difficult for entrants. Be sure to reach each style carefully, as some styles will specify where to enter a beer with a certain combination of ingredients. We have arbitrarily defined some ingredients as taking precedence over others (in order of highest precedence: wild, smoke, wood, fruit/spice, grain/sugar), but that only applies if you can perceive that ingredient. When seeking a place to enter your Specialty-Type Beer, look for the *best fit* with the style description in a style where the combination is allowable. Entering a beer as a specific style will be a signal to judges that your beer will have certain identifiable components. If you added an ingredient, but it cannot be detected, then do not enter it in a style that requires the ingredient. If judges cannot perceive it, they will believe it is absent and deduct points accordingly.

#### 2. Judging Specialty-Type Beers

Overall balance is the key to a successful Specialty-Type Beer. The entry should be a harmonious marriage of the beer and the special ingredients, with neither overpowering the other. The special ingredients should complement and enhance the underlying beer, and the resulting product should be pleasant to drink. The entry should be recognized as belonging in the entry category, or at least not clearly belonging elsewhere.

Some experienced judges will do take a quick hedonistic pass at a Specialty-Type Beer prior to digging deep at the particulars. The quick assessment is designed to judge whether the combination works or doesn't (i.e., if flavour clashes exist). If the combination is a bad idea, it doesn't matter how well the product is brewed; it simply won't be enjoyable. Judges should keep an open mind, however; some unexpected flavour combinations can be surprisingly delicious.

Judges should not be overly pedantic about seeking the full character of a specified base beer style. After all, the base beer does not usually contain the special ingredient, so its character will not be the

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

same. There can be interactions of flavour that produce additional sensory effects. Likewise, judges should understand that the fermentation process can transform some ingredients (particularly those with fermentable sugars), and that the ingredient character may not be the same as the unadulterated specialty ingredient. Therefore, judges should look for the overall pleasantness and balance of the resulting combination, as long as the beer suggests both the base beer and the specialty ingredient or process.

Creating and judging Specialty-Type Beers can be very rewarding. Judges should keep in mind that a creative element exists in these styles, and that something unusual and delicious should generally be rewarded. Keep an open mind when evaluating these styles, and do not look to judge them as rigidly as Classic Styles.

### 3. Effects of Added Ingredients on Balance in Beer

The ingredient character should be pleasant and supportive, not artificial and inappropriately overpowering (considering the character of the ingredient), and should not have brewing, fermentation, or handling defects. Aroma hops, yeast by-products and malt components of the underlying beer may not be as noticeable when additional ingredients are present. These components (especially hops) may also be intentionally subdued to allow the ingredient character to come through in the final presentation. If the base beer is an ale then a non-specific fruitiness and/or other fermentation by-products may be present as appropriate for warmer fermentations. If the base beer is a lager, then overall less fermentation by-products would be appropriate. Some malt aroma may be desirable, especially in dark styles. Hop aroma may be absent or balanced with the added ingredients, depending on the style. The added ingredients should add an extra complexity to the beer, but not be so prominent as to unbalance the resulting presentation.

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### 18.1. RAUCHBIER

*This is Classic Style, so that the introductory notes on Specialty-type Beers do not apply.*

**Overall Impression:** An elegant, malty German amber lager with a balanced, complementary beechwood smoke character. Toasty-rich malt in aroma and flavour, restrained bitterness, low to high smoke flavour, clean fermentation profile, and an attenuated finish are characteristic.

**Aroma:** Blend of smoke and malt, with a varying balance and intensity. The beechwood smoke character can range from subtle to fairly strong, and can seem smoky, woody, or bacon-like. The malt character can be low to moderate, and be somewhat rich, toasty, or malty-sweet. The malt and smoke components are often inversely proportional (i.e., when smoke increases, malt decreases, and vice versa). Hop aroma may be very low to none. Clean lager fermentation character.

**Appearance:** This should be a very clear beer, with a large, creamy, rich, tan- to cream-coloured head. Medium amber/light copper to dark brown colour.

**Flavour:** Generally follows the aroma profile, with a blend of smoke and malt in varying balance and intensity, yet always complementary. Märzen-like qualities should be noticeable, particularly a malty, toasty richness, but the beechwood smoke flavour can be low to high. At higher levels, the smoke can take on a ham- or bacon-like character, which is acceptable as long as it doesn't veer into the greasy range. The palate can be somewhat malty, rich, and sweet, yet the finish tends to be medium-dry to dry with the smoke character sometimes enhancing the dryness of the finish. The aftertaste can reflect both malt richness and smoke flavours, with a balanced presentation desirable. Moderate, balanced, hop bitterness. Moderate to none hop flavour with spicy, floral, or herbal notes. Clean lager fermentation character. Harsh, bitter, burnt, charred, rubbery, sulfury or phenolic smoky characteristics are inappropriate.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium body. Medium to medium-high carbonation. Smooth lager character. Significant astringent, phenolic harshness is inappropriate.

**Comments:** Literally “smoke beer” in German. The intensity of smoke character can vary widely; not all examples are highly smoked. Allow for variation in the style when judging. Other examples of smoked beers are available in Germany based on styles such as Dunkles Bock, Weissbier, Dunkel, Schwarzbier, and Helles, including examples such as Spezial Lager; these should be entered in the Classic Style Smoked Beer category. This description specifically refers to the smoked Märzen version.

**History:** A historical specialty of the city of Bamberg, in the Franconian region of Bavaria in Germany. Beechwood-smoked malt is used to make a Märzen-style amber lager. The smoke character of the malt varies by maltster; some breweries produce their own smoked malt (*rauchmalz*).

**Characteristic Ingredients:** German Rauchmalz (beechwood-smoked Vienna-type malt) typically

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

makes up 20-100% of the grain bill, with the remainder being German malts typically used in a Märzen. Some breweries adjust the colour slightly with a bit of roasted malt. German lager yeast. German or Czech hops.

**Style Comparison:** Like a Märzen with but with a balanced, sweet, smoky aroma and flavour and a somewhat darker colour.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.050 – 1.057  
IBUs: 20 – 30 FG: 1.012 – 1.016  
SRM: 12 – 22 ABV: 4.8 – 6%

**Commercial Examples:** Eisenbahn Rauchbier, Kaiserdom Rauchbier, Schlenkerla Rauchbier Märzen, Spezial Rauchbier Märzen Victory Scarlet Fire Rauchbier

**Tags:** standard-strength, amber-colour, bottom-fermented, lagered, central-europe, traditional-style, amber-lager-family, malty, smoke

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### 18.2. CLASSIC STYLE SMOKED BEER

**Overall Impression:** A smoke-enhanced beer showing good balance between the smoke and beer character, while remaining pleasant to drink. Balance in the use of smoke, hops and malt character is exhibited by the better examples.

**Aroma:** The aroma should be a pleasant balance between the expected aroma of the base beer and the smokiness imparted by the use of smoked malts. The intensity and character of the smoke and base beer style can vary, with either being prominent in the balance. Smokiness may vary from low to assertive; however, balance in the overall presentation is the key to well-made examples. The quality and secondary characteristics of the smoke are reflective of the source of the smoke (e.g., alder, oak, beechwood). Sharp, phenolic, harsh, rubbery, or burnt smoke-derived aromatics are inappropriate.

**Appearance:** Variable. The appearance should reflect the base beer style, although the colour of the beer is often a bit darker than the plain base style.

**Flavour:** As with aroma, there should be a balance between smokiness and the expected flavour characteristics of the base beer style. Smokiness may vary from low to assertive. Smoky flavours may range from woody to somewhat bacon-like depending on the type of malts used. The balance of underlying beer characteristics and smoke can vary, although the resulting blend should be somewhat balanced and enjoyable. Smoke can add some dryness to the finish. Harsh, bitter, burnt, charred, rubbery, sulfury, medicinal, or phenolic smoky characteristics are generally inappropriate (although some of these characteristics may be present in some base styles; however, the smoked malt shouldn't contribute these flavours).

**Mouthfeel:** Varies with the base beer style. Significant astringent, phenolic smoke-derived harshness is inappropriate.

**Comments:** This style is for any beer that exhibits smoke as a principal flavour and aroma characteristic other than the Bamberg-style *Rauchbier* (i.e., beechwood-smoked *Märzen*),

which has its own style. Any style of beer can be smoked; the goal is to reach a pleasant balance between the smoke character and the base beer style. Entries should be judged on how well that style is represented, and how well it is balanced with the smoke character. Entries with a specific type or types of smoke cited will be judged on how well that type of smoke is recognizable and marries with the base style. Judges should evaluate the beers mostly on the overall balance, and how well the smoke character enhances the base beer.

