

Submitting Beer To Homebrew Competitions

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2/29/2016

Objectives

- To walk through the process of entering competitions and what to expect from them
- To describe the potential benefits of submitting beer to competitions
- Tips to help you succeed faster



What Competitions Won't Tell You

That a beer is “better” than another beer

That a beer is more commercially viable
than another beer

**Homebrewing competitions aren't
designed to measure those things**

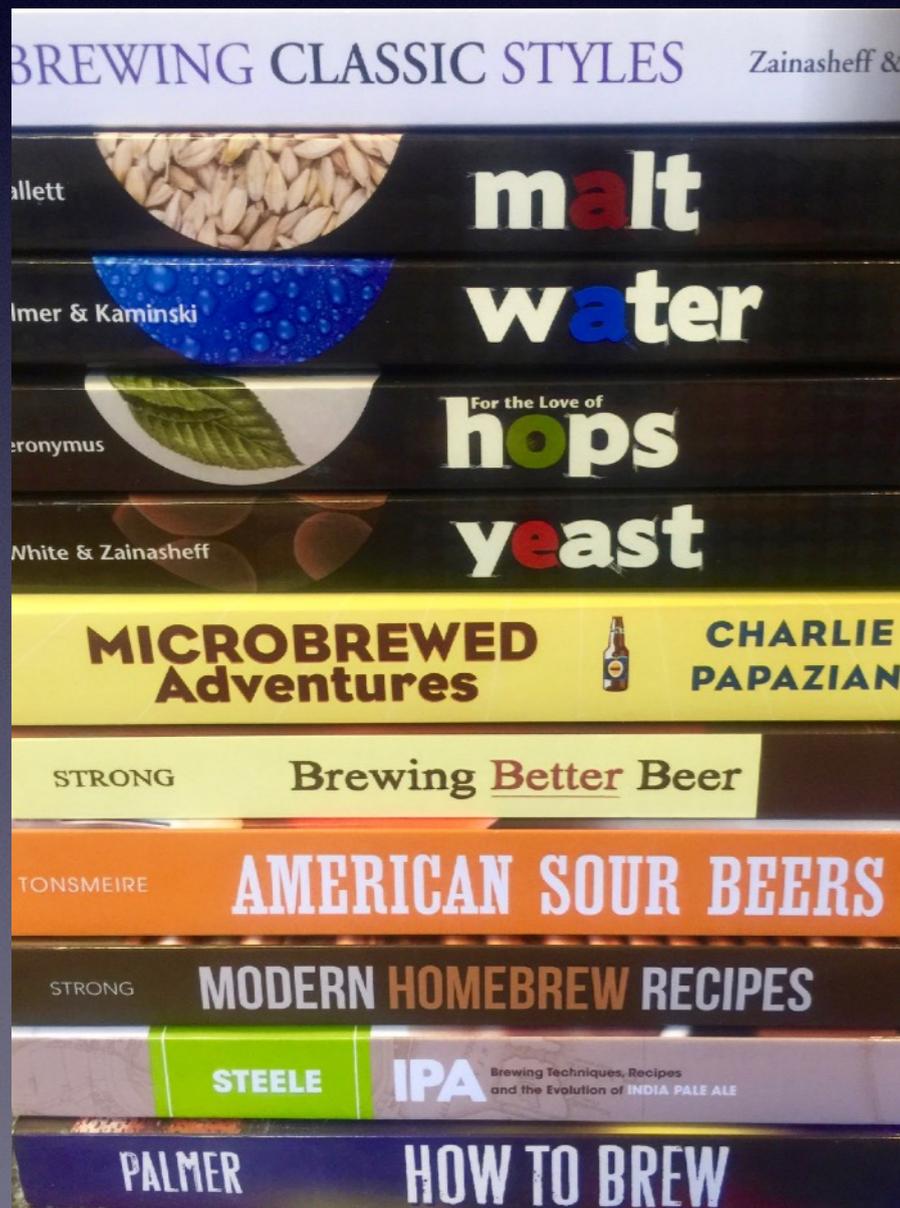
Then What Does A Competition Measure?

It measures which beers at each table best represent the sub-styles and categories in which they were entered



Let's get this out of the way...

