

BEER JUDGE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

2025 STYLE GUIDELINES

Cider Style Guidelines (including Perry)



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DEDICATION

*The 2025 edition of the BJCP Cider Guidelines is dedicated to Gary Awdey,
for his long years educating judges on cider appreciation.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE 2025 CIDER GUIDELINES

The 2025 BJCP Cider Style Guidelines are a major rewrite of the 2015 edition. This document is a companion to the 2021 BJCP Beer Style Guidelines and the 2025 BJCP Mead Style Guidelines. While some of the 2015 content has been retained, there has been a reorganization and renaming of the categories and styles, including the addition of a few new styles.

INTRODUCTION TO CIDER AND PERRY STYLES (CATEGORIES C1-C4)

This preamble applies to all the cider and perry styles, except where explicitly superseded in individual style descriptions. It identifies common characteristics and descriptions for all types of these beverages, and should be used as a reference when entering or judging. For more detailed information on applying the styles in a judging session, look at **Studying for the Cider Exam** on the BJCP website (Exam & Certification, Cider Judge Program).

Cider is the fermented juice of crushed apples. **Perry** is a similar beverage made from pears. In the United States, a distinction is made between hard cider (fermented, alcoholic) and sweet cider (unfermented, non-alcoholic). Elsewhere in the world, cider refers to the fermented product. We use the latter definition within these guidelines.

There are four categories in these guidelines for cider and perry: Traditional Cider (Category C1), Strong Cider (Category C2), Specialty Cider (Category C3), and Perry (Category C4). See the preamble to each category for more detailed descriptions. As with beer, there is no requirement that competitions judge these categories separately – individual styles may be grouped for judging and award purposes. Do not attempt to infer any deeper meaning from the names or groupings, as none is intended.

Aroma and Flavor

- Ciders and perries do not necessarily present overtly fruity aromas or flavors — in the same way that wine does not taste like grape juice or beer does not smell like wort. Drier styles of cider can develop a character that is more complex but less fruity. Cider and perry should not taste like a cocktail of raw fruit juice, carbonated water, and alcohol – they should taste *fermented*.
- Winemakers classify smells as aroma (those derived from the ingredients) or bouquet (those derived from the process of fermentation and aging). Cider judges may benefit from thinking similarly, understanding how the cidermaking process transforms the raw ingredients into the finished product.
- A clean fermentation profile is desirable in most styles, but this does not necessarily mean the absence of **yeast character**. Yeast can add estery notes or may have a light sulfury freshness; these are not faults. Aging on yeast can contribute light nutty, toasty, or bready notes.
- Some cider styles exhibit distinctly **non-fruity** qualities, such as the *smoky ham* undertones of a dry English cider. Some regional styles have a rustic character.
- **Sweetness** (residual sugar, or **RS**) ranges from absolutely dry (no RS) up to as much as that of dessert wines (10% or more RS). Approximate measurements of RS and final gravity (FG) for the levels of sweetness are:
 - **Dry:** below 0.4% RS, FG less than 1.002. No perception of sweetness, but the perception does not need to be bone dry.
 - **Semi-dry:** 0.4-0.9% RS, FG 1.002-1.004. There is a hint of sweetness but the perception is still primarily dry. Also known as *medium-dry* or *off-dry*.
 - **Medium:** 0.9-2.0% RS, FG 1.004-1.009. Sweetness is now a notable component of the overall balance.
 - **Semi-sweet:** 2.0-4.0% RS, FG 1.009-1.019. The perception is sweet but still refreshing. Also known as *medium-sweet*.
 - **Sweet:** above 4.0% RS, FG over 1.019. Like a dessert wine. Must not be syrupy or cloying.

These numbers are meant to assist in entry decisions and to normalize regional perception differences, not be used as a disqualifying factor by judges. When close to

the boundary between sweetness levels, enter based on the overall impression and how well it matches the descriptions for these levels.

Be aware that other factors (acidity, tannin, alcohol, dryness, other ingredients, etc.) affect the perception of sweetness. Do not rely solely on RS levels.

When judging, arrange samples in order of increasing sweetness. Understand that sweetness can mask faults — be more attentive to this in sweeter ciders. Likewise, do not overly penalize dry ciders for minor faults that may only be more evident due to the lack of sweetness. In sweeter examples, non-fruity components of taste — particularly acidity and tannin — must complement the sweetness, or they will seem *cloying* (syrupy, heavily sweet) or *flabby* (sweetness unbalanced by acidity).

- **Acidity** is an essential element of balance giving a clean, lively, bright, juicy, refreshing impression without being puckering. Acidity (from malic acid, and in some cases, lactic or other acids) must not be confused with acetification (from ethyl acetate or acetic acid — vinegar). The acrid aroma and tingling taste of volatile acidity (acetification) is a fault in most styles.
- **Tannin** supplies astringency, body, and sometimes bitterness, which contribute to balance, structure, and drinkability. Excessive bitterness from tannin is a fault, whether from process or from ingredients. Table fruit typically has low tannin levels.
- Ciders may undergo a **malolactic fermentation** (MLF), which reduces acidity by converting sharp malic acid into softer, rounder, less-acidic lactic acid. The result should not be flabby or too soft — the cider must remain refreshing. Perries should not undergo MLF because acetification may result.

MLF can produce clean flavors, but MLF of tannic cider apples often produces ethyl-phenols with spicy, smoky, smoked meat, phenolic, barnyard, funky, leathery, or horsey flavors. Do not expect most or all of these descriptors simultaneously. Restrained, balanced levels are optional but desirable in some regional styles.

MLF is often mis-perceived as *Brettanomyces* (*Brett*), since they share many common descriptors, but *Brett* contamination is a serious fault. A dominating funky barnyard character from *Brett* is undesirable.

Judges should be attentive to the possible *mousy* fault (THP, tetrahydropyridine), which is more likely in a higher pH cider that has undergone MLF. (For judges unable to detect the mousy fault, an alkaline oral rinse may be needed to confirm.)