**History:** The process of using smoked malts has been adapted by craft brewers to many styles. German brewers have traditionally used smoked malts in bock, doppelbock, weissbier, dunkel, schwarzbier, helles, Pils, and other specialty styles.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Different materials used to smoke malt result in unique flavour and aroma characteristics. Beechwood, or other hardwood (oak, maple, mesquite, alder, pecan, apple, cherry, other fruitwoods) smoked malts may be used. The various woods may remind one of certain smoked products due to their food association (e.g., hickory with ribs, maple with bacon or sausage, and alder with salmon). Evergreen wood should never be used since it adds a medicinal, piney flavour to the malt. Noticeable peat-smoked malt is universally undesirable due to its sharp, piercing phenolics and dirt-like earthiness. The remaining ingredients vary with the base style. If smoked malts are combined with other unusual ingredients (fruits, vegetables, spices, honey, etc.) in noticeable quantities, the resulting beer should be entered in the Specialty Smoked Beer.

**Entry Instructions:** The entrant **must** specify a *Classic Style* base beer. The entrant **must** specify the type of wood or smoke **if** a varietal smoke character is noticeable.

**Vital Statistics:** Varies with the base beer style.

**Commercial Examples:** Alaskan Smoked Porter, Schlenkerla Weizen Rauchbier and Ur-Bock Rauchbier, Spezial Lagerbier, Weissbier and Bockbier, Stone Smoked Porter

**Tags:** specialty-beer, smoke

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### 18.3. SPECIALTY SMOKED BEER

A **Specialty Smoked Beer** is either a smoked beer based on something other than a *Classic Style*, or any type of smoked beer with additional ingredients (fruits, vegetables, spices) or processes employed that transform the beer into something more unique.

**Overall Impression:** A smoke-enhanced beer showing good balance between the smoke, the beer character, and the added ingredients, while remaining pleasant to drink. Balance in the use of smoke, hops and malt character is exhibited by the better examples.

**Aroma:** The aroma should be a pleasant balance between the expected aroma of the base beer, the smokiness imparted by the use of smoked malts, and any additional ingredients. The intensity and character of the smoke, base beer style, and

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

additional ingredients can vary, with any being more prominent in the balance. Smokiness may vary from low to assertive; however, balance in the overall presentation is the key to well-made examples. The quality and secondary characteristics of the smoke are reflective of the source of the smoke (e.g., alder, oak, beechwood). Sharp, phenolic, harsh, rubbery, or burnt smoke-derived aromatics are inappropriate.

**Appearance:** Variable. The appearance should reflect the base beer style, although the colour of the beer is often a bit darker than the plain base style. The use of certain fruits and spices may affect the colour and hue of the beer as well.

**Flavour:** As with aroma, there should be a balance between smokiness, the expected flavour characteristics of the base beer style, and the additional ingredients. Smokiness may vary from low to assertive. Smoky flavours may range from woody to somewhat bacon-like depending on the type of malts used. The balance of underlying beer characteristics and smoke can vary, although the resulting blend should be somewhat balanced and enjoyable. Smoke can add some dryness to the finish. Harsh, bitter, burnt, charred, rubbery, sulfury, medicinal, or phenolic smoky characteristics are generally inappropriate (although some of these characteristics may be present in some base styles; however, the smoked malt shouldn't contribute these flavours).

**Mouthfeel:** Varies with the base beer style. Significant astringent, phenolic smoke-derived harshness is inappropriate.

**Comments:** Any style of beer can be smoked; the goal is to reach a pleasant balance between the smoke character and the base beer style. Entries should be judged on how well that style is represented, and how well it is balanced with the smoke character. Entries with a specific type or types of smoke cited will be judged on how well that type of smoke is recognizable and marries with the base style and added ingredients. Judges should evaluate the beers mostly on the overall balance, and how well the smoke character and added ingredients enhances the base beer.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Different materials used to smoke malt result in unique flavour and aroma characteristics. Beechwood, or other hardwood (oak, maple, mesquite, alder, pecan, apple, cherry, other fruitwoods) smoked malts may be used. The various woods may remind one of certain smoked products due to their food association (e.g., hickory with ribs, maple with bacon or sausage, and alder with salmon). Evergreen wood should never be used since it adds a medicinal, piney flavour to the malt. Noticeable peat-smoked malt is universally undesirable due to its sharp, piercing phenolics and dirt-like earthiness. The beer ingredients vary with the base style. Other unusual ingredients (fruits, vegetables, spices, honey, etc.) used in noticeable quantities.

**Entry Instructions:** The entrant **must** specify a base beer style; the base beer does not have to be a *Classic Style*. The entrant **must** specify the type of wood or smoke **if** a varietal smoke character is noticeable. The entrant **must** specify the additional

ingredients or processes that make this a specialty smoked beer.

**Vital Statistics:** Varies with the base beer style.

**Tags:** specialty-beer, smoke

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### 18.4. WOOD-AGED BEER

*This style is intended for beer aged in wood without added alcohol character from previous use of the barrel. Bourbon-barrel or other similar beers should be entered as a Specialty Wood-Aged Beer.*

**Overall Impression:** A harmonious blend of the base beer style with characteristics from aging in contact with wood. The best examples will be smooth, flavourful, well-balanced and well-aged.

**Aroma:** Varies with base style. A low to moderate wood- or oak-based aroma is usually present. Fresh wood can occasionally impart raw "green" aromatics, although this character should never be too strong. Other optional aromatics include a low to moderate vanilla, caramel, toffee, toast, or cocoa character from any char on the wood. Any alcohol character should be smooth and balanced, not hot. Some background oxidation character is optional, and can take on a pleasant, sherry-like character and not be papery or cardboard-like. Should not have added alcohol character.

**Appearance:** Varies with base style. Often darker than the unadulterated base beer style, particularly if toasted/charred barrels are used.

**Flavour:** Varies with base style. Wood usually contributes a woody or oaky flavour, which can occasionally take on a raw "green" flavour if new wood is used. Other flavours that may optionally be present include vanilla (from vanillin in the wood); caramel, butterscotch, toasted bread or almonds (from toasted wood); and coffee, chocolate, cocoa (from charred wood). The wood and/or other cask-derived flavours should be balanced, supportive and noticeable, but should not overpower the base beer style. Some background oxidation character is optional, although this should take on a pleasant, sherry-like character and not be papery or cardboard-like.

**Mouthfeel:** Varies with base style. Wood can add tannins to the beer, depending on age of the cask. The tannins can lead to additional astringency (which should never be high), or simply a fuller mouthfeel. Tart or acidic characteristics should be low to none, and never distracting.

**Comments:** The base beer style should be evident, but not so dominant as to unbalance the beer. The intensity of the wood-based flavours is based on the contact time with the wood; the age, condition, and origin and char level of the barrel; and the type of wood. **THIS CATEGORY SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR BASE STYLES WHERE WOOD-AGING IS A FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE STYLE** (e.g., Flanders Red, Lambic, etc.). *Beers made using either limited wood aging or products that only provide a subtle background character may be entered in the base*

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

*beer style categories as long as the wood character isn't prominently featured.*

**History:** A traditional production method that is rarely used by major breweries, and usually only with specialty products. More popular with modern American craft breweries looking for new, distinctive products. Oak cask and barrels are traditional, although other woods are becoming more popular.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Varies with base style. Aged in wooden casks or barrels, or using wood-based additives (wood chips, wood staves, oak essence). Fuller-bodied, higher-gravity base styles often are used since they can best stand up to the additional flavours, although experimentation is encouraged.

**Entry Instructions:** The entrant **must** specify the type of wood used and the char level (if charred). The entrant **must** specify the base style; the base style can be either a classic BJCP style (i.e., a named subcategory) or may be a generic type of beer (e.g., porter, brown ale). If an unusual wood has been used, the entrant **must** supply a brief description of the sensory aspects the wood adds to beer.

### **Vital Statistics:**

OG: varies with base style, typically above-average

FG: varies with base style

ABV: varies with base style, typically above-average

IBUs: varies with base style

SRM: varies with base style, often darker than the unadulterated base style

**Commercial Examples:** Bush Prestige, Cigar City Humidor India Pale Ale, Faust Holzfassgereifter Eisbock, Firestone Walker Double Barrel Ale, Great Divide Oak Aged Yeti Imperial Stout, Petrus Aged Pale, Samuel Smith Yorkshire Stingo

**Tags:** specialty-beer, wood

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### 18.5. SPECIALTY WOOD-AGED BEER

*This style is intended for beer aged in wood with added alcohol character from previous use of the barrel. Bourbon-barrel or other similar beers should be entered here.*

**Overall Impression:** A harmonious blend of the base beer style with characteristics from aging in contact with wood (including alcoholic products previously in contact with the wood). The best examples will be smooth, flavourful, well-balanced and well-aged.

**Aroma:** Varies with base style. A low to moderate wood- or oak-based aroma is usually present. Other aromatics often include a low to moderate vanilla, caramel, toffee, toast, or cocoa character, as well as any aromatics associated with alcohol (distilled spirits, wine, etc.) previously stored in the wood. The added alcohol character should be smooth and balanced, not hot. Some background oxidation character is optional, and can take on a pleasant, sherry-like character and not be papery or cardboard-like.

