



**British Columbia Amateur Winemakers Association  
Excerpts of Class Descriptions from the Competition  
Handbook**

**Thirteenth Revised Edition**

**June 2017**

## PART III. BCAWA OFFICIAL CLASSES

### Wine and Cider Class Descriptions

Numerical data given under "Technical Characteristics" are not intended to provide absolutely rigid bounds; rather, they are for the general guidance of Competitor and Judge. The term "varietal" refers to a wine with 85% or more of the named variety. Examples are given for clarification and are not intended to be prescriptive.

Wines in Classes E1 through E7 are red wines to be consumed with food. Better wines in these classes are virtually free of residual sugar, although a well-balanced and well-aged wine will have a softness that could be mistaken for sweetness. The garnet edge of a well-matured wine is preferable to the red-purple of a young wine.

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#### **Class A. Aperitif Sherry**

This class is intended for dry and not very sweet sherry, Madeira and related wines.

The very sweet wines of these types belong in the After Dinner Class.

#### **Technical Characteristics**

Ingredients: Commonly used grapes would include Palomino and Muscat. Herbs and other flavourings should NOT be used in this class.

|                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Alcohol:          | 15.5% - 20%       |
| Colour:           | No restrictions   |
| Sugar:            | 0% - 10%          |
| Specific Gravity: | 0.980 - 1.007     |
| Acid:             | 4.0 g/l - 5.5 g/l |
| pH:               | 2.9 - 3.3         |

**Class B. Aperitif**

Herbed or otherwise flavoured wine for use as an aperitif. Wines that exhibit the strong aperitif characteristic of the ingredient such as citrus, muscat, or other strongly-flavoured fruits belong in this class. The class includes vermouth type wines as well as those similar to the patent aperitifs. Most tend to the sweet rather than the dry end of the sugar spectrum.

**Technical Characteristics**

|                   |                                         |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Ingredients:      | No restrictions.                        |
| Alcohol:          | 16% - 18%                               |
| Colour:           | No restrictions.                        |
| Sugar:            | Medium to very sweet.                   |
| Specific Gravity: | 1.000 - 1.040                           |
| Acid:             | 4.0 g/L - 5.0 g/L                       |
| Tannin:           | May be somewhat astringent.             |
| Bitterness:       | A bitter characteristic is permissible. |

**Class C1. Chardonnay**

A white wine to be consumed with food. Wines must contain at least 85% Chardonnay.

**Wine Characteristics**

A dry, full bodied white with rich mouthfeel. .Apple, pear, fig, melon, peach, pineapple, lemon, grapefruit, along with nutmeg, honey, butter, butterscotch. Any combination of barrel fermentation and/or aging, sur lie, stirring, ML may require time to develop in glass. Oak should blend with fruit.

**Technical Characteristics**

|                   |                                                       |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Ingredients:      | Grapes                                                |
| Alcohol:          | 9% - 15%                                              |
| Colour:           | Pale straw to golden. No amber, brown or grey tinges. |
| Sugar:            | 0.0% - 1.0%                                           |
| Specific Gravity: | 0.990 - 0.995                                         |
| Acidity:          | 6.0 g/L - 7.5 g/L                                     |
| pH:               | 3.0 - 3.7                                             |

## **Class C2. Aromatic White Vinifera**

A dry to off-dry white wine (0% to 3% Residual Sugar) from *Vitis vinifera* grapes such as any of the muscats, Bacchus, Ehrenfelser, Gewürztraminer, Malvasia, Optima, Ortega, Pearl of Csaba, Scheurebe, Schönburger, Siegerrebe, Symphony, Viognier, or White Riesling. Aromatic non-vinifera grape wines are acceptable in this class. Unblended varietals that demonstrate a striking perfumed quality tend to be more successful than blends. Aromatic quality may reflect floral characters, fruit characters, or both. Preferred examples will usually have been cold-fermented. The final decisions about which entries best represent the concept of 'aromatic' must be left to the judges. Wines in this class should be judged cool.

