
Wines Competitions: Peak behind the Veil!

Presented by Leah Stafford

AWE, CSW, CMS-Intro, WSET, AWS-CWJ,
Wine educator, presenter, writer, grower, home winemaker,
UCD trained judge.

Why Enter Wines into Competitions?

- Receive Objective Feedback
- Grow as a winemaker
- Fun of Competition

Receiving “objective” Feedback:

What is Objective feedback?

How well do you know your wine?

Is your wine balanced?

What Flaws/Faults (if any) might be present?

Objective Feedback is provided from calibrated sensory training and numerical assignment to dictate where the wine is tasting at the time of competition.

Simply put:

Is it a really good glass of wine?

The 100 point system was created in 1935 by Professor William Cruess.

It is still widely used by the Commercial wine competitions. Wine judges merely began at 100 points and would remove a point for each matter found unsavory, thus focusing on “trueness to type of wine”.

This is the system that was used with the famous “Judgement of Paris” competition of 1976.

It is thought that beginning with 100 points with basically 10 points to earn on every aspect of a wine.

The 20 points came out later.

To date there are various 100 point systems used, It is basically a marketing tool.

1935- 1959 Dr. Maynard A. Amerine, Professor of Enology, Dr. A.J. Winkler, and his staff at University of California- Davis, began to develop a numerical way to asses wines using the 100 point system.

1952 a 20 point was proposed for better reliability and consistency to eliminate so much variance to the 100 points. As basically only 20 points is truly used.

1974 Dr. Ann Noble, a sensory chemist, was hired by the UCDavis viticulture department to help develop common language to describe wines aromas, flavors and characters. From this came the Aroma Wheel which is used today, after it's most recent updates in 2002.

- Since this time, Australia has developed a “mouthfeel” wheel, for texture.
- A separate wheel has been designed for sparkling wines, in regards to mousse.
- Germany has developed a similar aroma wheel adapted to the German wines and pradikat system.

Most wine judging forms are a take off of the combined influences of the UC Davis 20-point system and Aroma wheel.

Color/clarity: 2-4 points

Aroma and Bouquet: 4-5 points

Flavor: 4-8 points

- Total Acidity
- Sweetness
- Body/texture
- Flavor/Taste
- Astringency/bitterness (Tannins)
- Alcohol

Overall Quality 2-4 points

UC DAVIS 20 POINT SYSTEM

	A	B	C	D	E	F
CLARITY (2 POINTS)						
Brilliant, near-sparkle, clear with no haze or particulates	2.0					
Bright, some sparkle, clear with no haze or particulates	1.5					
Dull, mostly clear, perhaps a hint of haze or particulates	1.0					
Cloudy, unclear with a distinct haze or particulates	0.5					
COLOR (2 POINTS)						
Appropriate color for varietal/type and age	2.0					
Nearly correct color for varietal/type and age	1.5					
Slightly off color for varietal/type and age	1.0					
Flawed color for varietal/type and age	0.5					
BOUQUET (4 POINTS)						
Distinct varietal characteristics, balanced bouquet	4.0					
Simply fruity characteristics, some bouquet	3.0					
Little varietal character, simple bouquet	2.0					
Underdeveloped nose, closed, non-apparent	1.0					
Defective nose, off odors	0.0					
TOTAL ACIDITY (1 POINT)						
Proper balance, appropriate for varietal/type	1.0					
Slightly out-of-balance, high/low acidity	0.5					
Well out-of-balance, tart/flabby	0.0					
SWEETNESS (1 POINT)						
Appropriate sweetness, well enhanced/well balanced	1.0					
Slightly off, either too sweet or too dry for type	0.5					
Well off, cloying, out-of-balance for type	0.0					
BODY/TEXTURE (2 POINTS)						
Appropriate body for varietal/type and age	2.0					
Nearly correct body for varietal/type and age	1.5					
Slightly heavy/slightly thin for varietal/type and age	1.0					
Too heavy (climpy)/too thin (watery) for varietal/type and age	0.5					
FLAVOR/TASTE (2 POINTS)						
Complex flavors, appropriate for varietal/type and age	2.0					
Simple flavors, appropriate for varietal/type and age	1.5					
Agreeable flavors, appropriate for varietal/type and age	1.0					
Non-descript flavors, inappropriate for varietal/type and age	0.5					
ACIDSCENSY (BITTERNESS) (1 POINT)						
Well balanced, no perceptible bitterness	1.0					
Slightly bitter, but still in balance	0.5					
Overly bitter, unbalanced	0.0					
ASTRINGENCY (1 POINT)						
Appropriate levels of tannin for the varietal/type and age	1.0					
Somewhat high/low levels of tannin for the varietal/type and age	0.5					
Overly tannic/overly flaccid for the varietal/type and age	0.0					
OVERALL QUALITY (4 POINTS)						
Wines of "noble" quality with distinct and distinguishing character	4.0					
Wines that are "charming" with some special character	3.0					
Wines that are typical of the varietal/type and age	2.0					
Wines with no exceptional characteristics, but not flawed	1.0					
Wines with no exceptional characteristics, and possess flaws	0.0					
TOTAL SCORE						