**Appearance:** Varies with base style. Often darker than the unadulterated base beer style, particularly if whiskey/bourbon barrels are used. Beers aged in wine barrels or other products with distinctive colours may also impart a colour to the finished beer.

**Flavour:** Varies with base style. Wood usually contributes a woody or oaky flavour. Other flavours that are typically present include vanilla (from vanillin in the wood); caramel, butterscotch, toasted bread or almonds (from toasted wood); coffee, chocolate, cocoa (from charred wood or bourbon casks); and alcohol flavours from other products previously stored in the wood. The wood and/or other cask-derived flavours should be balanced, supportive and noticeable, but should not overpower the base beer style. Some background oxidation character is optional, although this should take on a pleasant, sherry-like character and not be papery or cardboard-like.

**Mouthfeel:** Varies with base style. Wood can add tannins to the beer, depending on age of the cask. The tannins can lead to additional astringency (which should never be high), or simply a fuller mouthfeel. Usually exhibits additional alcohol warming. Higher alcohol levels should not result in "hot" beers; aged, smooth flavours are most desirable. Tart or acidic characteristics should be low to none.

**History:** A traditional production method that is rarely used by major breweries, and usually only with specialty products. Quite popular with modern American craft breweries looking for new, distinctive products. Oak cask and barrels are traditional, although other woods can be used.

**Comments:** The base beer style should be apparent. The wood-based character should be evident, but not so dominant as to unbalance the beer. The intensity of the wood-based flavours is based on the contact time with the wood; the age, condition, previous usage of the barrel; and the type of wood. Alcoholic products previously stored in the wood should be evident, but should not be so dominant as to unbalance the beer. THIS CATEGORY SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR BASE STYLES WHERE BARREL-AGING IS A FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE STYLE (e.g., Flanders Red, Lambic, etc.). Special wood-aged wild ales should be entered in the *Wild Specialty* style.

**Characteristic Ingredients:** Varies with base style. Aged in wooden casks or barrels previously used to store alcohol (e.g., whiskey, bourbon, port, sherry, Madeira, wine, etc). Fuller-bodied, higher-gravity base styles often are used since they can best stand up to the additional flavours, although experimentation is encouraged.

**Entry Instructions:** The entrant **must** specify the additional alcohol character, with information about the barrel if relevant to the finished flavour profile. The entrant **must** specify the base style; the base style can be either a classic BJCP style (i.e., a named subcategory) or may be a generic type of beer (e.g., porter, brown ale). If an unusual wood or ingredient has been used, the entrant **must** supply

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

a brief description of the sensory aspects the ingredients adds to the beer.

### **Vital Statistics:**

OG: varies with base style, typically above-average

FG: varies with base style

ABV: varies with base style, typically above-average

IBUs: varies with base style

SRM: varies with base style, often darker than the unadulterated base style

**Commercial Examples:** Founders Kentucky Breakfast Stout, Goose Island Bourbon County Stout, J.W. Lees Harvest Ale in Port, Sherry, Lagavulin Whisky or Calvados Casks, The Lost Abbey Angel's Share Ale; many microbreweries have specialty beers served only on premises often directly from the cask.

**Tags:** specialty-beer, wood

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### 18.6. BELGIAN SPECIALTY ALE [AABC]

**Overall Impression:** Variable. This category encompasses a wide range of Belgian ales produced by truly artisanal brewers more concerned with creating unique products than in increasing sales.

**Aroma:** Variable. Most exhibit varying amounts of fruity esters, spicy phenols and/or yeast-borne aromatics. Aromas from actual spice additions may be present. Hop aroma may be none to high, and may include a dry-hopped character. Malt aroma may be low to high, and may include character of non-barley grains such as wheat or rye. Some may include aromas of Belgian microbiota, most commonly *Brettanomyces* and/or *Lactobacillus*. No diacetyl.

**Appearance:** Variable. Colour varies considerably from pale gold to very dark. Clarity may be hazy to clear. Head retention is usually good. Generally moderate to high carbonation.

**Flavour:** Variable. A great variety of flavours are found in these beers. Maltiness may be light to quite rich. Hop flavour and bitterness may be low to high. Spicy flavours may be imparted by yeast (phenolics) and/or actual spice additions. May include characteristics of grains other than barley, such as wheat or rye. May include flavours produced by Belgian microbiota such as *Brettanomyces* or *Lactobacillus*. May include flavours from adjuncts such as caramelised sugar syrup or honey.

**Mouthfeel:** Variable. Some are well-attenuated, thus fairly light-bodied for their original gravity, while others are thick and rich. Most are moderately to highly carbonated. A warming sensation from alcohol may be present in stronger examples. A "mouth puckering" sensation may be present from acidity.

**History:** Unique beers of small, independent Belgian breweries that have come to enjoy local popularity but may be far less well-known outside of their own regions. Many have attained "cult status" in the U.S. (and other parts of the world) and now owe a significant portion of their sales to export.

**Comments:** This is a catch-all category for any Belgian-style beer not fitting any other Belgian style

category. The category can be used for clones of specific beers (e.g., Orval, La Chouffe); to produce a beer fitting a broader style that doesn't have its own category or to create an artisanal or experimental beer of the brewer's own choosing (e.g., strong Belgian golden ale with spices, something unique). Creativity is the only limit in brewing but the entrants must identify what is special about their entry.

*The judges must understand the brewer's intent in order to properly judge an entry in this category.*

**THE BREWER MUST SPECIFY EITHER THE BEER BEING CLONED, THE NEW STYLE BEING PRODUCED OR THE SPECIAL INGREDIENTS OR PROCESSES USED.**

*Additional background information on the style and/or beer may be provided to judges to assist in the judging, including style parameters or detailed descriptions of the beer.* Beers fitting other Belgian categories should not be entered in this category.

**Ingredients:** May include herbs and/or spices. May include unusual grains and malts, though the grain character should be apparent if it is a key ingredient. May include adjuncts such as ~~and~~ caramelised sugar syrup and honey. May include Belgian microbiota such as *Brettanomyces* or *Lactobacillus*. Unusual techniques, such as blending, may be used through primarily to arrive at a particular result. The process alone does not make a beer unique to a blind judging panel if the final product does not taste different.

### **Vital Statistics:**

OG: varies

FG: varies

ABV: varies

IBUs: varies

SRM: varies

**Commercial Examples:** Orval; De Dolle's Arabier, Oerbier, Boskeun and Still Nacht; La Chouffe, McChouffe, Chouffe Bok and N'ice Chouffe; Ellezelloise Hercule Stout and Quintine Amber; Unibroue Ephemere, Maudite, Don de Dieu, etc.; Minty; Zatte Bie; Caracole Amber, Saxo and Nostradamus; Silenrieu Sara and Joseph; Fantôme Black Ghost and Speciale Noël; St. Fullien Noël; Gouden Carolus Noël; Affligem Noël; Guldenburg and Pere Noël; De Ranke XX Bitter; Bush (Scaldis); Grottenbier; La Trappe Quadrupel; Weyerbacher QUAD; Bière de Miel; Verboden Vrucht; New Belgium 1554 Black Ale; Cantillon Iris; Lindemans Kriek and Framboise, and many more

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### 18.7. ALTERNATIVE GRAIN BEER

*An **Alternative Fermentables Beer** is a standard beer (Classic Style or not) with additional or non-standard brewing grains (e.g., rye, oats, buckwheat, spelt, millet, sorghum, rice, etc.) added or used exclusively. Gluten-free (GF) beers made from completely gluten-free ingredients may be entered here, while GF beers using process-based gluten removal should be entered in their respective base style categories.*

*See the Introduction to Specialty-Type Beer section for additional comments, particularly on*

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

*evaluating the balance of added ingredients with the base beer.*

**Overall Impression:** A base beer enhanced by or featuring the character of additional grain or grains. The specific character depends greatly on the character of the added grains.

**Aroma:** Same as base beer style. The added grain will lend a particular character, although with some grains the beer will simply seem a bit more grainy or nutty. The alternative grain should provide the major aroma profile for this beer.

**Appearance:** Same as base beer style, although some additional haze may be noticeable.

**Flavour:** Same as base beer style. The additional grain should be noticeable in flavour, although it may not be necessarily identifiable. However, the alternative grain should provide the major flavour profile for this beer. Different grains have different characters; the additional grain should enhance the flavour of the base beer. Many will add an additional grainy, bready, or nutty flavour.

**Mouthfeel:** Same as the base beer, although many additional grains will tend to increase the body (oats, rye) and increase the viscosity, while some may decrease the body (GF grains) resulting in thinness.

**Comments:** If the alternative grain does not provide a noticeable distinguishable character to the beer, enter it as the base style. This style should not be used for styles where the alternative grain is fundamental to the style definition (e.g., Rye IPA, Oatmeal Stout, Rice- or Corn-based International Lager). Note that sake is not beer, and is not intended for this category.