Recipes from books, from magazines, and even commercial clone recipes are perfectly acceptable to use when brewing for a competition



- The idea that every recipe needs to be totally original is simply wrong
- Those resources are a great way to start with a solid recipe from where you can begin adjusting and improving to better fit your personal tastes and brewing equipment
- Even if you want to brew the exact same beer that the recipe's author intends, the recipe still needs to be tweaked to compensate for differences in available ingredients, equipment profiles, brewing methods, and efficiencies

So How Do I Get Started?

- Exactly how you'd think...it's time to make some beer
- Take a recipe and enter it into your preferred brewing software
- Adjust the ingredients, mash profiles, and fermentation variables to target your desired beer
- Brew!
- Don't forget to take lots of notes

The screenshot shows a brewing software interface for a recipe named "Little Fat Man". The interface includes a top menu bar with options like Design, Starter, Mash, Timer, Fermentation, Vols, Notes, Help, Save, Save As, Cancel, and Ok. Below the menu bar, there are input fields for Name (Little Fat Man), Type (All Grain), Boil Time (60 min), Date (2/ 1/2016), Brewer, Batch Size (5.00 gal), Est Pre-Boil Vol (6.37 gal), Version (1.0), Equipment (My 5 Gal Cooler in Kitchen), Tot Efficiency (66.00 %), Est Mash Eff (72.6 %), and a checkbox for Calc Boil Vol.

The main area displays a table of ingredients:

| Amt | Name | Type | # | %/IBU | Inventory | Cost |
|---------|---|-------|---|------------|-----------|---------|
| 8 lbs | Pale Malt, Maris Otter (Thomas Fawcett) (3.0 SRM) | Grain | 1 | 88.9 % | 0.0 oz | \$10.00 |
| 10.0 oz | Crystal, Medium (Simpsons) (55.0 SRM) | Grain | 2 | 6.9 % | 0.0 oz | \$1.41 |
| 6.0 oz | Caramel Malt - 90L 6-Row (Briess) (90.0 SRM) | Grain | 3 | 4.2 % | 0.0 oz | \$0.47 |
| 1.80 oz | Goldings, East Kent [4.50 %] - Boil 60.0 min | Hop | 4 | 30.9 IB... | 0.00 oz | \$1.80 |
| 1.00 oz | Goldings, East Kent [4.50 %] - Boil 10.0 min | Hop | 5 | 6.2 IBUs | 0.00 oz | \$1.00 |
| 0.50 oz | Goldings, East Kent [4.50 %] - Boil 2.0 min | Hop | 6 | 0.7 IBUs | 0.00 oz | \$0.50 |
| 1.0 pkg | English Ale (White Labs #WLP002) [35.49 ml] | Yeast | 7 | - | 0.0 pkg | \$6.00 |

