

2007 VicBrew Style Guidelines for Cider and Mead

For categories 1 (Low Alcohol) to 14 (Fruit & Other Specialty), see the
“*2007 Australian Amateur Brewing Championship Style Guidelines*”

Entries will be judged against the Style Guidelines in this document. For this reason, brewers must specify one of the listed Styles for each entry. The organizers reserve the right to reclassify non-conforming entries to a listed Style.

Introduction to Cider Guidelines p. 3

15. CIDER p. 4

15.1 Dry Cider

15.2 Sweet Cider

Introduction to Mead Guidelines p. 5

16. MEAD p. 7

16.1 Dry Mead

16.2 Sweet Mead

16.3 Cyser

16.4 Braggot

16.5 Melomel

16.6 Metheglin

16.7 Pymment

VITAL STATISTICS OF STYLES p. 10

PREFACE TO 2004 BJCP STYLE GUIDELINES, UPON WHICH THE AABC2007 GUIDELINES ARE BASED

Notes to All:

The style categories have been extensively revised from previous editions of the style guideline. In some cases, style parameters, descriptions, and well-known commercial examples have been changed. Please familiarize yourself with the new guidelines before using them.

The style categories have been renumbered, reordered and recategorized. Please double-check the guidelines to ensure the style number matches the name you are referencing.

Notes to Brewers:

Some styles require additional information to help judges evaluate your beer. Read the guidelines carefully and provide the required information. Omitting required information will likely result in a mis-judged beer.

If you enter a specialty or experimental beer not identified in the guidelines, or use unusual ingredients, please consider providing supplemental information so the judges can properly understand your beer and intent.

Notes to Organizers:

Please ensure that supplemental information submitted by brewers is available to the judges.

If brewers omit required information, please seek clarification from the brewers before the competition date.

You are free to group style categories and sub-categories in whatever logical groupings you wish for the purpose of your competition, taking into account the number of entries and available judges.

You are free to split and regroup style categories for the purpose of your competition, if you feel that a different grouping would be beneficial to your entrants. You are not constrained to keep all sub-categories within a major category together when constructing flights.

Notes to Judges:

Understand that most beer styles are not defined by a single beer. Many styles are quite broad and can encompass multiple stylistically accurate variants. Do not let your understanding of a single beer limit your appreciation of the full range of each beer style.

You are free to judge beers in a flight in whatever order makes sense to you, although you should try to sequence the beers in a manner that allows you to preserve your senses and to fairly evaluate each beer.

Pay careful attention to the modifiers used in describing the styles. Look for guidance on the magnitude and quality of each characteristic. Notice that many characteristics are optional; beers not evidencing these non-required elements should not be marked down. Phrases such as “may have”, “can contain”, “might feature”, “is acceptable”, “is appropriate”, “is typical”, etc. all indicate optional elements. Required elements are generally written as declaratory phrases, or use words such as “must” or “should”. Elements that must not be present often use phrases such as “is inappropriate”, “no”, or “must not”.

Seek to understand the intent of the style categories and to judge each beer in its entirety. Don't overly focus on single elements.

Look to the overall balance and character of the beer for your final opinion.

If a style guideline calls for required information from the brewer, but this information has not been provided to you please request it from the competition organizer. If the organizer does not have the information, then make a quick evaluation and decide how you wish to categorize the entry. Make note of it on your score sheet and then judge it as such. It may not always be accurate, but it's the best you can do under the circumstances. Do not overly penalize the brewer for missing information; it might not be his fault. Do the best you can and use common sense.

If you come across a beer that is clearly out of style, check with the organizer to make sure the entry has been properly labeled and/or categorized. Handling errors do occur.

Acknowledgements:

The committee would like to acknowledge the significant effort made by the 1998-1999 style committee in revising and updating the 1997 guidelines. Their work has been extended and expanded, but not forgotten. Their names appear on the title page of this document.

The committee thanks the volunteer reviewers and individual contributors whose efforts improved the guidelines. Those who helped in the development or review are listed on the title page of this document.