### **Wine Characteristics**

**Gewürztraminer.** Floral (rose petal), lychees, peach, apricot, grapefruit, anise, spicy. Oak should be very subtle, if present. Slight bitterness acceptable varietal character. Noticeable acidity acceptable. May have pink or bronze tints.

**Muscats.** Strong, spicy, floral, musky, orange peel, ripe peach, table grape characters expected. Usually short to medium finish. Seldom oaked. Muscat of Alexandria, Golden Muscat, Orange Muscat, White Muscat, Morio Muscat, Muscat Ottonel, etc.

**White Riesling.** Floral, honeysuckle, lychee, apricot, citrus, apple, peach, lime, pie crust, mineral, and petroleum notes reported. “Racy” acidity. Long finish.

**Viognier.** Honeysuckle, jasmine, primroses, apricots and peaches, candied peel, musk and spice. Creamy mouthfeel.

### **Technical Characteristics**

|                   |                                                                                         |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ingredients:      | Grapes                                                                                  |
| Alcohol:          | 9% - 13.5%.                                                                             |
| Colour:           | Pale bronze or bronze-pink to pale straw to light gold. No amber, brown or grey tinges. |
| Sugar:            | 0.0% - 2%.                                                                              |
| Specific Gravity: | 0.990 – 1.000.                                                                          |
| Acidity:          | 6.5g/L – 8.0g/L. pH: 3.0 - 3.7.                                                         |

**Class C4. Other Dry White**

This class contains all other white wines, either varietals or blends, which do not fit the descriptions of Classes C1 (Chardonnay), C5 (White Pinot), or C2 (Aromatic White Vinifera). A white wine to be consumed with food. Varietal vinifera wines in this class must contain 85% or more of vinifera varieties such as Auxerrois, Chasselas, Chenin blanc, Colombard, Grüner Veltliner, Madeleine Angevine, Sauvignon blanc, Semillon, or Trebbiano. The remaining 15% may be any ingredient. Blends in this class must not fit the definitions of C1, C5, or C2. Wines that include interspecific hybrid grapes are acceptable in this class and their ingredient percentages must be specified so their eligibility in the appropriate AWC class can be determined. Aromatic white grape varieties are acceptable in blends provided their impact is subdued. Non-grape dry white table wines belong in either this class or J1 (Country Table).

**Technical Characteristics**

|                   |                                                                                         |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alcohol:          | 9% - 13.5%.                                                                             |
| Colour:           | Pale bronze or bronze-pink to pale straw to light gold. No amber, brown or grey tinges. |
| Sugar:            | 0.0% - 1.5%.                                                                            |
| Specific Gravity: | 0.990 - 0.998.                                                                          |
| Acidity:          | 6.0g/L - 7.5g/L. pH: 3.0 - 3.7.                                                         |

### **Class C5. Dry White Pinot**

A white wine to be consumed with food. Varietal wines in the Dry White Pinot Family Class must contain at least 85% of any one of the following varieties: Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, white juice from Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier or Gamay Noir.

Blended wines in the Dry White Pinot Family Class must contain at least 85 % of any two or more of the above varieties.

### **Wine Characteristics**

**Pinot blanc.** Ripe pear, spice, citrus and honey. Oak should not overpower. Styles range from fruity to Chardonnay-like complexity.

**Pinot gris.** Aromas of tropical fruit, tangerine, floral perfume, magnolia blossom, smoky, anise. In the mouth, flavours of citrus, tangerine, peach, anise, almond and pear. Should have excellent mouth feel and lingering finish. Oak usually not very successful. May have pink or bronze tints.

### **Technical Characteristics**

|                   |                                                                                         |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ingredients:      | Grapes                                                                                  |
| Alcohol:          | 9% - 15%                                                                                |
| Colour:           | Pale bronze or bronze-pink to pale straw to light gold. No amber, brown or grey tinges. |
| Sugar:            | 0.0% - 1.5%                                                                             |
| Specific Gravity: | .990 - .997                                                                             |
| Acid:             | 6g/l - 8.5g/l                                                                           |
| pH:               | 3.0 - 3.7                                                                               |

All entries in this class will be considered for the AWC National Competition as BCAWA Class C4, Other Dry White.