Courtesy of UC Davis



2019 California State Fair
Home Wine Evaluation Sheet

Class: 225 - Cabernet Sauvignon	268
Panel & Flight: 1 - 1 - R	Entry: 708
Varietal/Fruit Blend: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon	Vintage: 2018

Characteristics (circle descriptive terms that apply)	Judge's Comments
CLARITY / APPEARANCE Brilliant - Star bright - Crystal - Leggy - Translucent - Slightly dull - Pearling - Cloudy - Hazy - Sediment - Turbid - Watery	
COLOR Typical for type and age - Vivid - Nearly correct - Attractive - Lively - Off - Maderized - Brown - Colorless	
AROMA AND BOUQUET Varietal Characteristic - Complex - Flowery - Fruity - Pronounced - Developed - Clean - Pleasant - Scented - Delicate - Fleeting - Simple - Underdeveloped - Elusive - Defective - Off - Sulfurous - Vinous - Corky	
ACIDITY / BALANCE Balanced - Appropriate to type - Slightly unbalanced - Lacking or Tart - Flabby - Insipid - Raw - Marsh - Vinegary	
SWEET / DRY Appropriate to type - Balanced - Normal - Sweet edged - Slightly Jackini - Cloying - Syrupy - Sugary - Lacking	
BODY / TEXTURE Appropriate - Firm - Sound - Velvety - Silky - Nearly correct - Smooth - Even - Slightly thin - Heavy - Uneven - Awkward Empty - Thin - Rough - Course - Clumpy	
TASTE / FLAVOR Complex - Mature - Varietal - Luscious - Fruity - Robust - Multilayered - Agreeable - Clean - Simple - Lacking - Green - Chemical - Starchy - Hollow	
BITTERNESS Balanced - Normal - Citric - Slightly bitter - Medium - Bitter - Marsh	
FINISH / ASTRINGENCY Appropriate for age - Enticing - Lasting - Nearly correct - Tapering - Marsh - Withered	
OVERALL QUALITY Nobel - Distinguished - Elegant - Grand Character - Graceful - Skillfully made - No exceptional features - Damaged - Major flaw (Note flaw)	

General comments to winemaker:

Individual Judge's Personal Recommendation
(Please indicate individual award)

☐ Gold ☐ Silver ☐ Bronze ☐ None

Consensus Award by Panel of Judges - Final
(To be agreed upon by entire panel)

☐ Dbl Gold* ☐ Gold ☐ Silver ☐ Bronze ☐ None

* All judges award GOLD individually

Judges #

Judges Signature

Courtesy of California State Fair

Courts of Master Sommelier and Wine and Spirits Education Trust
Historically taught wine assessment off of these rating:

	Low,	Medium,	High	
	Low, medium -, medium, medium+, high			
	Light, medium-, medium, medium+, pronounced			
	(/) (-) () (+)			
	(++)			
	1,	2,	3,	4,
5,				

Some judges have to take their education and conform it to the judging form provided to them at a competition.