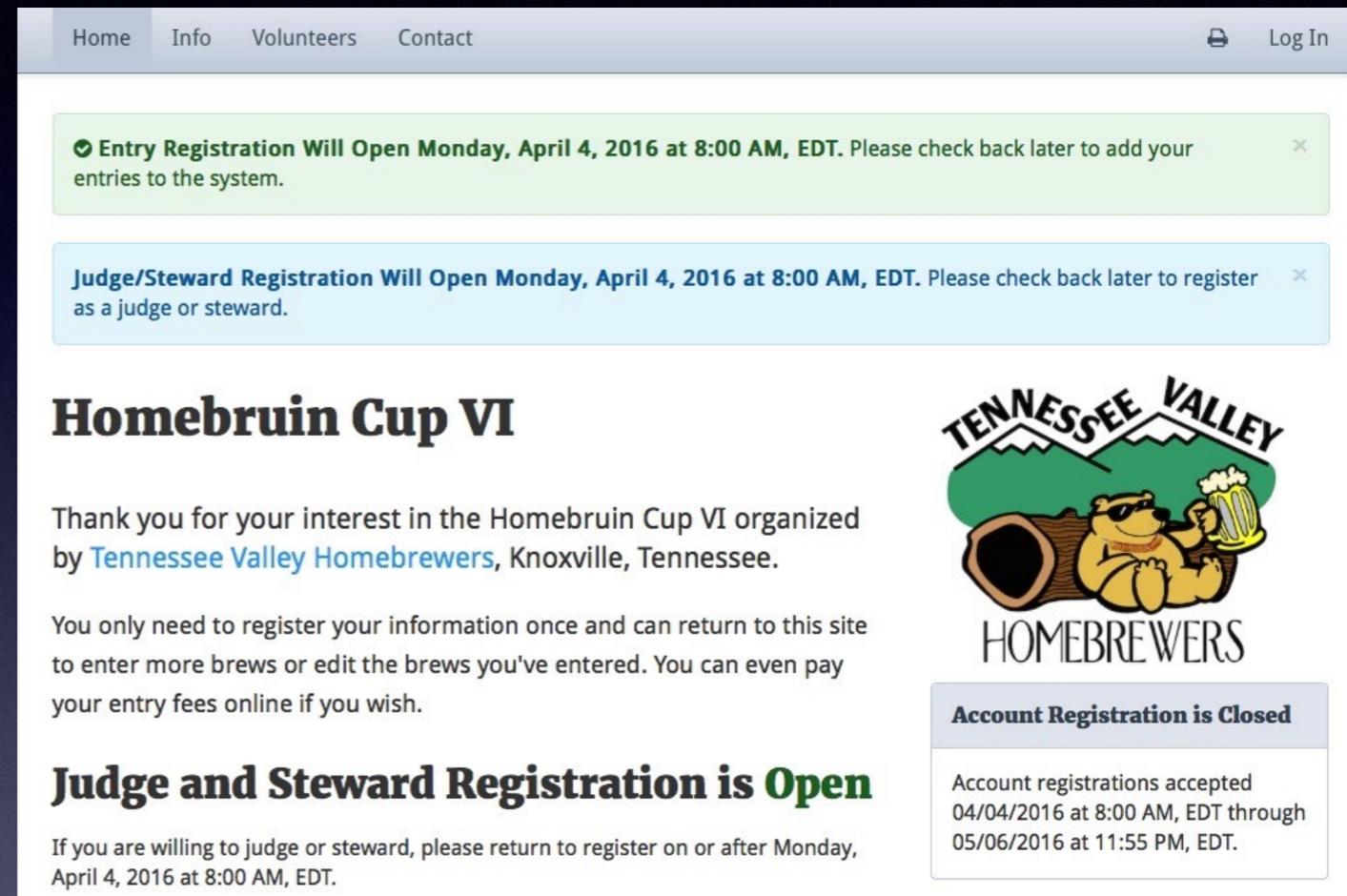
On the right side of the ingredient table, there are icons for Add Grain, Add Hops, Add Misc, Add Yeast, Add Water, Edit, Delete, Substitute, and Grain Pct. Below the table, there are controls for increasing or decreasing the amount and time for each ingredient.

The bottom section of the interface shows a "Style Guide Comparison" for "Best Bitter" style. It includes sliders for Est Original Gravity (1.045 SG), Bitterness (IBUs) (37.9 IBUs), Color (10.3 SRM), and Est ABV (4.3 %). To the right, there is a "Select Fields" section with various brewing parameters and their values, such as Total Grains (9.00 lb), Total Hops (3.30 oz), Bitterness Ratio (0.849 IBU/SG), Est Pre-Boil Gravity (1.039 SG), Est Final Gravity (1.012 SG), Measured OG (1.045 SG), Measured Batch Size (5.25 gal), Measured Efficiency (69.9 %), Total Cost (21.18 \$), and Bitterness (Rager) (42.0 IBUs).

Finding A Homebrew Competition

- Look to local homebrewing clubs for information on competitions in your area
- A full calendar of sanctioned competitions can be found on the [BJCP website](#)
- Most competitions use the BCOE software (pictured) but other good options exist
- You need to register as an entrant on the competition website before adding your entries
- Mark your calendar with all pertinent dates (such as registration deadline, shipping or delivery deadline, and competition date)
- Once you determine how many beers you plan to submit, register your entries and pay the fees*

*If using PayPal, remember to click the return link shown after the payment is processed or the competition website may not recognize your payment