**Class D. Rosé**

Light, refreshing pink wines. In grape rosé wines, varietal characteristic is a definite plus. Strongly aromatic wines such as raspberry are generally unsuitable for use as table wines.

**Technical Characteristics**

|                   |                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ingredients:      | Red and black grapes with colourless juice are most successful, but blends of red and white wines are permitted. |
| Alcohol:          | 9% - 12%                                                                                                         |
| Colour:           | Pink: pale to deep. An orange tinge is permissible. Red or purple are undesirable. Amber is unacceptable.        |
| Sugar:            | 0% - 1.5%                                                                                                        |
| Specific Gravity: | 0.990 - 0.998                                                                                                    |
| Acid:             | 6.0 g/L - 7.5 g/L                                                                                                |
| pH:               | 3.1 - 3.7                                                                                                        |

## **Class E1. Dry Bordeaux Style Red**

**Varietal** (= single variety) wines in this class are those that contain at least 85% of any one of the following five varieties: Cabernet franc, Carmenere, Malbec, Merlot, or Petit Verdot. Note that any other grape variety or varieties may be used in the remaining 15%. Note that varietal Cabernet Sauvignon wines belong only in Class E7.

**Blended** wines in this class must contain at least 85% of any two or more of the following six varieties: Cabernet franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Carmenere, Malbec, Merlot, or Petit Verdot. Note that any other grape variety or varieties may be used in the remaining 15%. Note that Cabernet Sauvignon is permitted in this class as a component of a blend.

Theoretically, a wine with 84% Cabernet Sauvignon and 16% other Bordeaux varieties would belong in this class, but the best wines will usually be those in which no single variety monopolizes the blend and in which the several varieties have combined to produce elegant complexity.

### **Wine Characteristics**

**Cabernet franc.** Similar in nose and flavour to Cabernet Sauvignon but tending towards coffee and blueberry characters and seldom without a more or less distinctive bell pepper, canned green bean/canned asparagus (methoxypyrazine) character. That character should not be considered a flaw in otherwise good wines but good wines in which it is least aggressive will likely be correspondingly rewarded.

**Carmenere.** Unless very ripe, tends to exhibit bell pepper herbaceousness. Black currant, smoke, raspberry, earth, spice, violets on the nose. Plummy, black fruit, tea, chocolate, dried herbs in the flavour.

**Malbec.** Flavours of earth, truffles and dark chocolate accompany the black and red berry flavors.

**Merlot.** Herbal, cherry, raspberry, plum, eucalyptus, cedar, bell pepper, nut, chocolate, raisin, tobacco.

**Petit Verdot.** This wine adds colour and minty, musky flavors to Merlot, and Bordeaux Style Blends.

### **Technical Characteristics**

|                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Ingredients:      | Grapes               |
| Alcohol:          | 11% - 16%            |
| Colour:           | Medium red to garnet |
| Sugar:            | 0.0% - 1%            |
| Specific Gravity: | 0.990 - 0.995        |
| Acidity:          | 5.0g/L - 6.7g/L      |
| pH:               | 3.4 – 4.0            |

## **Class E2. Dry Red Pinot**

Wines in the Dry Red Pinot Class must contain at least 85% of one or more of the following varieties: Pinot noir, Pinot Meunier, or Gamay noir. Ideally, these wines exhibit fruity attributes and may be at their peak when young. The best mature examples demonstrate complexity and finesse while retaining substantial fruit.

### **Wine Characteristics**

**Pinot noir.** Nose – earthy, Bing cherry, spice, light, plum, dry black cherry; and an aroma that can resemble wilted roses. Flavour – cherry, spice, raspberry, currant, mushroom, along with earth, tar, herb and cola notes. Complex, silky tannins, barnyard notes. Velvety mouth feel. Long finish.

**Pinot meunier.** Somewhat light in colour and body. Strawberry, black currant, plum, raspberry, blueberry in the flavour.