**Entry Instructions:** The entrant **must** specify a base style, but the declared style does not have to be a *Classic Style*. The entrant **must** specify the type of alternative grain used.

**Vital Statistics:** OG, FG, IBUs, SRM and ABV will vary depending on the underlying base beer.

**Commercial Examples:** Green's Indian Pale Ale, Lakefront New Grist, New Planet Pale Ale

**Tags:** specialty-beer

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### 18.8. ALTERNATIVE SUGAR BEER

*An **Alternative Fermentables Beer** is a standard beer (Classic Style or not) with additional fermentable sugars (e.g., honey, brown sugar, invert sugar, molasses, treacle, maple syrup, sorghum, etc.) added.*

*See the Introduction to Specialty-Type Beer section for additional comments, particularly on evaluating the balance of added ingredients with the base beer.*

**Overall Impression:** A harmonious marriage of sugar and beer, but still recognizable as a beer. The sugar character should both be evident but in balance with the beer, not so forward as to suggest an artificial product.

**Aroma:** Same as the base beer, except that some additional fermentables (honey, molasses, etc.) may add an aroma component. Whatever additional aroma component is present should be in balance

with the beer components, and be a pleasant combination.

**Appearance:** Same as the base beer, although some sugars will bring additional colours.

**Flavour:** Same as the base beer, except that some additional fermentables (honey, molasses, etc.) may add a flavour component. Whatever additional flavour component is present should be in balance with the beer components, and be a pleasant combination. Added sugars should not have a raw, unfermented flavour. Some added sugars will have unfermentable elements that may provide a fuller finish; fully fermentable sugars may thin out the finish.

**Mouthfeel:** Same as the base beer, although depending on the type of sugar added, could increase or decrease the body.

**Comments:** If the additional fermentables do not add a distinguishable character to the beer, enter it in the base style category. A honey-based beer should not have so much honey that it reads more like a mead with beer (i.e., a braggot) than a honey beer. This style should not be used for styles where the alternative sugar is fundamental to the style definition, or where a small amount of neutral-flavoured sugar is used simply to increase gravity, increase attenuation, or lighten flavour or body; those beers should be entered as the normal base style.

**Entry Instructions:** The entrant **must** specify a base style, but the declared style does not have to be a *Classic Style*. The entrant **must** specify the type of sugar used.

**Vital Statistics:** OG, FG, IBUs, SRM and ABV will vary depending on the underlying base beer.

**Commercial Examples:** Bell's Hopslam, Fullers Honey Dew, Lagunitas Brown Shugga'

**Tags:** specialty-beer

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### 18.9. EXPERIMENTAL BEER

*This is explicitly a catch-all category for any beer that does not fit into an existing style description. No beer is ever "out of style" in this style, unless it fits elsewhere. This is the last resort for any beer entered into a competition.*

**Overall Impression:** Varies, but should be a unique experience.

**Aroma:** Varies.

**Appearance:** Varies.

**Flavour:** Varies.

**Mouthfeel:** Varies.

**Comments:** This style is the ultimate in creativity, since it cannot represent a well-known commercial beer (otherwise it would be a clone beer) and cannot fit into any other existing Specialty-Type style (including those within this major category).

**Entry Instructions:** The entrant **must** specify the special nature of the experimental beer, including the special ingredients or processes that make it not fit elsewhere in the guidelines. The entrant **must** provide vital statistics for the beer, **and** either a brief sensory description or a list of

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

ingredients used in making the beer. *Without this information, judges will have no basis for comparison.*

**Vital Statistics:** OG, FG, IBUs, SRM and ABV will vary depending on the declared beer.

**Commercial Examples:** None

**Tags:** specialty-beer



## 19. MEAD

### INTRODUCTION TO MEAD GUIDELINES

*The following discussion applies to all the mead styles, except where explicitly superseded in the style guidelines. This introduction identifies common characteristics and descriptions for all types of mead, and should be used as a reference whenever entering or judging mead.*

#### 1. Important Attributes

- **Sweetness.** A mead may be *dry*, *semi-sweet*, or *sweet*. Sweetness simply refers to the amount of residual sugar in the mead. Sweetness is often confused with fruitiness in a dry mead. Body is related to sweetness, but dry meads can still have some body. Dry meads do not have to be bone dry. Sweet meads should not be cloyingly sweet, and should not have a raw, unfermented honey character. Sweetness is independent of strength. Note that tannin levels can affect the perceived sweetness of mead (more tannin makes a mead seem drier), but acidity is more related to the quality, balance, and enjoyment of the sweetness. The purpose of identifying a sweetness level is primarily to aid in the ordering of a flight. *Minor differences from stated sweetness level should not be heavily-penalized or considered a disqualifying fault.*
- **Carbonation.** A mead may be *still*, *petillant*, or *sparkling*. Still meads do not have to be totally flat; they can have some very light bubbles. Petillant meads are lightly sparkling and can have a moderate, noticeable amount of carbonation. Sparkling meads are not gushing, but may have a character ranging from mouth-filling to an impression akin to Champagne or carbonated water. *Minor differences from stated carbonation level should not be heavily-penalized or considered a disqualifying fault.*
- **Strength.** A mead may be categorized as *hydromel*, *standard*, or *sack* strength. Strength refers to the alcohol content of the mead (and also, therefore, the amount of honey and fermentables used to make the mead). Stronger meads can have a greater honey character and body (as well as alcohol) than weaker meads, although this is not a strict rule. Well-made stronger examples may have difficult-to-detect strength. *Minor differences from stated strength level should not be heavily-penalized or considered a disqualifying fault.*
- **Honey variety.** Some types of honey have a strong varietal character (aroma, flavour, colour, acidity). If a honey is unusual, additional information can be provided to judges as to the character to be expected. Note that *wildflower* isn't a varietal honey; it is specifically a term used to describe a honey derived from an unknown source or from

mixed flowers or blossoms. Consider providing a description of the honey if it is not listed in the Mead Exam Study Guide or other BJCP references. Identifying the source (state or region) and season of the honey can be useful information for the judges.

- **Special ingredients.** Different styles may include fruit, spice, malt, etc. Judges need to understand the ingredients that provide a unique character in order to properly evaluate the mead. Oak additions do not have to be specified (but may be at the entrant's discretion); *oaking is acceptable in every mead style*. Excessive oaking is a fault, just as in wine; any use of oak should be balanced and complimentary. A declared use of oak should not be interpreted as requiring the oak to be a primary flavour.

#### 2. Standard Description for Mead

*When individual mead style descriptions use the phrase **Standard Description Applies**, refer to the sections below that have the same names as are used in the style descriptions. These descriptions are incorporated by reference into every style where they are mentioned. Statements in the individual style descriptions build on, modify, or supersede the standard descriptions below.*

- **Appearance:** Clarity may be good to brilliant. Crystal clear, reflective examples with a bright, distinct meniscus are highly desirable. Observable particulates (even in an otherwise clear example) are undesirable. Highly carbonated examples usually have a short-lasting head similar to Champagne or soda pop. Some aspects of bubbles or head formation that may be observed and commented upon include size (large or small), persistence (how long do they continue to form?), quantity (how much are present?), rate (how fast do they form?), and mousse (appearance or quality of foam stand). The components of bubbles (or *head*) will vary greatly depending on the carbonation level, ingredients and type of mead. In general, smaller bubbles are more desirable and indicative of higher quality than larger bubbles. The colour may vary widely depending on honey variety and any optional ingredients (e.g., fruit, malts). Some honey varieties are almost clear, while others can be dark brown. Most are in the straw to gold range. If no honey variety is declared, almost any colour is acceptable. If a honey variety is declared, the colour should generally be suggestive of the honey used (although a wide range of colour variation is still possible). Hue, saturation and purity of colour should be considered. Stronger versions (standard and sack) may show signs of body (e.g., legs, meniscus) but higher carbonation levels can interfere with this perception.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