The 1997 BJCP guidelines were derived from the New England Homebrew Guidelines, and were primarily authored by Steve Stroud, Pat Baker and Betty Ann Sather. Mead guidelines were added to the 1997 guidelines based on the work of Tom Fitzpatrick, Steve Dempsey, Michael Hall, Dan McConnell, Ken Schramm, Ted Major and John Carlson.

INTRODUCTION TO CIDER GUIDELINES

Cider is fermented apple juice.

Aroma and Flavour:

- Ciders 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. In fact, a simple "apple soda" or "wine cooler" character is not desirable in a cider.
- Some styles of cider exhibit distinctly UN-fruity tastes or aromas, such as the "smoky bacon" undertones of a dry English cider.
- The sweetness (residual sugar, or RS) of a cider may vary from absolutely dry (no RS) to as much as a sweet dessert wine (10% or more RS). In sweeter ciders, other components of taste—particularly acidity—must balance the sweetness. The level of sweetness must be specified in order to arrange flights of tastings and entries within flights. Tasting always proceeds from drier to sweeter. There are three categories of sweetness:
 - Dry: below 0.9% residual sugar. This corresponds to a final specific gravity of under 1.002.
 - Medium: in the range between dry and sweet (0.9% to 4% residual sugar, final gravity 1.002 to 1.012). Sometimes characterized as either 'off-dry' or 'semi-sweet.'
 - Sweet: above 4% residual sugar, roughly equivalent to a final gravity of over 1.012.

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.

- Acidity is an essential element of cider: it must be sufficient to give a clean, refreshing impression without being puckering. Acidity (from malic and in some cases lactic acids) must not be confused with acetification (from acetic acid—vinegar): the acrid aroma and tingling taste of acetification is a fault.
- Ciders vary considerably in tannin. This affects both bitterness and astringency (see "Mouthfeel" below). If made from culinary or table fruit, tannins are typically low; nevertheless some tannin is desirable to balance the character. The character contributed by tannin should be mainly astringency rather than bitterness. An overt or forward bitterness is a fault (and is often due to processing techniques rather than fruit).

Appearance:

- Clarity may vary from good to brilliant. The lack of sparkling clarity is not a fault, but visible particles are undesirable. In some styles a "rustic" lack of brilliance is common. However, a "sheen" 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 moderate carbonation level is termed petillant. Highly carbonated is termed sparkling. At the higher levels of carbonation, the "mousse" (head) may be retained for a short time. However, gushing, foaming, and difficult-to-manage heads are faults.

Mouthfeel:

- In general, cider has a mouthfeel and fullness akin to a substantial white wine. The body is less than that of beers. Full-sparkling ciders will be champagne-like.

Ingredients:

- The apple varieties are intended to illustrate commonly used examples, not dictate requirements when making the style.
- In general, adjuncts are prohibited except where specifically allowed in particular styles, and then the entrant must state them. Common processing aids, and enzymes, are generally allowed as long as they are not detectable in the finished cider.
- Yeast used for cider may be either "natural" (the yeast which occurs on the fruit itself and/or is retained in the milling and pressing equipment) or cultured yeast. Malolactic 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). Entrant **MUST** state if malic acid was added.
- Sulfites may be added as needed for microbiological control. If used, the maximum accepted safe level for sulfites (200 mg/l) should be strictly observed; moreover, any excess sulfite that is detectable in the finished cider (a "burning match" character) is a serious fault.
- Sorbate may be added at bottling to stabilize the cider. However, any residual aroma/flavour from misuse or excessive use of sorbate (e.g., a "geranium" note) is a distinct fault.
- Carbonation may be either natural (by maintaining CO₂ pressure through processing or by bottle-conditioning) or added (by CO₂ injection).

15. CIDER

15.1 Dry Cider

Aroma/Flavour: Dry ciders are usually wine-like with some esters, in contrast to sweet ciders that may have apple aroma and flavour. Sugar and acidity should combine to give a refreshing character, neither cloying nor too austere. Medium to high acidity.

Appearance: Clear to brilliant, pale straw to medium gold in colour.

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

Overall Impression: Variable, but should be a medium, refreshing drink. Dry ciders must not be too austere. An ideal cider serves well as a "session" drink, and suitably accompanies a wide variety of food.