Appearance

- Clarity may range 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. Perries are notoriously difficult to clear; as a result, a slight haze is not a fault. However, a sheen in either cider or perry often indicates the early stages of lactic contamination and is a distinct fault.
- Carbonation can vary from completely still to soda-like (*spumante*). Little to no carbonation is termed **still**, but may give a slight *tickle* on the tongue – it does not have to be dead flat. Moderate carbonation is termed **pétillant**. Highly carbonated is termed **sparkling**. At the higher carbonation levels, the *mousse* (head) may be retained for a short time. However, gushing, foaming, and difficult-to-manage heads are faults.
- A cider or perry without additional ingredients is often a pale color, typically straw to gold. Be aware that some red-fleshed apples such as Redfield will give a blush or rosé hue that should not be misinterpreted as coming from other fruit; when in doubt, check the declared apple varieties. Dull, brownish shades can be an indication of oxidation, although darker tones could come from using low acid apples, keeving, aging or fermenting on wood, using concentration processes, or other reasons. Do not automatically assume oxidation by color alone. Obviously, examples containing added ingredients usually reflect the color of those additions.

Mouthfeel

- In general, cider and perry have a body and fullness akin to a light wine. Most cider styles have much less body than that of most beer. Some perries will have fuller bodies due to sorbitol (an unfermentable sugar alcohol), which can add a perception of sweetness.
- Highly sparkling ciders can seem Champagne-like. Still ciders may seem lacking to novices since carbonation livens the presentation. Properly declared still ciders should not be penalized for lack of carbonation.
- Tannin can affect mouthfeel by adding body, adding bitterness, or by increasing the perceived dryness of the finish. Tannic styles can have a pleasantly astringent mouthfeel resembling a red wine. Wine descriptors such as drying, fuzzy, or grippy may apply. An impression of wood, leather, dried leaves, or apple skins may also be present, with accompanying flavor effects.

Ingredients

- Cited fruit varieties are meant to illustrate commonly-used examples, not dictate requirements for producers. Fruit are divided into (1) table, eating, culinary, or dessert varieties, or (2) cider apples or perry pears (heirloom or specialty varieties that do not make for good eating). Fruit in this second group may exhibit a wide range of non-fruity traits, which should not be confused with fermentation character.
- Apples used in cider-making are commonly classified by acidity and tannin: **Sweet** (low acidity, low tannin), **Sharp** (high acidity, low tannin), **Bittersweet** (low

acidity, high tannin), or **Bittersharp** (high acidity, high tannin).

- Yeast may be either *natural* (occurring on the fruit itself or present in the milling and pressing equipment) or *cultured* (added by the cidemaker). MLF is allowed using either of these methods.
- In general, adjuncts and additives are prohibited except where specifically allowed in particular styles, or if only to correct low starting levels of apple sugars in order to produce a stable product. When used, they must be declared. Neutral sugar is allowed as an adjunct in most styles either to adjust starting or finishing gravity. Honey additions generally result in either a C3C Experimental Cider, a C4D Experimental Perry, or an M2A Cyser (see Mead Style Guidelines). Review individual style descriptions for any allowed or prohibited adjuncts.
- Common processing aids and enzymes are generally allowed as long as they are not perceivable in the finished product. Enzymes may be used to clarify juice before fermentation. Malic acid may be added to low-acid juice to raise acidity to a level safe for avoiding bacterial contamination and off-flavors (typically pH 3.8 or below).
- Sulfites may be used for microbiological control, but the maximum accepted safe level (200 mg/l) must be strictly observed. Any excess sulfite detectable as *burnt match* in the finished product is a serious fault.
- Sorbate may be added at bottling to stabilize the cider. However, any residual aroma or flavor from overuse of sorbate (e.g., a geranium note) is problematic.
- Residual sweetness may be obtained by arresting fermentation, or by adding sweeteners or fresh juice. Back-sweetened products must be stable. Turbidity, gushing, or foaming resulting from post-packaging fermentation are considered serious faults.
- Barrel fermentation in oak is a traditional method for many cider styles, but those barrels are reused so a strong, fresh oak character is not expected in the final product. *Relatively neutral wood may be used to ferment or age any style*. However, this means that any wood character in the finished cider must be at no more than a background level. The use of wood does not automatically imply a specialty or experimental style; however, the intensity of the wood character does.
- Examples with a substantial wood or barrel character should be entered in either C3C Experimental Cider or C4D Experimental Perry, unless the style specifically allows it. When using wood in this manner, declare the species of wood, and the process used (e.g., barrel, chips, staves, strips, spirals).

Entry Instructions

- Carbonation and sweetness levels are constrained in some styles; other levels are considered out-of-style. If a style lists no restrictions, then all levels are allowable.
- Perceived carbonation is dependent on judging conditions, so specifying or requiring absolute volumes of CO₂ is not necessary.
- Declaring fruit varieties is allowable in any style.
- Potential allergens must always be declared.
- Vital Statistics are general guidelines, not absolutes. Commercial outliers certainly exist.

C1. TRADITIONAL CIDER

Traditional Ciders are produced through fermenting apples without additional ingredients or unusual processes, and represent the regional traditions from many apple-growing areas of the world. The use of a geographic name in a style title does not imply an appellation – ciders inspired by the originals may be produced anywhere, as long as they have a similar sensory profile.

See the Introduction to Cider and Perry Styles for detailed sensory characteristics that apply to all styles.

C1A. Common Cider

A Common Cider is made primarily from culinary (table) apples. Compared to most other styles in this category, these ciders are generally lower in tannin and higher in acidity.

Overall Impression: A refreshing drink with the fruity and floral aroma of apples, and a bright, juicy acidity. Fresh, with a clean fermentation, but possibly showing a slight yeast character.

Aroma and Flavor: Apple character noticeable, either as the flavor of the fruit or as a fruity-floral aroma. Sweet or low-alcohol ciders may have noticeable apple aroma and flavor. Dry ciders will be more neutral-flavored and wine-like with some apple-derived esters and floral notes. Apple-derived esters are not necessarily apple-like; other fruit notes are possible (similar to what occurs when grapes are fermented into wine). Sweetness and acidity should combine to give a refreshing character. Medium to high acidity adds a refreshing quality, but must not be harsh or biting. Restrained tannin may contribute to an increased perception of dryness in the finish. Generally clean fermentation without the rustic or MLF notes of some other regional ciders. Light yeast character acceptable.