Thus one might be challenged at reading judges' notes.
It can be like reading a foreign language.

American Wine Society

Is probably the most accessible wine judging program available to certify judges with a 3 year training and grueling sensory testing. Thus it has earned the respect as being fair and unbiased judges that are called on for their training.

Their approach to judging was developed as they were a club of amateur wine makers, and a uniform approach to assess the wines members were crafting was necessary for fairness.

The current guideline is:

Color/Clarity:	0-3 points
Aroma and Bouquet:	0-6 points
Taste/Texture:	0-6 points
Finish/Aftertaste:	0-3 points
Overall Impression:	0-2 points

American Wine Society Scoring Guideline based off of UC Davis 20 points:

Appearance:

- 3 = Excellent - Brilliant with outstanding characteristics
- 2 = Good - Clear with characteristic color
- 1 = Poor - Slight haze and/or slight off color
- 0 = Objectionable - cloudy and/or off color

Aroma and Bouquet:

- 6 = Extraordinary - Unmistakable characteristic aroma of grape-variety,
Outstanding and complex bouquet;

Exceptionally balanced

- 5 = Excellent - Characteristic aroma, complex bouquet. Well balanced
- 4 = Good - Characteristic aroma. Distinguishable bouquet
- 3 = Acceptable - Slight aroma and bouquet. Pleasant
- 2 = Deficient - No perceptible aroma or bouquet or with slight off odors
- 1 = Poor - Off odors
- 0 = Objectionable - Objectionable or offensive odors

Taste and Texture:

6 = Extraordinary - Unmistakable characteristic flavor of grape-variety, or wine type
Extraordinary balance, Smooth, Full-bodied and Outstanding and
overwhelming.

5 = Excellent - Same as above but a little subdued. Excellent not overwhelming so.

4 = Good - Characteristic grape-typicity. Good balance

3 = Acceptable - Muddled flavor profile but pleasant.

Might have off flavors, out of balance, thin or rough.

2 = Deficient - Undistinguishable, off flavors or faults more prominent

1 = Poor - Disagreeable flavor, severely flawed or faulted

0 = Objectionable - Objectionable or offensive flavors and/or textures

“Texture”:

Tannins = rough

Residual sugars = cloying

Body - thin, or overtly cloying

Alcohol - thin, often related to acid out of whack too.

Finish / Aftertaste:

3 = Excellent - Lingering outstanding aftertaste

2 = Good - Pleasant aftertaste, slightly off

1 = Poor - Little or no distinguishable aftertaste

0 = Objectionable - Unpleasant aftertaste

Overall Impression: (Most subjective part of the wine assessment)

2 = Excellent - "Please sir may I have some more!"

1 = Good - "Okay, if this is all you are serving."

0 = Poor - "No! Thank you."

Totals and what they mean:

18-20 = Extraordinary, Gold

15-17 = Excellent, Silver

12-14 = Good, Bronze

9-11 = Commercially Acceptable

6-8 = Deficient

0-5 = Poor and Objectionable



AWS Wine Evaluation Chart

Name:

Date:

Place:

Theme:

Wine	Price	Appearance 3 Max.	Aroma / Bouquet 6 Max.	Taste / Texture 6 Max.	Aftertaste 3 Max.	Overall Impression 2 Max.	Total Score 20 max.

The **American Wine Society** (AWS) is a national non-profit consumer organization that is dedicated to educating its members about wine appreciation, winemaking, and wine evaluation.

The **AWS** is an independent organization with no commercial affiliation.

The **AWS** has over 140 chapters throughout the United States. Membership is open to any adult interested in wine - amateur, enthusiast, or professional.

For further information contact:

AMERICAN WINE SOCIETY

P. O. Box 889

Scranton, PA, 18501

Genco:

Garage Enologists of
Sonoma County.
Sonoma County,
California. Est: 1995

An organization of
amateur winemakers that
meet monthly in
Healdsburg, CA.