Comments: Entrants must specify carbonation level (still, petillant, or sparkling).

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

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	ABV
1045-1065	995-1002	5.0-8.0%

15.2 Sweet Cider

Aroma/Flavour: Sweet or low-alcohol ciders may have apple aroma and flavour, in contrast to dry ciders that are more wine-like with some esters. Acidity should give a refreshing character, but not too austere. Medium to high acidity.

Appearance: Clear to brilliant, pale straw to medium gold in colour.

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

Overall Impression: Variable, but should be a medium, refreshing drink. Must not be cloying. An ideal cider serves well as a "session" drink, and suitably accompanies a wide variety of food.

Comments: Entrants must specify carbonation level (still, petillant, or sparkling).

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

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	ABV
1045-1065	1012-1020+	4.0-7.0%

INTRODUCTION TO MEAD GUIDELINES

The following discussion applies to all the mead styles, except where explicitly superseded in the sub-category 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 that must be specified:

- **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.
- **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 soda pop.
- **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.
- **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 unknown or mixed flowers.
- **Special ingredients.** Different sub-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.

2. Common Mead Characteristics:

- **Appearance:** Clarity may be good to brilliant. Crystal clear, reflective examples with a bright, distinct meniscus are highly desirable. Observable particulates (even in a 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.

- **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 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 smells arising from the combination of ingredients, fermentation and aging) should show a pleasant fermentation character, with clean and fresh aromatics being preferred over dirty, yeasty, or sulfury notes. A multi-faceted bouquet, also known as complexity or depth, is a positive attribute. Phenolic or diacetyl aromatics should not be present. Harsh or chemical aromatics should not be present. Light oxidation may be present, depending on age, and may result in sherry-like notes, which are acceptable in low to moderate levels (if in balance, these can add to complexity). An excessive sherry character is a fault in most styles (except certain Polish-style specialties, or other meads attempting a sherry-like character). Oxidation resulting in a papery character is always undesirable. 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 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. 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 or solventy. Light oxidation may be present, depending on age, but an excessive sherry-like or papery character should be avoided. Aging and conditioning generally smooth out flavours and create a more elegant, blended, rounded product. 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. Smooth texture. 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. 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, chemicals, or the use of oak aging; however, these additives should not be readily discernable in flavour or aroma. Yeast nutrients may be used but should not be detected. If citrus, tea, or oak additives result in flavour components above a low, background, balance-adjusting level, the resulting mead should be entered appropriately (e.g., as a metheglin or open category mead, not a traditional).
- **Vital Statistics:**

OG: hydromel: 1.035 – 1.080
standard: 1.080 – 1.120
sack: 1.120 – 1.140+

ABV: hydromel: 3.5 – 7.5%
standard: 7.5 – 14%
sack: 14 – 18%

FG: dry: 0.990 – 1.010
semi-sweet: 1.010 – 1.025
sweet: 1.025 – 1.040+

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. Melomels and pyments can have orange, red, pink and/or purple hues. Cysers are most often golden. 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. Entering and Categorizing Meads:

- **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; sweet).

- **Optional Requirements:** Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties used. 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.
- **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 ingredient or method is used.
- **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.

16. MEAD

16.1 Dry 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). No to minimal residual sweetness with a dry finish. Sulfury, harsh or yeasty fermentation characteristics are undesirable. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Mouthfeel: Standard description applies, although the body is generally light to medium. Note that stronger meads will have a fuller body. Sensations of body should not be accompanied by noticeable residual sweetness.

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.

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.

Comments: See standard description for entrance 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

16.2 Sweet 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). Moderate to high residual sweetness with a sweet and full (but not cloying) finish. 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-full to full. Note that stronger meads will have a fuller body. Many seem like a dessert wine. Sensations of body should not be accompanied by cloying, raw residual sweetness.

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.

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.

Comments: See standard description for entrance requirements. Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level and strength. Sweetness is assumed to be SWEET in this category. Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties.