- **Aroma:** The intensity of the honey aroma will vary based upon the sweetness and strength of the mead. Stronger or sweeter meads may have a stronger honey aroma than drier or weaker versions. Different varieties of honey have different intensities and characters; some (e.g., orange blossom, buckwheat) are more readily recognizable than others (e.g., avocado, palmetto). If honey varieties are declared, the varietal character of the honey should be apparent even if subtle. The aromatics may seem vinous (similar to wine), and may include fruity, floral, or spicy notes. The bouquet (rich, complex aromatics arising from the combination of ingredients, fermentation and aging) should show a pleasant, clean fermentation character, with fresh aromatics being preferred over dirty, muddled, yeasty, or sulfury notes. A multi-faceted bouquet, also known as complexity or depth, is a positive attribute. Phenolic aromatics should not be present. Harsh or chemical aromatics should not be present. Oxidation is a big detraction in most mead, and most frequently appears as a strong sherry-like or light molasses-like character. A subtle, sherry-like oxidation character can add complexity in some situations, but not if the oxidation ruins the character of the mead. Alcohol aromatics may be present, but hot, solventy or irritating overtones are a defect. The harmony and balance of the aroma and bouquet should be pleasant and enticing.
- **Flavour:** The intensity of the honey flavour will vary based upon the sweetness and strength of the mead. Stronger, sweeter meads will have a stronger honey flavour than drier, weaker versions. Different varieties of honey have different intensities and characters; some (e.g., orange blossom, buckwheat) are more readily recognizable than others (e.g., safflower, palmetto). If honey varieties are declared, the varietal character of the honey should be apparent even if subtle. The residual sweetness level will vary with the sweetness of the mead; dry meads will have no residual sugar, sweet meads will have noticeable to prominent sweetness, semi-sweet meads will have a balanced sweetness. In no case should the residual sweetness be syrupy, cloying or seem like unfermented honey. Any additives, such as acid or tannin, should enhance the honey flavour and lend balance to the overall character of the mead but not be excessively tart or astringent. Tannin can make a mead seem drier than the residual sugar levels might suggest. Artificial, chemical, harsh, phenolic or bitter flavours are defects. Higher carbonation (if present) enhances the acidity and gives a “bite” to the finish. The aftertaste should be evaluated; longer finishes are generally most desirable. A multi-faceted flavour, also known as complexity or depth, is a positive attribute. Yeast or fermentation characteristics may be none to noticeable, with estery, fresh and clean flavours being most desirable. Alcohol flavours (if present) should be smooth and well-aged, not harsh, hot, or solventy. Very light oxidation may be present, depending on age, but an excessive molasses, sherry-like or papery character should be avoided. Aging and conditioning generally smooth out flavours and create a more elegant, blended, rounded product. All flavours tend to become more subtle over time, and can deteriorate with extended aging.
- **Mouthfeel:** Before evaluating, refer to the declared sweetness, strength and carbonation levels, as well as any special ingredients; these can all affect mouthfeel. Well-made examples will often have an elegant wine-like character. The body can vary widely, although most are in the medium-light to medium-full range. Body generally increases with stronger and/or sweeter meads, and can sometimes be quite full and heavy. Similarly, body generally decreases with lower gravity and/or drier meads, and can sometimes be quite light. Sensations of body should not be accompanied by an overwhelmingly cloying sweetness (even in sweet meads). A very thin or watery body is likewise undesirable. Some natural acidity is often present (particularly in fruit-based meads). Low levels of astringency are sometimes present (either from specific fruit or spices, or from tea, chemical additives or oak-aging). Acidity and tannin help balance the overall honey, sweetness and alcohol presentation. The level of carbonation can vary widely (see definitions above). Still meads may have a very light level of carbonation, lightly carbonated (petillant) meads will have noticeable bubbles, and a highly carbonated (sparkling) mead can range from a mouth-filling carbonation to levels approaching Champagne or soda pop. High carbonation will enhance the acidity and give a “bite” to the finish. A warming alcohol presence is often present, and this character usually increases with strength (although extended aging can smooth this sensation).
- **Overall Impression:** A wide range of results are possible, but well-made examples will have an enjoyable balance of honey flavours, sweetness, acidity, tannins, alcohol. Strength, sweetness and age greatly affect the overall presentation. Any special ingredients should be well-blended with the other ingredients, and lead to a harmonious end product.
- **Ingredients:** Mead is made primarily from honey, water and yeast. Some minor adjustments in acidity and tannin can be made with citrus fruits, tea, or chemicals; however, these additives should not be readily discernable in flavour or aroma. Yeast nutrients may be used but should not be detected. Oak aging is allowable in any category as a subtle to noticeable enhancement without causing the mead to be an *Experimental Mead*; excessive oak is a fault.
- **Vital Statistics:**
  - OG: hydromel: 1.035 – 1.080
  - standard: 1.080 – 1.120

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

sack:	1.120 – 1.170
ABV: hydromel:	3.5 – 7.5%
standard:	7.5 – 14.0%
sack:	14.0 – 18.0%
FG: dry:	0.990 – 1.010
semi-sweet:	1.010 – 1.025
sweet:	1.025 – 1.050

**Defaults:** If no attributes are specified, judges should evaluate the mead as a **semi-sweet, petillant, standard-strength mead** with no varietal honey character and no special ingredients. Competition organizers should make every effort to ensure that judges are provided the full set of attributes of the meads being evaluated

*Note that the perception of sweetness is a function of the percentage of residual sugar, so don't rely only on FG to determine sweetness. Consider the OG, strength, tannin levels, and to a lesser extent, acidity, in assessing sweetness.*

**IBUs:** not relevant for anything but braggot, but bittering hops are optional even in this style.

**SRM:** basically irrelevant since honey can be anything from almost clear to dark brown. Cysers are most often golden. Other fruit-based meads and piments can have orange, red, pink and/or purple hues. Braggots can be yellow to black. In all cases, the colour should reflect the ingredients used (type of honey, and fruit and/or malt in some styles).

### 3. Competition Entry Instructions

#### • **Mandatory Requirements:**

- Entrants **MUST** specify *carbonation* level (still; petillant or lightly carbonated; sparkling or highly carbonated).
- Entrants **MUST** specify *strength* level (hydromel or light mead; standard mead; sack or strong mead).
- Entrants **MUST** specify *sweetness* level (dry; semi-sweet or medium; sweet).

*Minor differences from stated levels should not be heavily penalized or be considered a disqualifying fault.*

- **Optional Requirements:** Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties used, as well as the source and season of the honey. If honey varieties are declared, judges will look for the varietal character of the honey. Note that the character of a varietal honey will be identifiable as distinct to the source flowers, but may not resemble the source plant, tree, or fruit. For example, orange-blossom honey has the character of orange blossoms, not oranges; blackberry honey is only distantly like blackberries, although it is an identifiable character. If a mead is oak-aged and the oak character is noticeable, the oaking can be specified. Judges should expect to detect oak, but not as a primary flavour.
- **Category-Specific Requirements:** Some categories require additional information, particularly in categories other than traditional mead. For example, declaring specific fruit, spices, or special characteristics. Supplemental materials may be provided to judges if an obscure or unusual ingredient or method is used.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

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### 19.1. DRY MEAD

**Overall Impression:** Similar in balance, body, finish and flavour intensity to a dry white wine, with a pleasant mixture of subtle honey character, soft fruity esters, and clean alcohol. Complexity, harmony, and balance of sensory elements are most desirable, with no inconsistencies in colour, aroma, flavour or aftertaste. The proper balance of sweetness, acidity, alcohol, and honey character is the essential final measure of any mead.

**Aroma:** Honey aroma may be subtle, although not always identifiable. Sweetness or significant honey aromatics should not be expected. If a honey variety is declared, the variety should be distinctive (if noticeable). Different types of honey have different intensities and characters. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

**Appearance:** Standard description applies. Flavour: Subtle (if any) honey character, and may feature subtle to noticeable varietal character if a varietal honey is declared (different varieties have different intensities). Residual sweetness levels are minimal to none. Dry finish. May have more noticeable acidity due to low sweetness levels. Tannin levels may make a sweeter mead seem dry. Sulfury, harsh or yeasty fermentation characteristics are undesirable. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

**Mouthfeel:** Standard description applies, although the body is generally medium to light (but not watery). Note that stronger meads can have a fuller body. Sensations of body should not be accompanied by noticeable residual sweetness.

**Ingredients:** Standard description applies. Traditional Meads feature the character of a blended honey or a blend of honeys. Varietal meads feature the distinctive character of certain honeys. Show meads feature no additives, but this distinction is usually not obvious to judges.

**Entry Instructions:** See Introduction to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements. Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level and strength. Sweetness is assumed to be DRY in this category. Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties.

**Commercial Examples:** White Winter Dry Mead, Sky River Dry Mead, Intermiel Bouquet Printanier M1B.

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### 19.2. SEMI-SWEET MEAD

**Overall Impression:** Similar in balance, body, finish and flavour intensity to a semi-sweet (or medium-dry) white wine, with a pleasant mixture of honey character, light sweetness, soft fruity esters, and clean alcohol. Complexity, harmony, and balance of sensory elements are most desirable, with no inconsistencies in colour, aroma, flavour or aftertaste. The proper balance of sweetness, acidity, alcohol, and honey character is the essential final measure of any mead.

**Aroma:** Honey aroma should be noticeable, and can have a light sweetness that may express the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey

(different varieties have different intensities and characters). Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

**Appearance:** Standard description applies.

**Flavour:** Subtle to moderate honey character, and may feature subtle to noticeable varietal character if a varietal honey is declared (different varieties have different intensities). Residual sweetness levels are subtle to moderate. Medium-dry to lightly sweet finish. Tannin levels may make a sweet mead seem medium-dry. Sulfury, harsh or yeasty fermentation characteristics are undesirable. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

**Mouthfeel:** Standard description applies, although the body is generally medium-light to medium-full. Note that stronger meads can have a fuller body. Sensations of body should not be accompanied by a residual sweetness that is higher than moderate.