Appearance: Slightly cloudy to brilliant. Color ranges from very pale straw to medium gold. Red-fleshed apple varieties can produce ciders with a blush hue.

Mouthfeel: Medium-light to medium body. Light tannin can provide a slight to medium-low astringency, but little bitterness. Any level of carbonation.

Comments: A refreshing drink of some substance – neither bland nor watery. Sweet ciders must not be cloying. Dry ciders must not be too austere (subtle, muted, tight fruit flavor with high acidity). Sometimes called New World Cider or Modern Cider. The name *common* implies lack of rarity, not lack of quality or class. Common cider may use heirloom apple varieties, if they do not have appreciable tannin levels, significant non-fruity character, or unusual intensity – ciders with these qualities are best entered in other Traditional Cider styles.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify both carbonation and sweetness levels. Entrants **MAY** specify apple varieties, particularly if those varieties introduce unusual characteristics.

Varieties: Common (e.g., Winesap, McIntosh, Golden Delicious, Braeburn, Jonathan), multi-use (e.g., Northern Spy, some Russets, Baldwin), any suitable wildings

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.045 – 1.065
FG: 0.995 – 1.020
ABV: 4.5 – 8%

Commercial Examples: Äppeltreow Barn Swallow Cider, Bellwether Liberty Spy, Doc's Hard Apple Cider, Seattle Cider Dry, Tandem Ciders Smackintosh, 2 Towns BrightCider, Uncle John's Apple Hard Cider

C1B. Heirloom Cider

Heirloom Cider is a broadly-defined style that often uses at least some cider apples to create a product having more tannin than Common Cider. It is usually made outside the regions associated with English, French, and Spanish Cider styles, and lacks the distinguishing MLF or rustic characteristics of those styles. It is a type of 'craft' cider produced in North America, eastern England, and elsewhere in the world.

Overall Impression: Combining the apple character and acidity of a Common Cider with the tannin of an English or French Cider, while retaining a clean fermentation profile.

Aroma and Flavor: The intensity of apple character, esters, and sweetness typically varies with the sweetness level. Heirloom variety cider apples may bring their own unique, often rustic, qualities. Acidity can be moderate to high. Tannins can be medium-low to medium-high. Tannins may add to the impression of dryness in the finish, while contributing flavors that are reminiscent of wood, leather, or apple skins. Acidity and tannin together balance the sweetness and provide structure to the cider; they are both typically present, and do not have to be at equal levels. Has a clean fermentation profile without MLF-derived phenol or barnyard character. Mousiness is a serious fault. Light yeast character acceptable.

Appearance: Slightly cloudy to brilliant. Color ranges from straw to deep gold. Red-fleshed apple varieties can produce ciders with a blush hue.

Mouthfeel: Medium to full body, depending on tannin level. Any astringency and bitterness from tannin should be no more than moderate. Any level of carbonation.

Comments: Probably most similar to English Cider, but without any MLF phenols or barnyard character, and having a higher acid balance. Sometimes called Heritage Cider or Traditional Cider. The name *heirloom* implies the use of older, not-widely-grown cider apple varieties, not that there is some added prestige, especially relative to Common Cider.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify both carbonation and sweetness levels. Entrants **MAY** specify varieties of apples used; if specified, a varietal character will be expected.

Varieties: Multi-use varieties from Common Cider and many of the same bittersweet and bittersharp varieties used in English or French Ciders, or other heirloom or cider varieties, crabapples, hybrids, tannic wildings

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.050 – 1.080
FG: 0.995 – 1.020
ABV: 6 – 9%

Commercial Examples: Eve's Cider Autumn's Gold, Farnum Hill Extra Dry, Redbyrd Orchard Cloudsplitter, Sea Cider Flagship, Snowdrift Cliffbreaks Blend, Tandem Ciders Crabster, West County Cider Redfield

C1C. English Cider

English Cider is a regional product originating in the West Country, a group of counties in the southwest of England. Made from bittersweet and bittersharp apples, it is higher in tannin and lower in acidity than Common Cider. It may optionally have a phenolic-smoky character from intentional MLF. Not all cider from England fits this category; some are in the Heirloom Cider style.

Overall Impression: Full-bodied and often seeming quite dry with a long finish from high tannin content. The fruit expression may seem subtle due to a lower estery apple character than most styles, but the fruit-derived flavor profile can be complex but non-fruity. Can optionally have a phenolic, smoky, or light barnyard MLF complexity.

Aroma and Flavor: The intensity of apple character tends to be subtle, but not absent. Esters and tannins can suggest apples without being overtly apple-flavored. This style often uses fruit giving significantly spicy, earthy, non-fruity flavors that are much different than those from common table apples. Acidity tends to be lower (especially if MLF has been conducted), with tannin providing much of the structure. Tannins can be moderate to high, and can add flavors reminiscent of leather, wood, dried leaves, or apple skins.

MLF may add a desirable phenolic or barnyard character, with spicy, smoky, phenolic, leathery, or horsey qualities. These flavor notes are positive but are **not** required. If present, they must not dominate; in particular, the phenolic and barnyard notes should not be heavy. A strong barnyard character without spicy, smoky, or phenolic notes suggests a *Brett* contamination, which is a fault. Mousiness is a serious fault.

Appearance: Barely cloudy to brilliant. Medium yellow to amber color.

Mouthfeel: Full body. Moderate to high tannin, perceived as astringency with some bitterness. Any carbonation level, although traditional cask versions tend to be still to moderate. Should not gush or foam.

Comments: Sweeter examples exist, but dry is most traditional, particularly when considering the drying contributions of tannin.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level. Entrants **MUST** specify sweetness, restricted to dry through semi-sweet. Entrants **MAY** specify varieties of apples used; if specified, a varietal character will be expected.