Commercial Examples: Lurgashall Christmas Mead, Chaucer’s Mead, Rabbit’s Foot Sweet Wildflower Honey Mead

16.3 Cyser (Apple Melomel)

Aroma: Depending on the sweetness and strength, a subtle to distinctly identifiable honey and apple/cider character (dry and/or hydromel versions will tend to have lower aromatics than sweet and/or sack versions). The apple/cider character should be clean and distinctive; it can express a range of apple-based character ranging from a subtle fruitiness to a single varietal apple character (if declared) to a complex blend of apple aromatics. Some spicy or earthy notes may be present, as may a slightly sulfury character.

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. Slight spicy phenolics from certain apple varieties are acceptable, as is a light diacetyl character from malolactic fermentation (both are optional). Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Appearance: Standard description applies, except with regard to colour. Colour may range from pale straw to deep golden amber (most are yellow to gold), depending on the variety of honey and blend of apples or ciders used.

Flavour: The apple and honey flavour intensity may vary from none 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). Natural acidity and tannin in apples may give some tartness and astringency to balance the sweetness, honey flavour and alcohol. A cyser 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). Slight spicy phenolics from certain apple varieties are acceptable, as are a light diacetyl character from malolactic fermentation and a slight sulfur character (all are optional). Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Mouthfeel: Standard description applies. Often wine-like. Some natural acidity is usually present (from the blend of apples) and helps balance the overall impression. Some apples can provide natural astringency, but this character should not be excessive.

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. Some of the best strong examples have the taste and aroma of an aged Calvados (apple brandy from northern France), while subtle, dry versions can taste similar to many fine white wines.

Ingredients: Standard description applies. Cyser is a standard mead made with the addition of apples or apple juice.

Traditionally, cysers are made by the addition of honey to apple juice without additional water. A spiced cyser, or a cyser with other ingredients, should be entered as an Open Category Mead.

Comments: There should be an appealing blend of the fruit and honey character but not necessarily an even balance. Generally a good tannin-sweetness balance is desired, though very dry and very sweet examples do exist. See standard description for entrance requirements. Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level, strength, and sweetness. Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties. Entrants

MAY specify the varieties of apple used; if specified, a varietal character will be expected. Products with a relatively low proportion of honey are better entered as a Specialty Cider.

Commercial Examples: White Winter Cyser

16.4 Braggot

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 beer-like 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. 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 beer-like 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.

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.

Ingredients: A braggot is a standard mead made with both honey and malt providing flavour and fermentable 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 Open Category 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 Open Category 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. See standard description for entrance 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 in the Specialty Beer category as a Honey Beer.

Commercial Examples: Magic Hat Braggot, Brother Adams Braggot Barleywine Ale, White Winter Traditional Brackett

16.6 Metheglin

Aroma: Depending on the sweetness and strength, a subtle to distinctly identifiable honey and herb/spice character (dry and/or hydromel versions will tend to have lower aromatics than sweet and/or sack versions). The herb/spice character should display distinctive aromatics associated with the particular herbs/spices; however, note that some herbs/spices (e.g., ginger, cinnamon) have stronger aromas and are more distinctive than others (e.g., chamomile, lavender)—allow for a range of herb/spice character and intensity from subtle to aggressive. The herb/spice character should be pleasant and supportive, not artificial and inappropriately overpowering (considering the character of the herb/spice). In a blended herb/spice metheglin, not all herbs/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 herbs and 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 and herbs (although flowers, petals and peppers may provide subtle colours; tea blends may provide significant colours).

Flavour: The herb/spice 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 herbs/spices may range in intensity from subtle to aggressive (although some herbs/spices may not be individually recognizable, and can just serve to add a background complexity). Certain herbs and 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. Metheglins containing more than one herb/spice should have a good balance among the different herbs/spices, though some herbs/spices will tend to dominate the flavour profile. A metheglin 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 herbs or spices may contain tannins that add a bit of body and some astringency, but this character should not be excessive.

Overall Impression: In well-made examples of the style, the herbs/spices are both distinctive and well-incorporated into the honey-sweet-acid-tannin-alcohol balance of the mead. Different types of herbs/spices can result in widely different characteristics; allow for a variation in the final product.