The screenshot shows the website for the Homebruin Cup VI competition. At the top, there are navigation links for Home, Info, Volunteers, and Contact, along with a Log In button. Two notification banners are present: a green one stating "Entry Registration Will Open Monday, April 4, 2016 at 8:00 AM, EDT. Please check back later to add your entries to the system." and a blue one stating "Judge/Steward Registration Will Open Monday, April 4, 2016 at 8:00 AM, EDT. Please check back later to register as a judge or steward." The main content area features the title "Homebruin Cup VI" and a thank you message from Tennessee Valley Homebrewers, Knoxville, Tennessee. Below this, it states that users only need to register once and can return to the site to enter more brews or edit existing ones. A prominent heading reads "Judge and Steward Registration is Open" with a note that registration for judges and stewards begins on Monday, April 4, 2016 at 8:00 AM, EDT. On the right side, there is a logo for Tennessee Valley Homebrewers featuring a bear holding a beer. Below the logo, a box indicates "Account Registration is Closed" and provides the registration period: "Account registrations accepted 04/04/2016 at 8:00 AM, EDT through 05/06/2016 at 11:55 PM, EDT."

BCOE Tabs

Find additional guidance or restrictions on entries by looking in the 'Rules' section under the "Home" tab. For example, this is a club member only competition.

Home Info Volunteers Contact Log In

Rules

This competition is AHA/BJCP sanctioned and open to any amateur homebrewer age 21 or older.

All mailed entries must be **received** at the mailing location by the entry deadline - please allow for shipping time.

All entrants must be current members of Tennessee Valley Homebrewers. All other entries will be rejected.

All entries will be picked up from drop-off locations the day of the entry deadline.

All drop off entries must be received between Saturday, April 30th and Friday, May 6th

All entries must be handcrafted products, containing ingredients available to the general public, and made using private equipment by hobbyist brewers (i.e., no use of commercial facilities or Brew on Premises operations, supplies, etc.).

The competition organizers are not responsible for miscategorized entries, mailed entries that are not received by the entry deadline, or entries that arrived damaged.

The competition organizers reserve the right to combine styles for judging and to restructure awards as needed depending upon the quantity and quality of entries.

Qualified judging of all entries is the primary goal of our event. Judges will evaluate and score each entry in accordance with the 2015 BJCP Style Guidelines. The average of the scores will rank each entry in its category. Each flight will have at least one BJCP judge.

The competition committee reserves the right to combine categories based on number of entries. All possible effort will be made to combine similar styles. All brews in combined categories will be judged according to the style they were originally entered in.

The Best of Show judging will be determined by a Best of Show panel based on a second judging of the top winners.

Bottles will not be returned to entrants.

Entry Registration is Closed

Entry registrations accepted 04/04/2016 at 8:00 AM, EDT through 05/06/2016 at 11:55 PM, EDT.

Entry Drop-Off is Closed

Entry bottles accepted at [drop-off locations](#) 04/04/2016 through 05/06/2016.

Entry Shipping is Closed

Entry bottles accepted at the [shipping location](#) 04/04/2016 through 05/06/2016.

Judging Location/Date

Casual Pint Hardin Valley 9
05/14/2016 at 11:30 AM, EDT

Home Info Volunteers Contact

Entry Fees

\$5.00 (USD) per entry.

BJCP 2015 Categories Accepted

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1A American Light Lager | 1B American Lager | 1C Cream Ale |
| 1D American Wheat Beer | 2A International Pale Lager | 2B International Amber Lager |
| 2C International Dark Lager | 3A Czech Pale Lager | 3B Czech Premium Pale Lager |
| 3C Czech Amber Lager | 3D Czech Dark Lager | 4A Munich Helles |
| 34B Mixed-Style Beer | 34C Experimental Beer | |

Entry Limit

There is a limit of (100) entries for this competition.

Per Entrant Limits

Each entrant is limited to one (1) entry per sub-category .

Payment

After creating your account and adding your entries to the system, you must pay your entry fee(s). Accepted payment methods are:

- Credit/debit card and e-check, via PayPal

Bottle Acceptance Rules

Each entry will consist of **two (2)** 12 ounce capped bottles that are void of all identifying information, including labels and embossing. Printed caps are allowed, but must be blacked out completely. All other bottles including plastic and swing-top bottles will be disqualified. Bottles with glued-on or taped-on labels will be disqualified. Printed caps are acceptable, but any printing must be completely marked out. Bottles must be received by the deadline. **Entry fees for disqualified entries will not be returned -- please follow the instructions.**

12oz brown glass bottles are preferred.