**Ingredients:** Standard description applies. Traditional Meads feature the character of a blended honey or a blend of honeys. Varietal meads feature the distinctive character of certain honeys. *Show meads* feature no additives, but this distinction is usually not obvious to judges.

**Entry Instructions:** See Introduction to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements. Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level and strength. Sweetness is assumed to be SEMI-SWEET in this category. Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties.

**Commercial Examples:** Lurgashall English Mead, Redstone Traditional Mountain Honey Wine, Sky River Semi-Sweet Mead, Intermiel Verge d'Or and Méliot

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### 19.3. SWEET MEAD

**Overall Impression:** Similar in balance, body, finish and flavour intensity to a well-made dessert wine (such as Sauternes), with a pleasant mixture of honey character, residual sweetness, soft fruity esters, and clean alcohol. Complexity, harmony, and balance of sensory elements are most desirable, with no inconsistencies in colour, aroma, flavour or aftertaste. The proper balance of sweetness, acidity, alcohol, and honey character is the essential final measure of any mead.

**Aroma:** Honey aroma should dominate, and is often moderately to strongly sweet and usually expresses the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey (different varieties have different intensities and characters). Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

**Appearance:** Standard description applies.

**Flavour:** Moderate to significant honey character, and may feature moderate to prominent varietal character if a varietal honey is declared (different varieties have different intensities). Residual sweetness levels are moderate to high. Sweet and full (but not cloying) finish. Balanced acidity and/or tannin helps keep the sweetness agreeable to the palate without being overwhelming. Sulfury, harsh or yeasty fermentation characteristics are

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

undesirable. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

**Mouthfeel:** Standard description applies, although the body is generally medium-full to full. Note that stronger meads will have a fuller body. Many examples will seem like a dessert wine. Sensations of body should not be accompanied by cloying, raw (unfermented) residual sweetness.

**Ingredients:** Standard description applies. Traditional Meads feature the character of a blended honey or a blend of honeys. Varietal meads feature the distinctive character of certain honeys. Show meads feature no additives, but this distinction is usually not obvious to judges. BJCP Mead Style Guidelines – 2015 Edition 5

**Entry Instructions:** See Introduction to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements. Entrants MUST specify carbonation level and strength. Sweetness is assumed to be SWEET in this category. Entrants MAY specify honey varieties.

**Commercial Examples:** Moonlight Sensual, Lurgashall Christmas Mead, Chaucer's Mead, Rabbit's Foot Sweet Wildflower Honey Mead, Intermiel Benoîte

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### 19.4. FRUIT MEAD (MELOMEL)

The **Fruit Mead or Melomel** subcategory is for fruit meads made with any fruit. This can include apples (cyser), grapes (pymment) berries, stone fruit or other fruits such as citrus fruit, dried fruits (dates, prunes, raisins, etc.), pears, figs, pomegranates, prickly pear, bananas, pineapples, and most other tropical fruit. It can also include combinations of fruits (such as grapes and stone fruit). The culinary, not botanical, definition of fruit is used here. If you have to justify a fruit using the word "technically" as part of the description, then that's not what we mean.

See the Introduction to Mead Guidelines for detailed descriptions of standard mead characteristics, an explanation of standard terms, and entering instructions.

Refer to the above style descriptions for additional detail on the character to be expected from dry, semi-sweet and sweet meads. Use those guidelines to judge distinctions between the various sweetness levels. Judging meads from dry to sweet is recommended as the primary ordering, with strength being the secondary ordering criterion.

**Overall Impression:** In well-made examples of the style, the fruit is both distinctive and well-incorporated into the honey-sweet-acid-tannin-alcohol balance of the mead. Different types of fruit can result in widely different characteristics; allow for a variation in the final product.

**Aroma:** Depending on the sweetness and strength, a subtle to distinctly identifiable honey and fruit character (dry and/or hydromel versions will tend to have lower aromatics than sweet and/or sack versions). The fruit character should display distinctive aromatics associated with the particular fruit(s); however, note that some fruit have stronger aromas and are more distinctive than others –

allow for a range of fruit character and intensity from subtle to aggressive. The fruit character should be pleasant and supportive, not artificial, raw (unfermented), and/or inappropriately overpowering (considering the character of the fruit). In a blended fruit melomel, not all the fruits may be individually identifiable or of equal intensity. The honey aroma should be noticeable, and can have a light to significant sweetness that may express the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey (different varieties have different intensities and characters). The bouquet should show a pleasant fermentation character, with clean and fresh aromatics being preferred. Stronger and/or sweeter versions will have higher alcohol and sweetness in the nose. Some tartness may be present if naturally occurring in the particular fruit(s), but should not be inappropriately intense. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

**Appearance:** Standard description applies, except with regard to colour. Colour may take on a very wide range of colours, depending on the variety of fruit and/or honey used. For lighter-coloured melomels with fruits that exhibit distinctive colours, the colour should be noticeable. Note that the colour of fruit in mead is often lighter than the flesh of the fruit itself and may take on slightly different shades. Meads made with lighter colour fruits can also take on colour from varietal honeys. In meads that produce a head, the head can take on some of the fruit colour as well.

**Flavour:** The fruit and honey flavour intensity may vary from subtle to high; the residual sweetness may vary from none to high; and the finish may range from dry to sweet, depending on what sweetness level has been declared (dry to sweet) and strength level has been declared (hydromel to sack). The natural acidity and tannin levels from fruit and fruit skins will vary, and this character is expected to be present in the mead, although in balance with sweetness, honey flavour, and alcohol. Tannin levels may make some meads seem drier than the residual sweetness might suggest. A melomel may have a subtle to strong honey character, and may feature noticeable to prominent varietal character if a varietal honey is declared (different varieties have different intensities). The distinctive flavour character associated with the particular fruit(s) should be noticeable, and may range in intensity from subtle to aggressive. The balance of fruit with the underlying mead is vital, and the fruit character should not be artificial, raw (unfermented), and/or inappropriately overpowering. In a melomel made with a combination of fruits, not all the fruits may be individually identifiable or of equal intensity. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

**Mouthfeel:** Standard description applies. Most will be wine-like. Some natural acidity and/or tannin are sometimes present (from certain fruit and/or fruit skin) and helps balance the overall impression. Fruit tannin can add body as well as some astringency. High levels of astringency are

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

undesirable. The acidity and tannin levels should be somewhat reflective of the fruit used.

**Ingredients:** Standard description applies. There should be an appealing blend of the fruit and honey character but not necessarily an even balance. A melomel can be made with a blend of fruits.

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

**Entry Instructions:** See Introduction to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements. Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level, strength, and sweetness. Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties. Entrants **MUST** specify the varieties of fruit used. A melomel that is spiced should be entered as a *Fruit and Spice Mead*. A melomel containing other ingredients should be entered as an *Experimental Mead*. Melomels made with either apples or grapes as the only fruit source should be entered as a *Cyser* or *Pymment*, respectively. Melomels with apples or grapes, plus other fruit should be entered in this category, not *Experimental Mead*.

**Commercial Examples:** Moonlight Blossom, White Winter Cyser, Rabbit's Foot Apple Cyser, Celestial Meads Que Syrah, Moonlight Slow Dance, Redstone Pinot Noir and White Pymment Mountain Honey Wines, Moonlight Blissful, Wild, Caress, and Mischief, White Winter Blueberry, Raspberry and Strawberry Melomels, Celestial Meads Miel Noir, Redstone Black Raspberry Nectar, Bees Brothers Raspberry Mead, Intermiel Honey Wine and Raspberries, Honey Wine and Blueberries, and Honey Wine and Blackcurrants, Mountain Meadows Cranberry Mead, Mountain Meadows Cherry Mead, Moonlight Entice, Sumptuous, Flirt, and Smitten, Redstone Sunshine Nectar, Moonlight Desire, Paramour, and Iniquity.

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### 19.5. FRUIT & SPICE MEAD

A ***Fruit and Spice Mead*** is a mead containing one or more fruits and one or more spices. See the definitions of fruit used in the various Fruit Mead styles; any ingredient qualifying there meets the "fruit" requirement here. For purposes of this style, the culinary, not botanical, definition of spice or herb is used here. If you have to justify a spice or herb using the word "technically" as part of the description, then that's not what we mean. The same definitions apply to this category as to the similarly-named beer category. In addition to the more obvious spices and herbs that fit into this style, the following ingredients also are explicitly included: roses, rose hips, ginger, chilli peppers, coffee, chocolate, nuts (including coconut), citrus peels/zest, and teas (except those strictly used for increasing tannin levels, not for adding flavour).

**Overall Impression:** In well-made examples of the style, the fruits and spices are both distinctive and well-incorporated into the honey-sweet-acid-tannin-alcohol balance of the mead. Different types of fruits and spices can result in widely different characteristics; allow for significant variation in the final product.