[https://www.
Gencowinemakers. Com](https://www.Gencowinemakers.Com)

GENCO
Wine Evaluations

Wine #	Vintage & Wine	Clarity & Color 3	Aroma & Bouquet 5	Initial Impression 4	Flavors 3	Body/Finish 3	Overall Quality & Comments 2	Award
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								

J20 The Bottle Shock Open HOME WINE COMPETITION

7146	Other Red Varietal Blends (200)	06-02
2018	Zinfandel, Barbera	
pH=3.6, TA=6.6, SO2=28		

JUDGE'S 1st SCORE (please circle)	No Award	1HM	<u>B</u>	B+	S-	S	S+	G-	G
JUDGE'S 2nd SCORE (other discussion)	No Award	1HM	<u>B</u>	B+	S-	S	S+	G-	G

CHARACTERISTICS	Circle appropriate terms if this assists you with your comments below
APPEARANCE Clarity / Color	Brilliant • Translucent • Clear • <u>Gold</u> • Cloudy • Hazy • Sediment • Turbid • Watery • Petulant • Effervescent Pale • Medium • <u>Dark</u> • WHITES: Green • StrawGreen • Straw • StrawGold • Gold • Amber • Brown REDS: Purple • Ruby • Crimson • Garnet • Tawny • Brick • Brown • ROSES: Grey • Pink • Salmon • Copper • Garnet
AROMA	Astringent (or <u>Cloyed</u>) • Fresh • Powerful • Oxidized • Flowery • Fruity • Developed • Clean • Pleasant • Scented • Delicate • Varietal • Characteristic • Complex
BOUQUET (including oak and defects)	Fleeting • Simple • Underdeveloped • Elusive • OAK: Vanilla • Spice • Toffee • Nutty • Espresso DEFECTS: SulfurDioxide • Rotten Egg • Mercaptan • Vinegary • Corky • Brett (adds complexity) • Brett (over done)
BALANCE Sweetness	ALCOHOL: Hot • Heavy • Bitter • <u>Well-balanced</u> • Graceful • Thin Appropriate to type • <u>Balanced</u> • Normal • Too Light • Sweet edged • Cloying • Sugary
Acidity	Appropriate to type • <u>High</u> • Slightly low or high • Slightly tart • Biting • Flat • Inipid • Vinegary
Tannin Texture	Green • Hard • Firm • Round • Plush • <u>Velvety</u> • Drying • Parching/Numbing (Woody) • Raw • Harsh • Bitter
BODY and TEXTURE	SIZE & RICHNESS: Appropriate • Firm • <u>Neatly</u> • Rich • Dense • Full • Moderate • Lean • Thin Slightly thin • Heavy • Smooth • <u>Light</u> • Unsettled • Awkward • Lingry • Thin • Rough • Coarse • Chalky • Velvety • Silky
TASTE/FLAVOR	Complex • Mature • Varietal • Luscious • Fruity • Robust • Multilayered • Agreeable • <u>Clean</u> • Simple Lacking • Green • Stagnant • Hollow • Slightly bitter • Bitter • Irritant
FINISH	Appropriate for age • Enticing • Long-Lasting • Persistent • <u>Neatly</u> • Tapering • Harsh • Short
OVERALL QUALITY	Exceptional • Fine • Distinguished • Elegant • Grand • <u>Good</u> • Skillfully made • No exceptional features • Damaged

Judge's general comments (Please Print Legibly!)

Big dark color for a 2018 even.
A little murky.
No note to speak of.
Taste is a little muddy as well.
No varietal character.

Check here if you need to use the back of this form: _____

Judge's Signature: _____

Clerks initials: JHD

Bottle Shock Competition: 2015-2020

After the California State Fair suspended its amateur competition in 2012, and Lodi County fair did the same in 2014.

G.M. "Pooch" Pucilowski and band of amateur wine enthusiasts created Bottle Shock to replace these competitions. Sadly, COVID and a lack of reasonable location to host the event, closed the competition. This competition focus was on providing critic to the efforts of the amateur winemaker.

This is what can happen to amateur competitions if not participated in.

Form courtesy of G.M. Pooch.