Bottles will not be returned to contest entrants.

Bottle labels must be printed from this website and affixed to each bottle by a rubber band; glue and/or tape are unacceptable.

Drop Off Location

Entry bottles accepted at our drop-off locations from **Monday, April 4, 2016** through **Friday, May 6, 2016**.

Homebruin Cup VI - BCOE&M 2.0.1 Hosted Edition ©2009-2016

The "Info" tab shows the entry fees and limits for each entrant, as well as a providing a list of all categories accepted for judging at the competition.

Okay, The Beer Is Carbonated And Ready For Competition

- Is it the style of beer you originally targeted? Beer is judged for what it is, not for what you hoped it would be. Did that Pale Ale turn out more like an IPA? Does that Blonde Ale taste more like a Cream Ale? No worries. Just update the entry info on the competition website before the registration window closes.
- If the beer is bottle conditioned, you're done. Just check the bottles for an appropriate fill level, and set the required amount aside for shipping.
- If the beer is in a keg, you've still got some work to do, but the process of bottling from a keg is beyond the scope of this presentation



Brewing For A Specific Competition

- There are advantages to picking the competitions you want to enter before the beer is even brewed
- It is especially helpful if you are wanting to submit multiple beers to a competition
- Record how long it takes every beer you brew to reach peak condition and how long before they begin to degrade
- Use that information to schedule future brew days so you are shipping beers at their peak condition



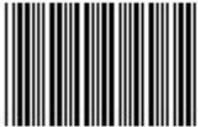
Preparing To Ship The Beer

| Entry # | Entry Name | Style | Confirmed? | Paid? | Updated | Actions |
|---------|---------------|------------------------|------------|-------|------------------------|--|
| 0634 | Scottish 80/- | 14C: Scottish Export | ✓ Yes | ✓ Yes | 01/31/2016 at 11:03 AM |  Print Entry Form/Bottle Labels |
| 0635 | Sundial Brown | 13B: English Brown Ale | ✓ Yes | ✓ Yes | 01/31/2016 at 11:04 AM |  Print Entry Form/Bottle Labels |
| 0636 | Wee Heavy | 17C: Wee Heavy | ✓ Yes | ✓ Yes | 01/31/2016 at 11:04 AM |  Print Entry Form/Bottle Labels |

- Print and cut out bottle labels from the “My Info And Entries” tab
- Attach labels to the bottles with rubber bands only (no glue or tape)
- Line the box with a trash bag before adding the padding and bottles, and remember to tie it closed before taping up the box so it can catch any potential leaks
- Make sure there is plenty of padding/bubble wrap on all six sides of the box, but never use loose packing peanuts
- Individually bubble wrap all bottles, secure the wrap with tape, and pack them in a way where every bottle is completely encased in padding and cannot touch any other bottle
- If there is extra room in the box, immobilize everything with additional padding or bubble wrap before sealing every seam with tape, but do not overstuff the box
- Remember, it is **ILLEGAL** to ship beer via the USPS

2016 Midwinter Homebrew Competition
ATTACH TO BOTTLE WITH RUBBER BAND ONLY

Entry #: 0635
Name: 
Address: 
Phone: 
Email: 
Entry Name: Sundial Brown
Cat/Sub: 13B - English Brown Ale
Homebrew Club: Tennessee Valley Homebrewers


0635

Space Reserved for Competition Staff Use

How Competitions Organize All Those Beers



- Entries are organized into “Tables” of individual or groups of similar beer styles
- The way each competition organizes the styles into Tables can vary quite a bit
- For an extremely large competition or for a category that has a large number of entries, that could mean grouping all entries of just one or two sub-styles at their own Table
- For smaller competitions or less popular categories, that could mean doing the exact opposite like grouping all lagers or all dark beers together into single Tables
- Larger Tables can also be broken into smaller “Flights” where the top entries from each Flight are then rejudged in a “Mini Best Of Show” to determine each Table’s winners
- Once all beers have been evaluated, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place beers at each Table are declared
- The 1st place winners of each Table are then evaluated to determine an overall ‘Best Of Show’ for the competition

