

BC GUILD OF WINE JUDGES

January 2026

CLASS E6 – OTHER DRY RED

Presented by Doug Markin (Nanaimo Chapter)

AFTER READING THESE NOTES YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- The description and technical characteristics of this class
- The Areas of the world which produce these types of wine
- The characteristics of some of these varieties of wine
- Tips about judging this class

BCAWA DESCRIPTION FOR CLASS E6 - “OTHER DRY RED” CLASS:

Technical Characteristics

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

Description : Class E6 Other Dry Reds

This class contains all other red wines, either varieties or blends, that do not fit the definitions of Classes E1 (Dry Red Bordeaux), E2 (Dry Red Pinot), E3 (non-Vinifera Red Grape) E4 (Dry Red Zinfandel), E5 (Rhone Style Red) and E7 Cabernet Sauvignon).

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.

Non-grape dry red table wines belong in either this class or J1 (Country Table).

Wines that include interspecific hybrid grapes are eligible for this class provided they are from less than 95% hybrid.

WHAT ARE “INTERSPECIFIC HYBRID GRAPES”?

Interspecific Hybrid grapes are grape varieties resulting from intentional crosses between two or more species within the genus *Vitis*, most commonly between the European wine grape *Vitis vinifera* and hardy North American species such as *V. riparia*, *V. rupestris*, or *V. labrusca*. Asian hybrids, involving species like *Vitis amurensis* from East Asia, focus on enhancing cold tolerance and are crossed with *V. vinifera* or other species to extend grape cultivation into harsher winter climates. *Source: Grokipedia*

WINE CHARACTERISTICS

Lemburger. Austria, Hungary, New York State, Washington State

Black cherry, raspberry, cassis, black pepper, rose petal, earthy, dark chocolate.

Pairs well with smoked sausage, red potato goulash, and cheesy spaetzle dumplings, grilled Tuna, Peking Duck, Caribou, Venison, Lamb, and Nachos.

Montepulciano. Abruzzo region (East central Italy)

Juicy red and black fruits – Raspberry, cherry, blackberry, plum and anise aromas; textured flavours, full fruit, black pepper, hints of spice.

Pairs well with roasted red meats (beef, lamb), pasta with red sauce, grilled meats, hearty stews, and aged cheeses.

Sangiovese. Primarily Tuscany region, Italy. Used to make Chianti, Chianti Classico, and Brunello di Montalcino. Also grown in California, Australia, Argentina, Chile, Washington State, and Corsica

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

Pairs well with a wide variety of vegetables and spice driven foods. Tomato, red peppers and just about any grilled food.

Barbera. The often-ignored wine of Northern Italy. Often grown on lower slopes where Nebbiolo won't survive. Also grown in California (Central Valley), Australia, and Argentina.

Fruit flavours: Dark Cherry, Dried Strawberry, Plum, Blackberry, Violet,

Other flavours & aromas: Lavender, Dried Leaves, Incense, Vanilla, Nutmeg, Anise

SYNONYMS & REGIONAL NAMES (*Regional Names Are In Italics*):

Barbera. *Barbera d'Alba, Barbera d'Aosta, Barbera d'Asti, Barbera del Monferrato*

Pairs well with savory dishes like pizza, lasagna, braised meats (pork, beef, lamb), and roasted chicken, cutting through fat while complementing tomato sauces. This wine also pairs well with mushrooms, herbs, hearty vegetables, and even robust fish like salt cod.

Dornfelder. Germany (a cross of Helfensteiner and Heroldrebe grapes)

Fruit: Blackberry, black cherry, plum, red fruits, berry compote, currant.

Other flavours and aromas: Hints of spice, sometimes earthy or nutty, often with floral notes.

Pairs well with poultry, pork, grilled meats, and cheeses.

Nebbiolo. Piedmont region, Northern Italy (Barolo and Barbaresco wines are produced from this grape)

Flavours: Cherry, raspberry, strawberry, plum, cranberry, evolving to dried cherry, fig, prune with age.