**Aroma:** Depending on the sweetness and strength, a subtle to distinctly identifiable honey, fruit, and spice character (dry and/or hydromel versions will tend to have lower aromatics than sweet and/or sack versions). The spice character should display distinctive aromatics associated with the particular spices; however, note that some spices (e.g., ginger, cinnamon) have stronger aromas and are more distinctive than others (e.g., chamomile, lavender) — allow for a range of spice character and intensity from subtle to aggressive. The spice character should be pleasant and supportive, not artificial and inappropriately overpowering (considering the character of the spice). The fruit character should display distinctive aromatics associated with the particular fruit; however, note that some fruits (e.g., raspberry, cherry) have stronger aromas and are more distinctive than others (e.g., peach) — allow for a range of fruit character and intensity from subtle to aggressive. The fruit character should be pleasant and supportive, not artificial, raw (unfermented) and/or inappropriately overpowering (considering the character of the fruit). In a mead with more than one fruit and/or spice, not all fruits and spices may be individually identifiable or of equal intensity. The honey aroma should be noticeable, and can have a light to significant sweetness that may express the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey (different varieties have different intensities and characters). The bouquet should show a pleasant fermentation character, with clean and fresh aromatics being preferred. Stronger and/or sweeter versions will have higher alcohol and sweetness in the nose. Some spices may produce spicy or peppery phenolics. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

**Appearance:** Standard description applies, except perhaps to note that the colour usually won't be affected by spices (although flowers, petals and peppers may provide subtle colours; tea blends may provide significant colours). The fruit may provide significant colour, and is generally evocative of the fruit used (although it may be of a lighter shade than the fruit skin).

**Flavour:** The spice flavour intensity may vary from subtle to high; the fruit flavour intensity may vary from subtle to high; the honey flavour intensity may vary from subtle to high; the residual sweetness may vary from none to high; and the finish may range from dry to sweet, depending on what sweetness level has been declared (dry to sweet) and strength level has been declared (hydromel to sack). The distinctive flavour character associated with the particular spices may range in intensity from subtle to aggressive (although some spices may not be individually recognizable, and can just serve to add a background complexity). Certain spices might add bitter, astringent, phenolic or spicy (hot) flavours; if present, these qualities should be related to the declared ingredients (otherwise, they are faults), and they should balance and blend with the honey, sweetness and alcohol. The distinctive flavour character associated with the particular fruits may range in intensity from subtle to aggressive

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

(although some fruits may not be individually recognizable, and can just serve to add a background complexity). Certain fruits might add acidic, bitter, astringent or flavours; if present, these qualities should be related to the declared ingredients (otherwise, they are faults), and they should balance and blend with the honey, sweetness and alcohol. Meads containing more than one fruit or spice should have a pleasant balance of the different fruits and spices, but this does not mean that all fruits and spices need to be of equal intensity or even individual identifiable. The mead may have a subtle to strong honey character, and may feature noticeable to prominent varietal character if a varietal honey is declared (different varieties have different intensities). Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

**Mouthfeel:** Standard description applies. Some fruits and spices may contain tannins that add a bit of body and some astringency, but this character should not be excessive.

**Ingredients:** Standard description applies. See the various *Fruit Mead* descriptions, as well as the *Spice, Herb, or Vegetable Mead* description for additional details.

**Comments:** Often, a blend of fruits and spices may give a character greater than the sum of its parts. The better examples of this style often use spices judiciously; when more than one spice are used, they are carefully selected so that they blend harmoniously with the fruit and with each other.

**Entry Instructions:** See Introduction to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements. Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level, strength, and sweetness. Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties. Entrants **MUST** specify the types of spices used, (although well-known spice blends may be referred to by common name, such as apple pie spices). Entrants **MUST** specify the types of fruits used. If only combinations of spices are used, enter as a *Spice, Herb, or Vegetable Mead*. If only combinations of fruits are used, enter as a *Melomel*. If other types of ingredients are used, enter as an *Experimental Mead*.

**Commercial Examples:** Moonlight Kurt's Apple Pie, Mojo, Flame, Fling, and Deviant, Celestial Meads Scheherazade, Rabbit's Foot Private Reserve Pear Mead, Intermiel Rosée

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### 19.6. BRAGGOT

A **Braggot** is a mead made with malt.

**Overall Impression:** A harmonious blend of mead and beer, with the distinctive characteristics of both. A wide range of results are possible, depending on the base style of beer, variety of honey and overall sweetness and strength. Beer flavours tend to somewhat mask typical honey flavours found in other meads.

**Aroma:** Depending on the sweetness, strength and base style of beer, a subtle to distinctly identifiable honey and beer character (dry and/or hydromel versions will tend to have lower aromatics than sweet and/or sack versions). The honey and

beer/malt character should be complementary and balanced, although not always evenly balanced. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey (different varieties have different intensities and characters). If a base style of beer or type of malt is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable character reflective of the beer style (different styles and malts have different intensities and characters). A hop aroma (any variety or intensity) is optional; if present, it should blend harmoniously with the other elements. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

**Appearance:** Standard description does not apply due to beerlike characteristics. Clarity may be good to brilliant, although many braggots are not as clear as other meads. A light to moderate head with some retention is expected if the mead is carbonated. Colour may range from light straw to dark brown or black, depending on the variety of malt and honey used. The colour should be characteristic of the declared beer style and/or honey used, if a variety is declared. Stronger versions may show signs of body (e.g., legs).

**Flavour:** Displays a balanced character identifiable as both a beer and a mead, although the relative intensity of flavours is greatly affected by the sweetness, strength, base style of beer, and variety of honey used. If a beer style is declared, the braggot should have some character traceable to the style although the flavours will be different due to the presence of honey. If a variety of honey is declared, the braggot should feature a subtle to prominent varietal character (different varieties have different intensities). Stronger and/or sweeter braggots should be expected to have a greater intensity of flavour than drier, lower gravity versions. The finish and aftertaste will vary based on the declared level of sweetness (dry to sweet), and may include both beer and mead components. A wide range of malt characteristics is allowable, from plain base malts to rich caramel and toast flavours to dark chocolate and roast flavours. Hop bitterness and flavour may be present, and may reflect any variety or intensity; however, this optional character should always be both suggestive of the base beer style and well blended with the other flavours. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

**Mouthfeel:** Standard description does not apply due to beerlike characteristics. Smooth mouthfeel without astringency. Body may vary from moderately light to full, depending on sweetness, strength, and the base style of beer. Note that stronger meads will have a fuller body. A very thin or watery body is undesirable, as is a cloying, raw sweetness. A warming sense of well-aged alcohol may be present in stronger examples. Carbonation will vary as described in the standard description. A still braggot will usually have some level of carbonation (like a cask bitter) since a completely flat beer is unappetizing. However, just as an aged barleywine may be still, some braggots can be totally still.

**Ingredients:** A braggot is a mead made with both honey and malt providing flavour and fermentable

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

extract. Originally, and alternatively, a mixture of mead and ale. A braggot can be made with any type of honey, and any type of base beer style. The malt component may be derived from grain or malt extracts. The beer may be hopped or not. If any other ingredients than honey and beer are contained in the braggot, it should be entered as an Experimental Mead. Smoked braggots may be entered in this category if using smoked malt or a smoked beer as the base style; braggots made using other smoked ingredients (e.g., liquid smoke, chipotles) should be entered in the Experimental Mead style.

**Comments:** Sometimes known as bracket or brackett. The fermentable sugars come from a balance of malt or malt extract and honey, although the specific balance is open to creative interpretation by brewers.

**Entry Instructions:** See Introduction to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements. Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level, strength, and sweetness. Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties. Entrants **MAY** specify the base style or beer or types of malt used. Products with a relatively low proportion of honey should be entered as an Alternative Sugar Beer.

**Commercial Examples:** Rabbit's Foot Diabhal and Bière de Miele, Magic Hat Braggot, Brother Adams Braggot Barleywine Ale, White Winter Traditional Brackett

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### 19.7. OTHER MEAD

An **Other or Experimental Mead** is a mead that does not fit into any other mead subcategory. This could apply to meads that blend multiple mead subcategories (unless the combination fits elsewhere, such as Melomel or Fruit and Spice Mead). Any experimental mead using additional sources of fermentables (e.g., maple syrup, molasses, brown sugar, or agave nectar), additional ingredients (e.g., liquors, smoke, etc.), alternative processes (e.g., icing), fermentation with non-traditional yeasts (e.g., *Brettanomyces*,

*Belgian lambic or ale, etc.*), or other unusual ingredient, process, or technique would also be appropriate in this category. Oak-aging does not necessarily force a mead into the Experimental Mead style unless the barrel has another characteristic (such as bourbon) in addition to the wood. No mead can be "out of style" for this category unless it fits into another existing mead category.

**Overall Impression:** This mead should exhibit the character of all of the ingredients in varying degrees, and should show a good blending or balance between the various flavour elements. Whatever ingredients are included, the result should be identifiable as a honey-based fermented beverage.