Varieties: Kingston Black, Stoke Red, Dabinett, Porter's Perfection, Nehou, Yarlington Mill, Major, various Jerseys

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.050 – 1.075
FG: 0.995 – 1.015
ABV: 6 – 9%

Commercial Examples: Aspoll Imperial Cyder, Burrow Hill Cider Bus, Farnum Hill Farmhouse, Henney's Vintage Cider, Hogan's Dry Cider (UK), Montana CiderWorks North Fork Traditional, Oliver's Traditional Dry, Sea Cider Wild English

C1D. French Cider

French Cider is a regional product originating in the northwest of France, predominantly Normandy and Brittany. Made using bittersweet and bittersharp apples, it can have a higher tannin level, but it is often made sweeter to balance. The French also use MLF as do the English, but the character is often lower. Salts may be adjusted and nutrients may be deprived to arrest fermentation.

Overall Impression: Medium to sweet, full-bodied, rich. Somewhat fruity. May have a background level of phenolic, smoky, or barnyard character.

Aroma and Flavor: Fruity, often fairly sweet with a full, rich flavor. The sweetness and tannin combine to give a palate fullness that often delivers considerable apple flavor. Tannins can dry the finish slightly. MLF notes of spicy-smoky, phenolic, lightly funky, and barnyard are common but not required (just as with English Cider), but must not be pronounced if present.

Appearance: Clear to brilliant. Medium yellow to amber color. Color may be deeper than other traditional styles. Higher carbonation levels may create a brief foam stand similar to soda.

Mouthfeel: Medium to full body, mouth-filling. Moderate tannin, perceived mainly as palate fullness and astringency rather than bitterness. Carbonation moderate to champagne-like, but at higher levels it must not gush or foam.

Comments: Typically made sweet to balance the tannin levels from the traditional apple varieties. The French technique of *défécation* (*keeving* in English) can be used to slow fermentation by depriving nutrients. Some may approximate this by back-sweetening with juice. Commercial examples are frequently carbonated in the bottle. The French expect a subtler MLF character than do the English. Known as *Cidre* in French, and often sold by sweetness level.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level. Entrants **MUST** specify sweetness, restricted to medium through sweet. Entrants **MAY** specify varieties of apples used; if specified, a varietal character will be expected.

Varieties: Nehou, Muscadet de Dieppe, Reine des Pommés, Michelin

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.045 – 1.065
FG: 1.005 – 1.020
ABV: 3 – 6%

Commercial Examples: Bellot Vintage Cider, Domaine Dupont Cidre Bouché, Écusson Cidre Bio Doux, Eric Bordelet Sidre Tendre, Etienne Dupoint Brut, Maison Hérout Cuvée Tradition

C1E. Spanish Cider

Spanish Cider is a regional product originating in the north of Spain, predominantly in Asturias, Cantabria, and Basque regions. Produced from sharp and bittersharp apples using a natural co-fermentation of yeast and bacteria. Often exhibits a wild note, with elevated volatile acidity (ethyl acetate or acetic acid) that traditionally is liberated using an exaggerated pour known as *Escanciar*.

Overall Impression: Dry and fresh, with a bright acidity that may contain light to moderate acetic and wild notes. Rustic and earthy impression, traditionally unfiltered.

Aroma and Flavor: Aromatic, with pome fruit and floral notes. Often has a light wild, barnyard, or funky quality, but this should not be strong or dominating in the balance. May have a light leather, spice, or smoke quality. Tangy, sharp, tart flavor often with citrus (lemon or grapefruit) accents. Light to moderate acetic character and tannin acceptable, but should not be overtly vinegary. Dry palate and finish are typical. Herbal and hay notes are acceptable. Excessively funky, vinegary, or cheesy flavors are faults.

Appearance: Clear to cloudy, but most often cloudy. Straw to deep gold in color. A head may appear after the pour, but is not persistent. Traditional products are unfiltered and virtually flat after the carbonation is liberated during the pour.

Mouthfeel: Medium body. Traditional products have natural carbonation from fermentation but this is liberated during the pour to result in a nearly still drinking experience. However, modern bottled products can be up to sparkling. Little to no astringency or bitterness, except in Basque versions.

Comments: Each Spanish cider-producing region has its own traditions and products, but these are combined within this broad style. Basque cider is more earthy, leathery, and woody, with more bitterness and a stronger sourness compared to the milder, floral and fruity Asturias cider. Traditionally slow-fermented in chestnut vessels with wild and acetic notes coming from the natural process. Typically enjoyed young. Traditional ciders are called *Sidra Natural*, and only have residual carbonation from fermentation. Sparkling sidras are a modern product using secondary refermentation in the bottle. Known as *Sidra* in Spanish and *Sagardo* in Basque. **Ciders that are simply infected or vinegary should not be entered in this style.** If volatile acidity is noted, judges may attempt to liberate it by pouring the cider between tasting glasses or by using a Spanish Cider or wine aerator. Do not attempt theatrical pours during competitions.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level. Entrants **MUST** specify sweetness, restricted to dry through medium. Entrants **MAY** specify varieties of apples used; if specified, a varietal character will be expected.

Varieties: Regona, Raxao, Limón Montés, Verdialona, De la Riega, San Juan, Errezil, Gezamin, Moko

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.040 – 1.055
FG: 0.995 – 1.010
ABV: 5 – 6.5%

Commercial Examples: Barrika Basque Country Cider, El Gaitero Sidra, Fanjul Sidra Natural Llagar de Fozana, Gurutzeta Sagardo Sidra Natural, Kupela Natural Basque Cider, Mayador Sidra Natural M. Busto, Trabanco Sidra Natural, Zapiain Sidra Natural

C2. STRONG CIDER

Strong Ciders use either sugary adjuncts or concentration processes to increase the final alcohol content to levels above those typically attainable from fermenting only unadulterated sweet cider. These additional ingredients or processes have noticeable effects on the finished profile of the ciders, in addition to simply increasing the alcohol level. The name of the category should not be interpreted as implying that every example is necessarily stronger in alcohol than every Traditional Cider style.

The same general characteristics and fault descriptions apply to Strong Ciders as to Traditional Ciders (category C1), with the exception of allowable added ingredients. See the Introduction to Cider and Perry Styles for detailed sensory characteristics that apply to all styles.

C2A. New England Cider

This cider is made using traditional New England apples with relatively high acidity, and adjuncts to raise alcohol levels and contribute additional flavor notes. New England is a multi-state region in the northeast United States, east of New York state.