The BJCP Scoresheet

- You should receive at least two scoresheets for every entry
- Beer can change in the bottle between when you ship it and when it is judged, so don't dismiss comments simply because you can't detect what the judges found
- The reality is that not every scoresheet will contain helpful feedback
- The best way to get actionable feedback is to submit the same beer to more than one competition and look for trends in what the judges are saying



<http://www.bjcp.org>

SAMUEL ADAMS
Patriot Homebrew Contest

BEER SCORESHEET

AHA/BJCP Sanctioned Competition Program



<http://www.beertown.org>

Category # 2 Subcategory (a-f) A Entry # 02-005

Subcategory (spell out) German Pils
Special Ingredients: _____

Bottle Inspection: Appropriate size, cap, fill level, label removal, etc.

Comments _____

Use Avery label # 5160

Judge Qualifications and BJCP Rank:

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apprentice | <input type="checkbox"/> Recognized | <input type="checkbox"/> Certified |
| <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Master | <input type="checkbox"/> Grand Master |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honorary Master | <input type="checkbox"/> Mead Judge | <input type="checkbox"/> Cider Judge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Brewer | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-BJCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Rank Pending |

Descriptor Definitions (Mark all that apply):

- Acetaldehyde – Green apple-like aroma and flavor.
- Alcoholic – The aroma, flavor, and warming effect of ethanol and higher alcohols. Sometimes described as “hot.”
- Astringent – Puckering, lingering harshness and/or dryness in the finish/aftertaste; harsh graininess; huskiness.
- Diacetyl – Artificial butter, butterscotch, or toffee aroma and flavor. Sometimes perceived as a slickness on the tongue.
- DMS (dimethyl sulfide) – At low levels a sweet, cooked or canned corn-like aroma and flavor.
- Estery – Aroma and/or flavor of any ester (fruits, fruit flavorings, or roses).
- Grassy – Aroma/flavor of fresh-cut grass or green leaves.
- Light-Struck – Similar to the aroma of a skunk.
- Metallic – Tinny, coinny, copper, iron, or blood-like flavor.
- Musty – Stale, musty, or moldy aromas/flavors.
- Oxidized – Any one or combination of winy/vinous, cardboard, papery, or sherry-like aromas and flavors.
- Phenolic – Spicy (clove, pepper), smoky, plastic, plastic adhesive strip, and/or medicinal (chlorophenolic).
- Solvent – Aromas and flavors of higher alcohols (fusel alcohols). Similar to acetone or lacquer thinner aromas.
- Sour/Acidic – Tartness in aroma and flavor. Can be sharp and clean (lactic acid), or vinegar-like (acetic acid).
- Sulfur – The aroma of rotten eggs or burning matches.
- Vegetal – Cooked, canned, or rotten vegetable aroma and flavor (cabbage, onion, celery, asparagus, etc.)
- Yeasty – A bready, sulfury or yeast-like aroma or flavor.

Look up detailed descriptions in the BJCP vocabulary application:
<http://www.bjcp.org/cep/vocab/>

Aroma (as appropriate for style) 7 /12
Comment on malt, hops, esters, and other aromatics

High green apple aroma
Low malt aroma
No hop aroma

Appearance (as appropriate for style) 3 /13
Comment on color, clarity, and head (retention, color, and texture)

Clear can read through
Straw in color, Pours white head
clears to large bubbles on edge of glass

Flavor (as appropriate for style) 14 /20
Comment on malt, hops, fermentation characteristics, balance, finish/aftertaste, and other flavor characteristics

Medium malt flavor, medium spicy hop
flavor finishes slightly sweet almost
fruity flavor, balance towards the spicy
noble hop flavor, No off fermentation
flavors, low green apple flavor in finish

Mouthfeel (as appropriate for style) 4 /15
Comment on body, carbonation, warmth, creaminess, astringency, and other palate sensations

Medium - thin body - on the thin side
medium carbonation, no warmth, slight
creaminess slickness at the back of the
throat

Overall Impression 7 /10
Comment on overall drinking pleasure associated with entry, give suggestions for improvement

This is a nice beer with no lingering
off flavors but it finishes sweet
on the palate, slight under attenuation
or more bitterness? Other than that
nice job!