**Gamay noir.** Violet, rose petal, cherry, strawberry, raspberry aromas and flavour.

### **Technical Characteristics**

|                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Ingredients:      | Grapes               |
| Alcohol:          | 11% - 16%            |
| Colour:           | Medium red to garnet |
| Sugar:            | 0.0% - 1%            |
| Specific Gravity: | 0.990 - 0.995        |
| Acidity:          | 5.0g/L - 6.7g/L      |
| pH:               | 3.4 – 4.0            |

**Class E3. Non-Vinifera Red Grape**

A red table wine made from grapes of which at least 95% are interspecific hybrid varieties. They include, as varietals or blends, Baco noir, Castel, Chambourcin, Chancellor, De Chaunac, Frontenac, Landal, Landot, Lucie Kuhlmann, Léon Millot, Maréchal Foch, Michurinetz, Sabrevois, and St. Croix among many others.

The remaining 5% may be any ingredient. As with any table wine, the sugar-acid balance must convey the impact of dry table wine style. Judges should have sufficient general familiarity with these wines that they recognize their positive attributes and realize that entries should not be penalized for characters that are typical of the varietal.

**Class E4. Dry Red Zinfandel**

Wines in this class must contain at least 85% Zinfandel.

**Wine Characteristics**

Raspberry, blackberry, cherry, plum, tar, earth, leather, spice, pepper. Full-bodied.

**Technical Characteristics**

|                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Ingredients:      | Grapes               |
| Alcohol:          | 11% - 16%            |
| Colour:           | Medium red to garnet |
| Sugar:            | 0.0% - 1%            |
| Specific Gravity: | 0.990 - 0.995        |
| Acidity:          | 5.0g/L - 6.7g/L      |
| pH:               | 3.4 – 4.0            |

### **Class E5. Rhone Style Dry Red**

A dry red table wine made from at least 85% of one or more of the following grape varieties: Alicante Bouschet, Carignane, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Petite Sirah (Durif), and/or Syrah (Shiraz). Blends may also contain any other variety permitted in Chateauneuf-du-Pape. The remaining 15% may be any ingredient.

#### **Wine Characteristics**

**Grenache.** Light to medium-bodied red wines that have lots of red fruit flavors (e.g. raspberry, cherry, etc) and soft tannins.

**Mourvèdre.** Medium weight, spicy cherry and berry flavours and moderate tannins.

**Petite Sirah.** Black pepper, blackberry jam, blackberries, oranges, plums, boysenberries, vanilla, red meat, black tea, dried sage and clove. Deep colour.

**Syrah.** Blackberry, pepper, plum, dry pepper, spice, black cherry, tar, leather and roasted nut flavours, a full bodied, smooth, supple texture and smooth tannins.

#### **Technical Characteristics**

|                   |                                  |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Ingredients:      | Grapes.                          |
| Alcohol:          | 11% - 16%.                       |
| Colour:           | Light red to med. red to garnet. |
| Sugar:            | 0.0% - 1%.                       |
| Specific Gravity: | 0.990 - 0.996.                   |
| Acidity:          | 5.0g/L - 6.7g/L.                 |
| pH:               | 3.4 – 4.0.                       |

## **Class E6. Other Dry Red**

This class contains all other red wines, either varietals or blends, that do not fit the definitions of Classes E1 (Dry Red Bordeaux), E2 (Dry Red Pinot), E4 (Dry Red Zinfandel), E7 Cabernet Sauvignon), E5, (Rhone Style Red) or E3 (Non-Vinifera Red Grape). So, dry red wines that contain less than 85% Bordeaux varieties, less than 85% Cabernet Sauvignon, less than 85% Pinot, less than 85% Zinfandel, less than 85% Rhone Style reds or less than 95% dry red non-vinifera grape belong in this Other Dry Red Class. Varietal vinifera wines in this class must contain 85% or more of vinifera varieties such as Lemberger, Barbera, Dornfelder, Nebbiolo, Ruby Cabernet, Sangiovese, Touriga Nacional, Tempranillo (Valdepeñas), or Zweigelt. The remaining 15% may be any other ingredient. Wines that include interspecific hybrid grapes are eligible for this class provided they are from less than 95% hybrid. Non-grape dry red table wines belong in either this class or J1 (Country Table).