Characteristics (circle descriptive terms that apply)	Judge's Comments
CLARITY / APPEARANCE Brilliant - Star bright - Crystal - Leggy - Translucent - Slightly dull - Peaking - Cloudy - Hazy - Sediment - Turbid - Watery COLOR Typical for type and age - Vivid - Nearly correct - Attractive - Lively - Off - Maderized - Brown - Colorless	
AROMA AND BOUQUET varietal Characteristic - Complex - Flowery - Fruity - Pronounced - Developed - Clean - Pleasant - Scented - Delicate - Fleeting - Simple - Underdeveloped - Elusive - Defective - Off - Sulfurous - Vinous - Corky	
ACIDITY / BALANCE Balanced - Appropriate to type - Slightly unbalanced - Lacking or Tart - Flabby - Insipid - Raw - Harsh - Vinegary	
SWEET / DRY Appropriate to type - Balanced - Normal - Sweet edged - Slightly Jacking - Cloying - Syrupy - Sticky - Lacking	
BODY / TEXTURE Appropriate - Firm - Sound - Velvety - Silky - Nearly correct - Smooth - Even - Slightly thin - Heavy - Uneven - Awkward Empty - Thin - Bough - Course - Clumsy	
TASTE / FLAVOR Complex - Mature - Varietal - Luscious - Fruity - Robust - Multilayered - Agreeable - Clean - Simple - Lacking - Green - Chemical - Stemsy - Hollow	
BITTERNESS Balanced - Normal - Citric - Slightly bitter - Medium - Bitter - Harsh	
FINISH / ASTRINGENCY Appropriate for age - Enticing - Lasting - Nearly correct - Tapering - Harsh - Withered	
OVERALL QUALITY Nobel - Distinguished - Elegant - Grand Character - Graceful - Skillfully made - No exceptional features - Damaged - Major flaw (Note flaw)	
General comments to winemaker:	

Individual Judge's Personal Recommendation
(Please indicate individual award)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Gold Silver Bronze None

Consensus Award by Panel of Judges - Final
(To be agreed upon by entire panel)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Dist Gold* Gold Silver Bronze None

* All judges award GOLD individually

California State Fair:

After judges assign their awards to the wines. They confer with the other judges to see if it is in agreement. If it is not, then it is discussed and a new award is agreed on. If not agreed on, the scoring matrix is utilized.

Some competitions use this, which was designed by math statistics, to assist the assignment of awards, based off of the what the judges award.

As you can see;
The greatest amount of awards are silver. So to get a silver means you made a really good wine.

Created by Aaron Kidder and GM "Pooch" Pucilowski

3-Judge Scoring Matrix

[illegible]

WineMaker Magazine International Amateur Wine Competition:

- Began in 2002.
- Sponsored by WineMaker Magazine for amateur wine makers.
- The largest competition for amateurs.
- A competition for amateurs that didn't have access to other competitions.
- The competition expanded to include 7 countries and all states of the U.S.

From 800 entries in 2002, the competition grew to over 4500 in 2013. Since then international shipping rules make it a challenge to receive entries from other countries. 2025 down to 1400. Yet, still remains largest competition in US.

As home winemakers, its up to us to participate in order keep such competitions active. As we learned, Bottle Shock closed down.

WineMaker Magazine International Amateur Wine Competition:

Is still one of the largest competitions of its
type in the world.

Judges' form used has evolved off of the
UC Davis 20 point system and AWS.
With the competition on the East Coast a
good deal of AWS judges are invited to judge,
however a few renegades are invited too.

Any of you whom have participated in this
competition has seen this form and we can
go through the input you may have received
on it.