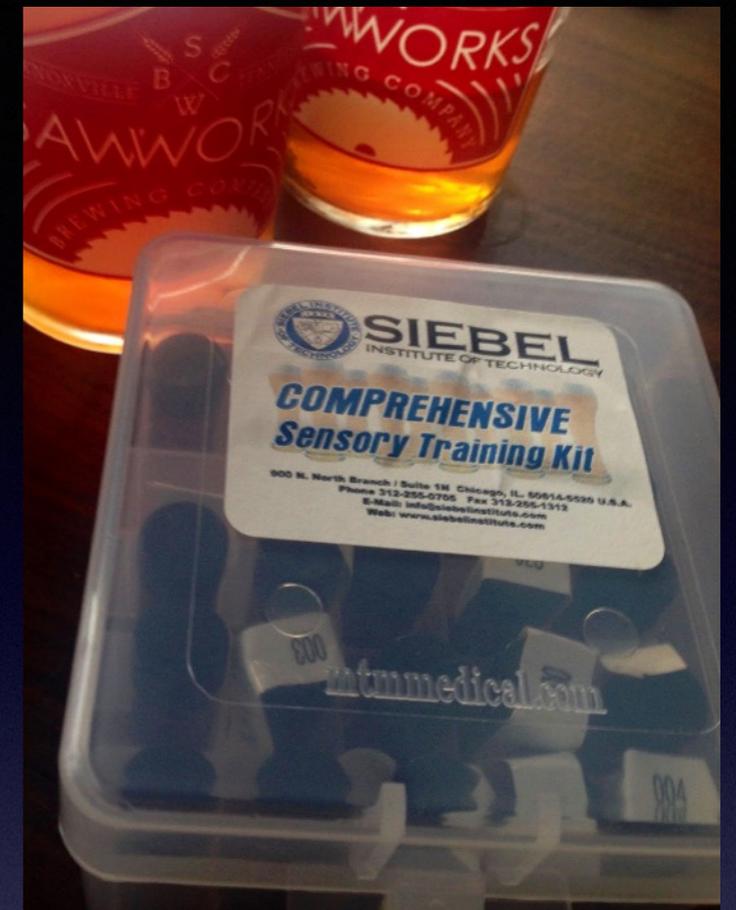
Total 35 /50

| | |
|--|---|
| SCORING GUIDE | Outstanding (45 - 50): World-class example of style |
| | Excellent (38 - 44): Exemplifies style well, requires minor fine-tuning |
| | Very Good (30 - 37): Generally within style parameters, some minor flaws |
| | Good (21 - 29): Misses the mark on style and/or minor flaws |
| | Fair (14 - 20): Off flavors, aromas or major style deficiencies |
| Problematic (0 - 13): Major off flavors and aromas dominate | |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Classic Example | <input type="checkbox"/> | Stylistic Accuracy | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Not to Style |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Flawless | <input type="checkbox"/> | Technical Merit | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Significant Flaws | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Wonderful | <input type="checkbox"/> | Intangibles | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lifeless | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Training Yourself To Better Evaluate Beer

- Training your palate on key beer flavors and learning the vocabulary of judges are valuable assets in becoming a better brewer
- Participate in a beer tasting class or study group
- Attend an Off-Flavor Kit tasting
- Study the resources on the [BJCP Website](http://www.bjcp.org) and become beer judge



Some Final Thoughts On Bottling For Competition

- Bottle conditioning is okay, but when possible, bottling from a keg immediately before submitting the entries maximizes control over clarity and carbonation
 - Make sure to use the best practices recommended by the filling device's manufacturer to minimize oxygen exposure
- Increase the beer's carbonation level by 10-15% before bottling from a keg
 - Some carbonation is lost at bottling and again at the judging table
 - Judges tend to pour vigorously and swirl the samples to evaluate head formation/retention before they evaluate the affect of carbonation level on taste and mouthfeel
- Save two bottles to sample while reviewing the scoresheets
 - Keep one bottle cold, and with the other, mimic the shipping/storage conditions you think your competition bottles experienced
 - Even brief exposure to high temperatures can negatively affect the condition of a beer



Questions?