Overall impression: Substantial body and character. Typically is relatively dry, but can be somewhat sweet if in balance and not containing hot alcohol. Sometimes has a barrel character. Often has flavors from adjuncts, especially raisins.

Aroma and Flavor: A flavorful cider with robust apple character, strong but neutral alcohol, and derivative flavors from adjuncts and sugar additives. Traditionally dry, but sweetness can be present to balance stronger flavors. If sugary adjuncts have a flavor or aroma, those should be balanced with the apple flavor and not dominate. A raisin-like flavor is common. Any barrel or wood character should be restrained, not dominant. Tannins can add to the dryness of the finish. Acid levels are moderate to high, and should be in balance with other flavors. Alcohol should not be hot or harsh. There are many possible flavors present; the best examples show an integration and harmonization between components.

Appearance: Clear to brilliant. Yellow to amber color. Darker colors allowable with declared ingredients and barrel aging.

Mouthfeel: Moderate to full body. Alcohol warmth typical, but should not have a hot character. Medium-low to moderate tannins, which can be higher if barrel-aged. Variable carbonation.

Comments: Adjuncts may include any of white sugar, brown sugar, molasses, maple syrup, or small amounts of honey. Raisins are common. These adjuncts are intended to raise the OG well above what could be achieved by apples alone. Sometimes barrel-aged, which can add an oak character similar to a barrel-aged wine. If the barrel previously held spirits, some of their flavor notes (e.g., whisky, rum) may be present, but must be subtle and balanced. New England Cider is a traditional style; do not interpret it to mean any cider from New England. It also has nothing to do with New England (Hazy) IPA.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify if the cider was barrel-fermented or -aged. Entrants **MUST** specify both carbonation and sweetness levels.

Varieties: Traditional New England apples, such as Northern Spy, Roxbury Russet, Golden Russet, Baldwin

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.060 – 1.100
FG: 0.995 – 1.020
ABV: 7 – 13%

Commercial Examples: Blackbird Cider Works New England Style, Doc's New England Small Batch Cider, Dressler Estate Outpost, Gypsy Circus New England Pantomime, Tandem Ciders Scrumpy Little Woody

C2B. Applewine

A cider fermented with added neutral sugar that increases the starting gravity, and thus the resulting alcohol, to levels well above those typical for Common Cider. The amount of added sugar is greater than what could be used in other styles to compensate for low gravity. Uses no fruit other than apples, and uses only sugar to increase the starting gravity.

Overall Impression: Typically presents like a dry white wine, with fruity and floral notes. Balanced, with low astringency and bitterness. Alcohol is typically noticeable.

Aroma and Flavor: Comparable to a Common Cider in apple character, fruity and floral. Cider character must be distinctive. Very dry to sweet, although often dry. Dry versions can be fairly neutral. Light to moderate yeast character acceptable. Alcohol usually noticeable but should not be harsh, hot, or burning. Acidity typically medium to high. Tannins low to none. The combination of acidity, alcohol, and dryness must not make the finish too hard and tight.

Appearance: Clear to brilliant. Straw to medium-gold. Cloudiness or hazes are inappropriate.

Mouthfeel: Dry versions may seem lighter in body than other ciders, because higher alcohol levels are derived from sugar additions rather than juice. Carbonation may range from still to Champagne-like. Typically has a light alcohol warmth.

Comments: Differs from a New England Cider by using flavorless adjuncts. Sugar is added for *chaptalization*, or increasing the gravity of the juice in order to create more alcohol; it is not intended to increase residual sweetness. Does not contain grapes or fruit other than apples. Not related to *Apfelwein*, which is a German word for cider. Fortified or distilled products should not be entered in this style. Some commercial examples may be labeled as applewine based on ABV levels and local laws; when seeking examples, pay attention to the profile, not the labeling.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify both carbonation and sweetness levels.

Varieties: Same as Common Cider

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.070 – 1.100
FG: 0.995 – 1.020
ABV: 9 – 12%

Commercial Examples: Äppeltreow Autumn Glory Apple Wine, McClure's Sweet Apple Wine, 1911 Established Empire Dry Applewine

C2C. Ice Cider

A cider fermented from juice concentrated either by freezing fruit before pressing or by freezing juice to remove water. Fermentation stops or is arrested before reaching dryness.

Aroma and Flavor: Fruity, with a depth and complexity of apple flavor. Smooth, rich, sweet, and dessert wine-like but with a balancing acidity, like in a Sauternes or other high-quality dessert wine. Acidity must be high enough to prevent it from being cloying. Has a bright character when fresh. Age can bring a deeper complexity with a darker fruit and sugar character, but this should not seem strongly caramelized. Noticeable volatile acidity, typically perceived as acetone, is a fault.

Appearance: Brilliant. Color is deeper than a standard cider, in the range of gold to amber. Aged examples may show darker shades of color.

Mouthfeel: Full body. May be tannic (astringent or bitter) but this is generally slight to moderate, although higher balanced levels are allowable. Can be warming but should not be hot.

Comments: The character differs from Applewine in that the ice cider process increases not only sugar (and hence, potential alcohol) but also acidity and all fruit flavor components proportionately. Differs from Fire Cider in that it lacks deeply caramelized flavors, but has a higher acidity to balance the sweetness. No additives are permitted in this style; in particular, sweeteners may not be used to increase gravity. This style originated in Quebec in the 1990s.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify starting gravity, final gravity or residual sugar, and alcohol level. Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level.

Varieties: Usually North American classic table fruit such as McIntosh or Cortland

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.130 – 1.180
FG: 1.050 – 1.085
ABV: 7 – 13%

Commercial Examples: Champlain Orchards Honeycrisp Ice Cider, Cidrerie St-Nicolas Glace Du Verger Iced Orchard Cider, Domaine Pinnacle Cidre de Glace, Eden Heirloom Blend Ice Cider, Eve's Cider Essence, Les Vergers de la Colline Le Glacé, Windfall Orchard Ice Cider

C2D. Fire Cider

A Canadian cider style (cidre de feu) using classic North American table fruit varieties, and fermented from boiled, concentrated juice. Fermentation may be intentionally arrested or stopped while a substantial amount of residual sugar is present. No additives are permitted; in particular, sweeteners may not be used to increase gravity. Commercial versions may be aged for up to five years prior to release.