### **Wine Characteristics**

**Lemberger.** Black cherry, raspberry, cassis, black pepper, rose petal, earthy.

**Montepulciano.** Raspberry and anise aromas; textured flavours, full fruit, black pepper, hints of spice.

**Sangiovese.** Cherry, dark cherry, plum, herby, bay leaf, dry supple texture and medium-to full-bodied spice, raspberry, cherry and anise flavours.

### **Technical Characteristics**

|                   |                                    |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Ingredients:      | Grapes.                            |
| Alcohol:          | 11% - 16%.                         |
| Colour:           | Light red to medium red to garnet. |
| Sugar:            | 0.0% - 1%.                         |
| Specific Gravity: | 0.990 - 0.995.                     |
| Acidity:          | 5.0g/L - 6.7g/L                    |
| pH:               | 3.4 – 4.0                          |

**Class E7. Dry Red Cabernet Sauvignon**

Wines in this class must contain at least 85% Cabernet Sauvignon.

**Wine Characteristics**

Black currant, cassis, plum, black cherry and spice. It can also be marked by herb, olive, mint, tobacco, cedar and anise, and ripe, jammy notes. Generally accepted that oak improves it by softening tannins and imparting, woody, toasty, cedar, vanilla characters.

**Technical Characteristics**

|                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Ingredients:      | Grapes               |
| Alcohol:          | 11% - 16%            |
| Colour:           | Medium red to garnet |
| Sugar:            | 0.0% - 1%            |
| Specific Gravity: | 0.990 - 0.995        |
| Acidity:          | 5.0g/L - 6.7g/L      |
| pH:               | 3.4 – 4.0            |

All entries in this class will be considered for the AWC National Competition as Class E1, Dry Red Bordeaux Style.

## **Class F. Dessert**

Wines to be drunk with the dessert course of the meal. Should be sweet and luscious, but with sufficient acid to prevent them from being cloying. Alcohol must have been developed by fermentation of the wine. These are NOT fortified wines.

Wines such as ports, sweet sherries, Madeira types, and other wines that are fortified, baked or otherwise made using port, sherry, Madeira etc. processes do NOT belong in this class.

The Dessert Class has three style sub-categories: Botrytis Affected, Icewine Style and Other Dessert Styles (such as Late Harvest, etc.). The style of the wine should be indicated on the Registration Form and/or Bottle Tag.

### **Technical Characteristics**

|                   | <u>Botrytis Affected</u> | <u>Icewine Style</u>        | <u>Other</u> |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Ingredients:      | No restrictions          |                             |              |
| Alcohol:          | 12% - 14%                | 8.5% - 13.5%                | 8.5% - 14%   |
| Colour:           | No restrictions          |                             |              |
| Sugar:            | 7.5% - 10%               | Min. 8.5%                   | 5.5%-8.5%    |
| Specific Gravity: | 1.024 – 1.080            | 1.028 – 1.080 plus or minus |              |
| Acid:             | Min. 8 g/L               | 9 g/L - 14 g/L              | Min. 8 g/L   |
| pH:               | 3.1 - 3.9                | 3.1 - 3.9                   | 3.1 - 3.9    |

**Class G. After Dinner**

Wines in this class are for use after dinner, perhaps with nuts and cheese, or in place of a liqueur. Wines such as ports, sweet sherries, Madeiras, or other wines that are fortified, baked or otherwise made using port, sherry etc. type processes belong in this class. This does not however prevent a competitor from entering in this class an appropriate wine naturally fermented to high alcohol.

**Technical Characteristics**

|                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Ingredients:      | No restrictions   |
| Alcohol:          | 15% - 20%         |
| Colour:           | No restrictions   |
| Sugar:            | 15% - 20%         |
| Specific Gravity: | 1.017 - 1.040     |
| Acid:             | 3.9 g/l - 5.5 g/l |
| pH:               | 3.2 - 3.9         |

**Class H. Sparkling**

There are Sparkling wines made that are appropriate for all occasions. They can be drunk alone, or with virtually any food. Wines sparkled by the Champagne method have an unmistakable yeasty flavour which adds to their complexity. Those that have been carbonated tend to exhibit fruitier characteristics. Sediment is unacceptable.