**Aroma, appearance, flavour, mouthfeel** generally follow the standard descriptions, yet note that all the characteristics may vary. Since a wide range of entries are possible, note that the characteristics may reflect combinations of the respective elements of the various sub-categories used in this style. Refer to Category M1 for a detailed description of the character of dry, semi-sweet and sweet mead. If the entered mead is a combination of other existing mead categories, refer to the constituent categories for a detailed description of the character of the component styles.

**Entry Instructions:** See Introduction to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements. Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level, strength, and sweetness. Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties. Entrants **MUST** specify the special nature of the mead, whether it is a combination of existing styles, an experimental mead, or some other creation. Any special ingredients that impart an identifiable character **MAY** be declared.

**Commercial Examples:** Moonlight Utopian, Hanssens/Lurgashall Mead the Gueuze, White Winter Cherry Bracket, Mountain Meadows Trickster's Treat Agave Mead



## 20. CIDER

### INTRODUCTION TO CIDER GUIDELINES

*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. **Perry** is fermented pear juice. The standard styles covers ciders and perries made primarily or entirely from the juice of apples or pears (but not both at once). The only adjunct permitted in the standard styles, and only in some styles, 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 flavours (brown sugar, molasses) would also create a Specialty cider (such as New England style).

### Aroma and Flavour

- Ciders and perries do not necessarily present overtly fruity aromas or flavours — 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 or perry 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.
  - **Dry:** below 0.4% residual sugar. This corresponds to a final specific gravity less than 1.002. There is no perception of sweetness.
  - **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.
  - **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.
  - **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.
  - **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 and perry: it must be sufficient to give a clean, refreshing impression without being puckering. Acidity (from malic acid 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 and perries 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. (Perries should not go through MLF because it will cause undesirable acetification.) In ciders made with tannic apples, the MLF commonly produces ethylphenols which are evident as other flavours: spicy/smoky including smoked meat, phenolic, and farmyard/old-horse. These flavours are desirable although not mandatory in English and French styles, but must not be over the top.

# 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

The spicysmoky 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 2 BJCP Cider Style Guidelines – 2015 Edition common. Perries are notoriously difficult to clear; as a result a slight haze is not a fault. 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 and perry have 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 and pear 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/perry 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-flavours (typically pH 3.8 or below). Sulfités may be added as needed for microbiological control. If used, the maximum accepted safe level for sulfités (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 backsweetening 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/Perry), 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/flavour from excessive use or misuse of sorbate (e.g., a geranium note) is a distinct fault.
- Carbonation may be either natural (by maintaining CO<sub>2</sub> pressure through processing or by bottle-conditioning) or added (by CO<sub>2</sub> 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.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

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### 20.1. NEW WORLD (COMMON) CIDER

**A New World Cider** (renamed from Common 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/Flavour:** Sweet or low-alcohol ciders may have apple aroma and flavour. 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 colour.

**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% C

**Commercial Examples:** [US] Uncle John’s Fruit House Winery Apple Hard Cider, Tandem Ciders Pretty Penny (MI), Bellwether Spyglass (NY), West County Pippin (MA), White Winter Hard Apple Cider (WI), Wandering Aengus Ciderworks Bloom (OR), Æppeltreow Appely Brut and Doux (WI).

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### 20.2. 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 flavour profile, long finish.

**Aroma/Flavour:** No overt apple character, but various flavours and esters that suggest apples, particularly tannic varieties. English-style ciders commonly go through MLF (see Introduction/Aroma-and-Flavour) which produces

desirable spicy/smoky, phenolic, and farmyard/old-horse characters. These flavour 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 colour.

**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, Yarlington Mill, Major, various Jerseys, etc.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.050 – 1.075  
FG: 0.995 – 1.015  
ABV: 6 – 9%

**Commercial Examples:** [US] Westcott Bay Traditional Very Dry, Dry and Medium Sweet (WA), Farnum Hill Extra-Dry, Dry, and Farmhouse (NH), Wandering Aengus Oaked Dry (OR), Montana CiderWorks North Fork (MT), Bellwether Heritage (NY). [UK] Oliver’s Traditional Dry, Hogan’s Dry and Medium Dry, Henney’s Dry and Vintage Still, Burrow Hill Medium, Aspull English Imperial.

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### 20.3. FRENCH CIDER

**French Cider** includes Normandy styles plus ciders inspired by those styles, including ciders made by various techniques to achieve the French flavour 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.

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/Flavour:** 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,

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

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 colour.

**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 Pommés, Michelin, etc.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.050 – 1.065  
FG: 1.010 – 1.020  
ABV: 3 – 6%

**Commercial Examples:** [US] West County Reine de Pomme (MA), [France] Eric Bordelet (various), Etienne Dupont, Etienne Dupont Organic, Bellot

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### 20.4. PERRY (NEW WORLD, TRADITIONAL)

**Perry** is made from pear juice. Entrants **MUST** state the sub-style and the additional information required in the descriptions below.

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#### NEW WORLD PERRY

**New World Perry** is made from culinary/table pears.

**Overall Impression:** Mild. Medium to medium-sweet. Still to lightly sparkling. Only very slight acetification is acceptable. Mousiness, ropy/oily characters are serious faults.

**Aroma/Flavour:** There is a pear character, but not obviously fruity. It tends toward that of a young white wine. No bitterness.

**Appearance:** Slightly cloudy to clear. Generally quite pale.

**Mouthfeel:** Relatively full, low to moderate tannin apparent as astringency.

**Comments:** Some table pears may contain significant amounts of sorbitol, in which case a dry perry may give an impression of sweetness due to sorbitol in the pears. Perception of sorbitol as sweet is highly variable from one person to the next. Hence, entrants should specify sweetness according to actual residual sugar amount, and judges must be aware that they might perceive more sweetness than how the perry was entered.

**Entry Instructions:** Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level (3 levels). Entrants **MUST** specify sweetness (5 categories). Varieties: Bartlett, Kiefer, Comice, Conference, etc.

#### Vital Statistics:

OG: 1.050 – 1.060  
FG: 1.000 – 1.020  
ABV: 5 – 7%

**Commercial Examples:** [US] White Winter Paarynat (WI), Uncle John's Fruit House Winery Perry (MI)

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#### TRADITIONAL PERRY

**Traditional Perry** is made from pears grown specifically for that purpose rather than for eating or cooking. Many "perry pears" are nearly inedible due to high tannins; some are also quite hard. Perry pears may contain substantial amounts of sorbitol, a non-fermentable sweet-tasting compound. Hence a perry can be completely dry (no residual sugar) yet taste sweet.

**Overall Impression:** Tannic. Medium to medium-sweet. Still to lightly sparkling. Only very slight acetification is acceptable. Mousiness and ropy/oily characters are serious faults.

**Aroma/Flavour:** There is a pear character, but not obviously fruity. It tends toward that of a young white wine. Some slight bitterness.

**Appearance:** Slightly cloudy to clear. Generally quite pale.

**Mouthfeel:** Relatively full, moderate to high tannin apparent as astringency.

**Comments:** Note that a dry perry may give an impression of sweetness due to sorbitol in the pears, and perception of sorbitol as sweet is highly variable from one person to the next. Hence entrants should specify sweetness according to actual residual sugar amount, and judges must be aware that they might perceive more sweetness than how the perry was entered.

**Entry Instructions:** Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level (3 levels). Entrants **MUST** specify sweetness (5 categories). Entrants **MUST** state variety of pear(s) used. Varieties: Butt, Gin, Brandy, Barland, Blakeney Red, Thorn, Moorcroft, etc.

#### Vital Statistics:

OG: 1.050 – 1.070  
FG: 1.000 – 1.020  
ABV: 5 – 9%

**Commercial Examples:** [US] Æppeltreow Orchard Oriole Perry (WI); [France] Bordelet Poire Authentique and Poire Granit, Christian Drouin Poire, [UK] Oliver's Classic, Blakeney Red, and Herefordshire Dry; Hogan's Vintage Perry.

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### 20.5. OTHER CIDER/PERRY

This is an open-ended style for perry or other ciders, which may include other adjuncts such that it does not fit any of the other styles. This includes the use of spices and/or other sweeteners. A cider with added honey may be entered here if the cider character remains dominant. Otherwise it should be entered as a cyser in the mead category.

## 2017 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines

**Aroma/Flavour:** The cider character must always be present, and must fit with adjuncts.

**Appearance:** Clear to brilliant. Colour should be that of a common cider unless adjuncts are expected to contribute colour.

**Mouthfeel:** Average body, may show tannic (astringent) or heavy body as determined by adjuncts.

**Comments:** Entrants MUST specify all major ingredients and adjuncts. Entrants MUST specify carbonation level (still, petillant, or sparkling). Entrants MUST specify sweetness (dry or medium).

**Vital Statistics:**

OG: 1045-1100

FG: 995-1020

ABV: 5-12%