Overall Impression: A dark gold to brown cider with a very sweet, caramelized, maple sugar-like impression. Well-aged versions often exhibit a dark fruit or sherry-like character.

Aroma and Flavor: Deep, sweet aroma of caramelized sugars that can have a character like maple syrup or brown sugar, with hints of caramel, dried apricots, baked apples, or butterscotch. Aged versions may have elements of dark fruits and often exhibit a sherry-like character. A very light smoke-like character, if present, is not a fault. Acidity and tannins are typically restrained in the balance. High to very high sweetness, yet not cloying. Up to moderate alcohol may be present, but must be well-integrated.

Appearance: Clear to brilliant. Color is much deeper than a Common Cider or Ice Cider, ranging from deep gold to brown.

Mouthfeel: Full body, sometimes with a thick, chewy viscosity. Some examples can have moderate tannin levels, but not to the point where they seem overly astringent or harsh. Carbonation typically still to moderate. Alcohol warmth may be perceived at a low to moderately-low level, sometimes less obvious than the strength would otherwise indicate. Well-aged examples can exhibit a characteristic smoothness.

Comments: Caramelization is desirable, but scorched or burnt flavors are a fault. Differs from Ice Cider in that it should have a character from caramelization, and the acidity is generally lower in the balance.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify starting gravity, final gravity or residual sugar, and alcohol level. Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level.

Varieties: Classic North American table fruit such as McIntosh, Cortland, or Spartan

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.130 – 1.180
FG: 1.040 – 1.075
ABV: 9 – 16%

Commercial Examples: Cidrerie Milton Cidre de Feu, Domaine Labranche Cidre de Feu, Lacroix Feu Sacré, Petit et Fils Le Jaseux, Union Libre Fire Cider

C3. SPECIALTY CIDER

Specialty Cider includes those ciders with added flavorings or using processes not already described in categories C1 and C2. These ciders do not necessarily need a declared base style as is expected in some specialty beer styles, but they do need to use a perceptible form of cider as the base. The result must be recognizable as a cider with a pleasant integration of the specialty aspect into a coherent, synergistic end product. Declaring a base style is allowable, but understand that judges will then also judge the cider relative to that base style. Entries with undeclared base styles still should have a cider character.

*In the context of this category, the term **fruit** is defined as having the same usage as in the preamble to category 29 Fruit Beer in the 2021 BJCP Beer Style Guidelines. Likewise, the term **spice** is defined as in category 30 Spiced Beer, including allowing the use of any spices, herbs, or vegetables.*

The same general characteristics and fault descriptions apply to Specialty Ciders as to Traditional Ciders (category C1), with the exception of allowable added ingredients. See the Introduction to Cider and Perry Styles for detailed sensory characteristics that apply to all styles.

C3A. Fruit Cider

A cider with additional non-apple fruit or fruit juices added. This is the correct style to enter a beverage fermented from a combination of apple and pear juice.

Overall Impression: A pleasant integration of cider and added fruit. The apple character and the added fruit must be noticeable, balanced, and complementary. If a base style is declared, should show some evidence of that style. *If no base style is declared, assume to be a Common Cider.*

Aroma and Flavor: The cider character must be present and must meld well with the other declared fruits. The fruit character can seem like fresh fruit or somewhat jam-like, but should always have a fermented quality. It is a fault if the added fruit completely dominates the cider, the fruit seems like raw unfermented juice, or the cider otherwise tastes artificial. Oxidation of the base cider or of the fruit is a fault, but the cider can have a fresh or aged character.

Appearance: Clear to brilliant, as appropriate for the base style. Color appropriate to added fruit, but should not show brownish or dull oxidation characteristics (for example, red berries should give red-to-purple color, not orange). Fruit varieties can come in a range of colors often broader than those traditionally associated with the declared fruit.

Mouthfeel: Reflecting base style. Some ingredients may contribute additional acidity or tannins.

Comments: Typically made from at least 75% apple juice, but this value does not need to be declared. The final product must retain a cider character from the apples. The description of the cider is critical information for judges, and should be sufficient for them to understand the concept. If special ingredients are declared, they should be perceived (exception: potential allergens do not need to be perceivable, but must be declared).

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify both carbonation and sweetness levels. Entrants **MUST** specify all fruit or fruit juice added. Entrants **MAY** specify a base cider style. Entrants **MAY** specify the color of added fruit.

Varieties: Any, depending on base cider

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.045 – 1.070
FG: 0.995 – 1.010
ABV: 5 – 9%

Commercial Examples: Apple Valley Black Currant, Bauman's Cider Loganberry, Tandem Ciders Strawberry Jam, Tieton Cranberry, Uncle John's Apple Cherry Hard Cider, Vander Mill Bluish Gold

C3B. Spiced Cider

A cider with any combination of “botanicals” added. Hopped ciders are allowable in this category, in addition to ciders with the spices, herbs, and vegetables referenced in the Specialty Cider preamble.

Overall Impression: A pleasant integration of cider and added spices. The apple character must combine with the botanicals to give a balanced result. If a base style is declared, should show some evidence of that style.

Aroma and Flavor: The apple character and added botanicals must both be noticeable and complementary. As with a fruit cider, it is a fault if the botanicals dominate or seem artificial. Likewise, harsh or raw spice flavors are undesirable. Hops, if used, should have a fresh, green character, not a grassy, vegetal quality. Note that some botanicals are stronger than others. Oxidation of either the special ingredients or the base cider is a fault.

Appearance: Clear to brilliant, as appropriate for the base style. Color appropriate to the added botanicals and base style.

Mouthfeel: Reflecting base style. Cider may be tannic or astringent from the effect of added botanicals but must not be bitter from over-extraction. Some ingredients may contribute tannins, bitterness, sourness, or other effects.

Comments: The final product must retain a cider character from the apples. Hopped ciders typically display a fresh ‘dry hop’ character, not bitterness, from the hops. The description of the cider is critical information for judges, and should be sufficient for them to understand the concept. If special ingredients are declared, they should be perceived (exception: potential allergens do not need to be perceivable, but must be declared).