**Technical Characteristics**

|                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Ingredients:      | No restrictions. |
| Alcohol:          | 9% - 12%         |
| Colour:           | No restrictions. |
| Sugar:            | 0% - 6%          |
| Specific Gravity: | 0.992 to 1.016   |
| Acid:             | 9 - 12 g/L       |
| pH:               | 2.8 - 3.4        |

## **Class I. Social Wine**

A Social wine should be enjoyable without the accompaniment of food. Colour can fall into a wide range but it should be inviting. The wine should have an inviting fruity aroma. The wine should be neither dry nor excessively sweet. It should not be noticeably high in alcohol. In many types of wine a peak or peaks appear in the flavour spectrum - for example a White Table wine might have an acid peak; in the Aperitif class, a bitter peak is not out of place. There should be no such peaks in a Social wine. Good balance between sugar and acid is essential. A touch of "spritzy" is permissible. This is a patio wine not a table wine and may be served alone or with light style foods (snacks).

### **Technical Characteristics**

|                   |                             |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ingredients:      | No restrictions.            |
| Alcohol:          | 8% - 11%                    |
| Colour:           | Appealing, no restrictions. |
| Sugar:            | <b>2.0% - 5%</b>            |
| Specific Gravity: | <b>1.000 - 1.012</b>        |
| Acid:             | 6 g/l - 10 g/l              |
| pH:               | 3.1 - 3.4                   |

## **Country Classes**

A country wine is any wine made from at least 95% non-grape ingredients. **Some country wines are intentionally made in a style closely matching the description of one of the "functional" grape classes: A (Aperitif Sherry), B (Aperitif), F (Dessert), G (After Dinner), or H (Sparkling) and must be entered in those classes.** Others may fit the definitions of classes E6 (Other Dry Red), D (Rosé), C4 (Other Dry White), or I (Social) and may be entered there or in Class J1 (Country Table) or J2 (Country Social), whichever seems most appropriate. The Country Wine Classes J1 and J2 are intended for those country wines which depend heavily on their non-grape origins for their interest and character and have been made in a functionally table or functionally social style. Still meads and melomels are appropriate for this class and should be entered in either J1 or J2 depending on sweetness.

### **Class J1: Country Table Wine**

Any dry to medium dry (0-3% Residual Sugar) country wine intended as table wine. Balance is of great importance in determining a successful wine. Flavour may range from very delicate to very intense. A touch of "spritz" is acceptable, especially in lower alcohol or lighter flavoured wines.

### **Class J2. Country Social Wine**

Any country wine intended to be appreciated on its own, rather than to accompany food. Country Social Wines are medium dry to medium sweet (3-8% Residual Sugar) and are not sweet enough to be dessert wines. Class J2 is intended primarily for wines which are outside the parameters of Class I (Social) because of their fruit characteristics and often, sweetness. Country Social Wines typically have one or more dramatic "peaks" in their profile - an immediately recognizable intensity of fruit aroma and/or flavour, or noticeable acidity and freshness, or a hint of bitterness, or a higher alcohol level through fermentation than is suitable for Class I (Social). Astringency and/or bitterness and/or high acidity are not faults in themselves but must have been balanced by appropriate sweetness and/or flavour intensity and/or mouthfeel. A touch of spritz is acceptable, especially in lower alcohol or less intensely flavoured wines.

**Class P. Sparkling Cider**

A sparkling beverage of 6 to 10% alcohol content, dry to medium sweetness, low to medium acidity, made from either or both apple juice (Cider), or pear juice (Perry) or from some combination of one or both of those juices with other fruit (non-grape) juice. The other juice must be less than 50% of the blend and the flavour of the other fruit should not dominate. The difficult-to-define, zesty character of traditional cider must be present and will be a direct reflection of the cidemaker's skill in selecting ingredients. Any form of carbonation acceptable in the Sparkling Class is also acceptable in the Sparkling Cider Class. Sparkle should be controlled and prolonged. Fine champagne-like bubbles trailing from the bottom of the glass are preferred. Cider may be disgorged or presented on the priming yeast. In the latter case the cider must pour clear to within 3 cm of the bottom of the bottle.