Aromas: Rose petals, violet, herbs, spice, cherry, tar, licorice, leather, tobacco, truffle, forest floor, anise, graphite.

Regional names: Barolo and Barbaresco

Pairs well with fatty foods (nothing to lean). According to Wine Folly (source) this wine also pairs well with Savory Chinese dishes and spice-driven Asian cuisine.

Touriga Nacional. Portugal, South Africa, United States, Australia, Argentina, Brazil

Used as a blending grape in Port wines as well as a varietal dry red wine.

Flavours: Violet, blueberry, plum, blackberry, mint, and bittersweet cocoa

Aromas: Oak aging can add aromas of toasted marshmallow, vanilla and nutmeg, mint, bergamot, and violet.

Pairs well with fatty foods but not too spicy in order not to overwhelm the floral aromas. Barbecue beef, beef stroganoff or Tourtiere are a few examples.

Tempranillo. Spain – Regions: Rioja, Ribera del Douro (Tinta Fino), Toro (Tinta del Toro)

Red fruits (cherry, plum), fig, tobacco, leather, vanilla, cedar, earthy notes

This wine ranges from fresh juicy unoaked versions to complex age worthy wines with oak.

Pairs well with grilled meats, cured ham, Manchego cheese, stews and tapas.

Zweigelt. Austria (a cross between Blaufrankisch and St Laurent) Tastes like Pinot Noir (bright, tart and fruity)

Flavours: Red Cherry, raspberry, black pepper, licorice, and chocolate.

Pairs well with barbecue grilled chicken and macaroni salad.

Agria. Hungary (origin name – Turan), British Columbia, Washington State, Oregon State
This grape is the result of the crossing of several other obscure Hungarian grapes.

Flavours: Cherry, Strawberry, Ripe Damsen Plum, Rose, and sometimes rustic hints of leather or spice.

Pairs well with Hungarian goulash, cured meats such as Chorizo, and pork meatballs in tomato sauce.

As you can see, there are a great number of wines that can be made and entered in the E6 Other Dry Red Category. The wines listed above are a few of the more common entries in this class.

WINE ASSESSMENT:

Judging the E6 class can be somewhat intimidating because of the wide range of grape varieties that fit into this class.

In other classes of dry red wine, there is a defined list of grape varieties allowed in the production of those wines. In the “E6 Other Dry Red” class of wine, there is a much broader range of grapes allowed.

AUTHOR’S NOTE:

In a 2025 regional competition there was an entry in the E6 Class that listed the ingredients (blend) as “various red wines”. The only way we could judge this wine was strictly on the merits of a dry red wine.

We conducted a holistic judging process to decide if the wine was medal worthy or not. We looked for appealing aromas and flavours then moved to point scoring this wine in accordance with the Wine Evaluation Sheet.

While some of the varieties fermented by BCABA winemakers are listed in this article, there may be varieties that are not listed in the Wine Judges Handbook.

When presented with a new variety it is helpful to have a cellphone or tablet with you to access the internet so that you can “Google” unknown varieties to gain some knowledge of their aroma/flavour profiles.

If time does not permit, or you cannot access the internet, then it is best to judge the wine on its merits as a Dry Red Wine.

Judges should assess wines containing non-specific varietals as they would any dry red wine using the Wine Evaluation Sheet and the technical characteristics of this class.

OVERVIEW:

This flight is typical of wines found in the E6 Other Dry Red class in BCABA club competitions. There will be some single varietal wines along with blended varietals. The wines range in quality from no medal to Gold.

Unlike a competition where the wine varietals are listed on the competition label, this flight will be judged blind, and you will have to rely on your sense of smell and taste to assess the wines.

The wines in this flight were produced in Italy, Spain, and British Columbia.

REFERENCES:

- Winefolly.com,
- Grokipedia.com (AI site owned by Elon Musk),
- en.wikipedia.org
- Various winery websites that produced the wines in this flight.