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify both carbonation and sweetness levels. Entrants **MUST** specify all spices added. If hops are used, entrant **MUST** specify the varieties. Entrants **MAY** specify a base cider style.

Varieties: Any, depending on base cider

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.045 – 1.070
FG: 0.995 – 1.010
ABV: 5 – 9%

Commercial Examples: Äppeltreow Sparrow Spiced Cider, Finnriver Dry Hopped Cider, Left Foot Charley Cinnamon Girl, Montana CiderWorks Hopped Up, Oliver's At the Hop, Seattle Cider Basil Mint, Uncle John's Atomic Apple

C3C. Experimental Cider

This is an open-ended, catch-all category for cider with other ingredients or processes that do not fit any of the previous cider styles in categories C1 through C3. It also may be used for any other type of historical or regional traditional cider not already described. If the cider fits a previous style description, then it is not an Experimental Cider.

Aroma and Flavor: The cider character must always be present, and must fit with added ingredients or process effects. If a spirit barrel was used, the character of the spirit (rum, whiskey, etc.) may range from subtle (barely recognizable) to balanced and complementary (short of dominating and overwhelming the cider character). Overall balance and drinkability are the critical success factors for this style. The resulting cider should contain recognizable experimental components, and be pleasant to drink.

Appearance: Clear to brilliant, as appropriate for the base style. Color should be that of a standard cider unless other ingredients or processes are expected to contribute color.

Mouthfeel: Reflects the base style, but may also show tannic, astringent, bitter, heavy body, or other characteristics as determined by declared ingredients or processes.

Comments: Some examples fitting this category include:

- Cider with added honey (unless used in New England Cider, or if honey is dominant in the balance, which should be entered as a M2A Cyser under the Mead Guidelines)
- Cider with other sweeteners
- Ciders with both spices and other (non-apple) fruit
- Cider/beer hybrids (graff/graf, snakebite)
- Cider with a wood or barrel character that is a significant part of the flavor profile
- Cider that otherwise meets existing guideline definitions, except that it is *noticeably* outside listed style parameters (e.g., strength, sweetness, carbonation)
- Regional, traditional, or historical styles not in the guidelines.

Regardless of experimental nature, the resulting beverage must be recognizable as a cider. The description of the cider is critical information for judges, and should be sufficient to allow them to understand the concept. If special ingredients are declared, they should be perceived (exception: potential allergens do not need to be perceivable, but must be declared).

Experimental cider may exceed the typical Vital Statistics ranges for declared base styles, especially when based on concentrated styles (C2C or C2D).

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify the ingredients or processes that make the entry an experimental cider. Entrants **MUST** specify both carbonation and sweetness levels. Entrants **MAY** specify a base style, or provide a more detailed description of the concept.

Varieties: Any, depending on base cider

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.045 – 1.100
FG: 0.995 – 1.020
ABV: 5 – 12%

Commercial Examples: Cidergeist Beezy, Domaine Dupoint Cidre Reserve, Finnriver Fire Barrel, Snowdrift Cornice, Tandem Ciders Bee's Dream, Uncle John's Blossom Blend, Uncle John's Sidra de Tepache

C4. PERRY

Perry is the fermented juice of crushed pears. Pear must represent the majority of fermentables in the beverage. See the Introduction to Cider and Perry Styles for detailed sensory characteristics that apply to all styles.

C4A. Common Perry

Common Perry is made from culinary (table) pears.

Overall Impression: Mildly fruity, fuller-bodied. Usually semi-dry to semi-sweet. Still to pétillant, typically. Only very slight acetification is acceptable.

Aroma and Flavor: There is a fruity pear character, which can be mild but increases in sweeter examples. The pear character reflects flavors expected of fermented table pears, which may not taste strongly like fresh pears. Drier versions tend toward a profile similar to a young white wine. The acidity level should be mild to balanced, not sharp. Tannins can be mild to balanced, but should not add significant bitterness. The balance of acid and tannins is variable, but is generally even to acid-forward. Should not be mousy, ropy, or oily.

Appearance: Slightly cloudy to clear. Generally quite pale, with a straw to gold color.

Mouthfeel: Relatively full body. Low to moderate tannins apparent as astringency. Still to sparkling carbonation, although most are no more than medium.

Comments: Compared to Heirloom Perry, Common Perry has less tannin, more of a table fruit character, and can have more acidity. Some table pears contain significant amounts of sorbitol, which may give a dry perry an impression of sweetness. The perception of sorbitol as *sweet* is highly variable from one person to the next. Hence, entrants should specify sweetness according to actual residual sugar amount, and judges must be aware that they might perceive more sweetness than how the perry was entered. Back-sweetening with raw pear juice to achieve a recognizable flavor profile can be found in commercial examples, but this is not necessarily authentic or expected in perry from areas with a long, continuous tradition. The name *common* implies lack of rarity, not lack of quality or class. Sometimes called New World Perry or Modern Perry.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify both carbonation and sweetness levels.

Varieties: Bartlett, Kiefer, Comice, Conference

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.050 – 1.060
FG: 1.000 – 1.020
ABV: 5 – 8%

Commercial Examples: Æppeltreow Perry, EdenVale Pear Cider, Seattle Cider Perry, Snowdrift Semi-Dry Perry, Twin Pines Hammer Bent Perry, Uncle John's Perry

C4B. Heirloom Perry

A traditional perry made from “perry pears” grown specifically for that purpose, rather than for eating or cooking. Many of these varieties are nearly inedible due to high tannins; some are also quite hard. Perry pears may contain substantial amounts of sorbitol, a non-fermentable, sweet-tasting sugar alcohol. Hence a perry can exhibit the impression of sweetness, yet be completely dry (no RS).

Overall Impression: Tannic and somewhat fruity, with a fuller body. English examples tend to be drier than French examples, so the sweetness level is variable. English and French examples may be carbonated to higher levels.