Ingredients: Standard description applies. A metheglin is a standard mead made with the addition of spices or herbs. Meads made with flowers (such as rose petal mead, or rhodomel) or chile peppers (capsimel/capsicumel) may also be entered in this category, as can meads made with a blend of spices. If spices are used in conjunction with other ingredients such as fruit, cider, or other fermentables, then the mead should be entered as an Open Category Mead.

Comments: Often, a blend of spices may give a character greater than the sum of its parts. The better examples of this style use spices/herbs subtly and when more than one are used, they are carefully selected so that they blend harmoniously. [See standard description for entrance requirements.](#) Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level, strength, and sweetness. Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties. Entrants **MUST** specify the types of spices used.

Commercial Examples: Bonair Chili Mead

16.7 Pyment (Grape Melomel)

Aroma: Depending on the sweetness and strength, a subtle to distinctly identifiable honey and grape/wine character (dry and/or hydromel versions will tend to have lower aromatics than sweet and/or sack versions). The grape/wine character should be clean and distinctive; it can express a range of grape-based character ranging from a subtle fruitiness to a single varietal grape character (if declared) to a complex blend of grape or wine aromatics. Some complex, spicy, grassy or earthy notes may be present (as in wine). 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. Slight spicy phenolics from certain red grape varieties are acceptable, as is a light diacetyl character from malolactic fermentation in certain white grape varieties (both are optional). Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Appearance: Standard description applies, except with regard to colour. Colour may range from pale straw to deep purple-red, depending on the variety of grapes and honey used. The colour should be characteristic of the variety or type of grape used, although white grape varieties may also take on colour derived from the honey variety.

Flavour: The grape/wine 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). Natural acidity and tannin in grapes may give some tartness and astringency to balance the sweetness, honey flavour and alcohol. A pyment 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). Depending on the grape variety, some fruity, spicy, grassy, buttery, earthy, mineral, and/or floral flavours may be present. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Mouthfeel: Standard description applies. Wine-like. Some natural acidity is usually present (from grapes) and helps balance the overall impression. Grape tannin and/or grape skins can add body as well as some astringency, although this character should not be excessive. Longer aging can smooth out tannin-based astringency.

Overall Impression: In well-made examples of the style, the grape is both distinctively vinous and well-incorporated into the honey-

sweet-acid-tannin-alcohol balance of the mead. White and red versions can be quite different, and the overall impression should be characteristic of the type of grapes used and suggestive of a similar variety wine.

Ingredients: Standard description applies. A pyment is a standard mead made with the addition of grapes or grape juices.

Alternatively, the pyment may be a homemade grape-based wine sweetened with honey, or a mead mixed with homemade grape-based wine after fermentation. A spiced pyment (hippocras), or a pyment with other ingredients should be entered as an Open Category Mead.

Comments: There should be an appealing blend of the fruit and honey character but not necessarily an even balance. Generally a good tannin-sweetness balance is desired, though very dry and very sweet examples do exist. [See standard description for entrance requirements.](#) Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level, strength, and sweetness. Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties. Entrants **MAY** specify the varieties of grape used; if specified, a varietal character will be expected.

Commercial Examples: Redstone “Pinot Noir” Mountain Honey Wine

2007 VICBREW STYLE CHART – CIDER & MEAD

STYLE	OG	FG	ABV%
15. CIDER			
15.1 Dry Cider	1045-1065+	995-1002	5.0-8.0%
15.2 Sweet Cider	1045-1065+	1012-1020+	5.0-8.0%
General classification of ciders	Dry	995-1002	
	Semi-sweet	1002-1012	
	Sweet	1012-1020+	
16 MEAD			
16.1 Dry Mead	Variable	Variable	
16.2 Sweet Mead	Variable	Variable	
16.3 Cyser	Variable	Variable	
16.4 Braggot	Variable	Variable	
16.5 Melomel	Variable	Variable	
16.6 Metheglin	Variable	Variable	
16.7 Pymment	Variable	Variable	
General classification of meads – Lighter	1035-1080		
Standard	1080-1120		
Sack	1120-1140+		
	Dry	990-1010	
	Semi-Sweet	1010-1025	
	Sweet	1020-1040+	