2025 WineMaker International Amateur WINE COMPETITION		Awarded Points
Appearance (maximum 3 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent - Brilliant with outstanding characteristic color (3 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Good - Clear with characteristic color (2 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement - Slight haze and/or slight off color (1 point) <input type="checkbox"/> Objectionable - Cloudy and/or off color (0 points) Comments _____		_____
Aroma and Bouquet (maximum 6 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional - Wonderful characteristic aroma of grape variety or wine type. Outstanding and complex bouquet. Exceptional balance of aroma and bouquet. (6 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent - Strong characteristic aroma of grape variety or wine type. Complex bouquet. Good balance of aroma and bouquet. (5 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Good - Good characteristic aroma of grape variety or wine type. Admireable bouquet. (4 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Pleasant - Good characteristic aroma of grape variety or wine type. Pleasant bouquet. (3 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable - No perceptible aroma or bouquet or with slight off odors (2 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement - Off odors very detectable (1 point) <input type="checkbox"/> Objectionable - Offensive odors (0 points) Comments _____		_____
Taste (maximum 6 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional - Wonderful characteristic flavor of grape variety or wine type. Outstanding balance. Smooth, full-bodied and outstanding. (6 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent - Strong characteristic flavor of grape variety or wine type. Excellent balance and body, but not quite outstanding. (5 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Good - Good characteristic flavor of grape variety or wine type. Good balance. May have some minor imperfections. (4 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Pleasant - Pleasant flavor of grape variety or wine type. May be slightly out of balance and/or have minor off flavors. (3 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable - A hint of flavor of grape variety or wine type. Detectable out of balance flavors with more pronounced faults than above. (2 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement - Disagreeable off flavors and a poor balance. (1 point) <input type="checkbox"/> Objectionable - Offensive flavors (0 points) Comments _____		_____
Aftertaste (maximum 3 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent - Lingering outstanding aftertaste (3 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Good - Pleasant aftertaste (2 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement - Little or no distinguishable aftertaste (1 point) <input type="checkbox"/> Objectionable - Unpleasant aftertaste (0 points) Comments _____		_____
Overall Impression (maximum 2 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent (2 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Good (1 point) <input type="checkbox"/> Objectionable (0 points) Comments _____		_____
Judge # _____		Judge Signature _____ Verification _____
		Total Points Awarded _____

Today; the most renown commercial wine competition is the:
Decanter World Wine Awards

This International competition is revered and most influential in Europe.

- Began in 2004 by Stephen Spurrier editor of Decanter Magazine of the UK.
- It judges off the 100 point system and once offered Gold, Silver and Bronze medals.
- For the commercial wine sector only.
- Changed to 100 point system for wine marketing.

The criticism of the 100 point system is that basically all of the wines are judged between narrow 85 - 100 points, being equated to the U.S. school grading system.

The U.S. top commercial wine competitions are:

San Francisco Chronicle - "Largest Competition of American wines in the World."

New York International Wine Competition - "Biggest Competition for cold climate wines."

Orange County Fair - "California's largest as allows out of state and country wines."

J20 The Bottle Shock Open
HOME WINE COMPETITION

7146	Other Red Varietal Blends (200)	06-02
2016	Zinfandel, Barbera	
pH=3.6, TA=6.6, SO2=28		

JUDGE'S 1 st SCORE (please circle)	No Award	HM	<u>B</u>	B+	S-	S	S+	G-	G
JUDGE'S 2 nd SCORE (after discussion)	No Award	HM	<u>B</u>	B+	S-	S	S+	G-	G