Aroma and Flavor: There is a noticeable fermented pear character, which can be subtle to quite fruity. The pear character can be more complex than a Common Perry, and does not taste strongly of table pears. The impression often tends toward that of a young white wine. A slight tannic bitterness is possible. The acidity level should be balanced, not sharp, as typically more tannin is present than acidity. Sorbitol may contribute to the impression of sweetness. Should not be mousy, ropy, or oily. Perry can sometimes have a very low level of natural acetification, which is unrelated to contamination.

Appearance: Slightly cloudy to clear. Generally quite pale, with a straw to gold color. Still to sparkling carbonation, although most are no more than medium.

Mouthfeel: Relatively full body. Moderate to high tannin apparent as astringency. Sorbitol can provide a smooth and slick texture. Should not seem syrupy.

Comments: Compared to Common Perry, Heirloom Perry is more tannin-forward, may have some bitterness, and has a more complex pear flavor. Note that a *dry* perry may give an impression of sweetness due to sorbitol in the pears, and perception of sorbitol as *sweet* is highly variable from one person to another. Hence entrants should specify sweetness according to actual residual sugar amount, and judges must be aware that they might perceive more sweetness than how the perry was entered. Back-sweetening with raw pear juice to achieve a recognizable flavor profile can be found in some commercial examples, but this is not necessarily authentic or expected in perry from areas with a long, continuous tradition. Sometimes called Traditional Perry or Heritage Perry. The name *heirloom* implies the use of older, not-widely-grown perry pear varieties, not that there is some added prestige, especially relative to Common Perry.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify both carbonation and sweetness levels.

Varieties: Butt, Gin, Brandy, Barland, Blakeney Red, Thorn, Moorcroft

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.050 – 1.070
FG: 1.000 – 1.020
ABV: 4 – 9%

Commercial Examples: Æppeltreow Orchard Oriole Perry, Burrow Hill Perry, Christian Drouin Poiré, Dragon's Head Sparkling Perry, Eric Bordelet Poiré Authentique, EZ Orchards Poire, Hogan's Classic Perry (UK), Oliver's Classic Perry

C4C. Ice Perry

A regional style (*Poiré de Glace*) originating in Quebec in the 2000s, often produced by *cideries* or *domaines* where ice cider is made using a similar process. Pear juice is frozen before fermentation to concentrate sugars. Fermentation is often arrested before completion to achieve the desired sweetness level. Sweeteners must not be used to adjust the starting or finishing gravity.

Overall Impression: Full-bodied, bright, and fruity, with a balanced acidity. Sweet, but not cloying. Still to pétillant.

Aroma and Flavor: Fruity, smooth, sweet-tart. The fruit aroma is clear and bright, often like poached pears, fruit preserves, or candied peaches. The light to moderate fruit flavors can seem like pears that have been cooked, dried, preserved, candied, or caramelized. The soft, rounded finish may have additional notes of honey, nuts, pastries, or tropical fruit. Acidity must be sufficient to prevent it from seeming to be cloying. May be tannic (astringent or bitter) but this should be slight to moderate at most. Should not be mousy, ropy, or oily. Noticeable acetone is a fault. Only very slight acetification is acceptable.

Appearance: Gold to amber color. Clear to crystal clear. Usually still, but light evidence of carbonation is allowed.

Mouthfeel: Full body. Supple, smooth texture, with a very long, silky finish. Alcohol warmth is light to moderately low, although may not be perceivable due to the sweetness. Most examples are still, but a light carbonation is acceptable.

Comments: While originating in Canada, not exclusively a Canadian product. The level of tannin and acidity is noticeably lower than in Ice Cider.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify starting gravity, final gravity or residual sugar, alcohol level, and carbonation level.

Varieties: Bartlett, Bosc, Flemish Beauty, other table pears

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.130 – 1.170
FG: 1.050 – 1.085
ABV: 9 – 12%

Commercial Examples: Coteau Rougemont Poiré de Glace, Domaine de la Galotière Poiré de Glace, Domaine de Lavoie Poiré de Glace, Vergers Écologiques Philion Gaia, Domaine des Salamandres Le Classique

C4D. Experimental Perry

This is an open-ended, catch-all category for perry with other ingredients or for perry using other processes that result in a product not fitting any other C4 styles, such as pear-based versions of C3A and C3B (fruited or spiced perry). It may also be used for any other type of historical or regional traditional perry not already described, or for perry that otherwise meets existing guideline definitions, except that it is noticeably outside listed style parameters (e.g., strength, sweetness, carbonation). If the perry fits a previously defined style, then it is not an *Experimental Perry*.

Products derived from other pome fruit (e.g., quince) including those berry-like fruit in the *Amelanchier* genus (e.g., juneberry, serviceberry, saskatoon berry) may be entered here in lieu of a separate category, provided the experimental fruit is dominant in the formulation.

Aroma and Flavor: The perry character must always be present, and must fit with added ingredients or process effects. If a spirit barrel was used, the character of the spirit (rum, whiskey, etc.) may range from subtle (barely recognizable) to balanced and complementary (short of dominating and overwhelming the perry character). Overall balance and drinkability are the critical success factors for this style. The resulting perry should contain recognizable experimental components, and be pleasant to drink.

Appearance: Clear to brilliant. Color should be that of a standard perry unless other declared ingredients or processes contribute color.

Mouthfeel: If a base style has been declared, the body and mouthfeel should be reflective of that style. Declared ingredients or processes may result in additional body, or in increased tannic, astringent, bitter, or other characteristics.

Comments: If a mixture of fruit is used, the perry character must remain dominant. Regardless of experimental nature, the resulting beverage must be recognizable as a perry. The description of the perry is critical information for judges, and should be sufficient to allow them to understand the concept. If special ingredients are declared, they should be perceived (exception: potential allergens do not need to be perceivable, but must be declared).

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify the ingredients or processes that make the entry an experimental perry. Entrants **MUST** specify both carbonation and sweetness levels. Entrants **MAY** specify a base style, or provide a more detailed description of the concept.

Varieties: Any

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.045 – 1.100
FG: 0.995 – 1.020
ABV: 5 – 12%

Commercial Examples: Æpeltreow Pear Wine, Sea Cider Ginger Perry, Snow Capped Cider JalaPEARño