CHARACTERISTICS	Circle appropriate terms if this assists you with your comments below
APPEARANCE Clarity / Color	Brilliant • Translucent • Clear • <u>Gold</u> • Cloudy • Hazy • Sediment • Turbid • Watery • Petulant • Effervescent Pale • Medium • <u>Dark</u> • WHITES: Green • StrawGreen • Straw • StrawGold • Gold • Amber • Brown REFS: Purple • Ruby • Crimson • Garnet • Tawny • Brick • Brown • ROSES: Grey • Pink • Salmon • Copper • Garnet
AROMA	Astringent (or <u>Cloyed</u>) • Fresh • Powerful • Oxidized • Flowery • Fruity • Developed • Clean • Pleasant • Scented • Delicate • Varietal • Characteristic • Complex
BOUQUET (including oak and defects)	Fleeting • Simple • Underdeveloped • Elusive • OAK: Vanilla • Spice • Toaster • Nutty • Espresso DEFECTS: SulfurDioxide • Rotten Egg • Mercaptan • Vinous • Corky • Brett (adds complexity) • Brett (over done)
BALANCE	ALCOHOL: Hot • Heavy • Bitter • <u>Balanced</u> • Graceful • Thin
Sweetness	Appropriate to type • <u>Balanced</u> • Normal • Too Light • Sweet edged • Cloying • Sugary
Acidity	Appropriate to type • <u>High</u> • Slightly low or high • Slightly tart • Biting • Flat • Inipid • Vinous
Tannin Texture	Green • Hard • Firm • Round • Plush • <u>Velvety</u> • Drying • Parching/Numbing (Woody) • Raw • Harsh • Bitter
BODY and TEXTURE	SIZE & RICHNESS: Appropriate • Firm • <u>Nearly correct</u> • Rich • Dense • Full • Moderate • Lean • Thin Slightly thin • Heavy • Smooth • <u>Light</u> • Unsettled • Awkward • Empty • Thin • Rough • Coarse • Chalky • Velvety • Silky
TASTE/FLAVOR	Complex • Mature • Varietal • Luscious • Fruity • Robust • Multilayered • Agreeable • <u>Simple</u> • Simple Lacking • Green • Stagnant • Hollow • Slightly bitter • Bitter • Irritant
FINISH	Appropriate for age • Enticing • Long-Lasting • Persistent • <u>Nearly correct</u> • Tapering • Harsh • Short
OVERALL QUALITY	Exceptional • Fine-tune • Distinguished • Elegant • Grand • <u>Good</u> • Skillfully made • No exceptional features • Damaged

Judge's general comments (Please Print Legibly!)

Big dark color for a 2016 even.
A little murky.
No nose to speak of.
Taste is a little muddy as well.
No varietal character.

Check here if you need to use the back of this form: _____

Judge's Signature: _____

Clerks initials: JHD

This is a good example of why one should enter competitions for feedback.

This 2020 judge's form was on our own 2016 wine. See where it says "A little Murky" This was true.

Because of this feedback we stopped fining with egg whites and purchased a small filtration system.

This wine continues to be made and now earns Silver - Gold awards.

A take off of it won Best of Show in 2023 WineMaker Mag.

100 Point Score Explanation

95–100	Classic: a great wine
90–94	Outstanding: a wine of superior character and style
85–89	Very good: a wine with special qualities
80–84	Good: a solid, well-made wine
75–79	Mediocre: a drinkable wine that may have minor flaws
50–74	Not recommended

Take this into consideration and then the 20 point scale basically states that if a wine is 9-11 points out of 20, lower than a “Bronze” is still regarded commercially accepted.

Thus 9-11 points = 75-79 points on the 100 scale.

Which scale might be thought of as more demanding?

The 100 point system is widely used by wine critics:

Robert M. Parker Jr. - Wine Advocate

Jeff Level -The Wine Cellar Insider

Vinous

Decanter Magazine

Wine and Spirits Magazine

Wine Spectator

Jamie Goode

James Suckling

Jancis Robinson

Sommelier Guild and Courts of Master Sommelier

However, these wine critics have different priorities:

Priority of wine assessments:

Jancis Robinson MW,	Robert Parker	James Suckling	C.M.Sommelier
Finesse		Concentration	Tannins
Grape typicity			
Balance		Age-ability	Alcohol
	Origin typicity		
Length		Complexity	Acidity
	Style typicity		
Integration		Balance	Balance
	Finesse		
Complexity		Length	
	Complexity	Balance	
Concentration		Integration	Length
	Length		
Age-ability		Grape typicity	Integration

Jancis Robinson's 20-Point Scale

20	Truly exceptional
19	A humdinger
18	A cut above superior
17	Superior
16	Distinguished
15	Average
14	Deadly dull
13	Borderline faulty or unbalanced
12	Faulty or unbalanced

Who is giving this “objective” feedback?

Where do these judges come from?

1. California: UCDavis
2. Experts in the field
3. Persons of the Wine Industry
4. American Wine Society

Experts in the field:

- Educated by University or Wine Programs
- Experienced wine makers
- Wine Industry; writers, distributors.
- “Sommeliers”, Restaurateurs
- Mixture of all the above

American Wine Society Judges:

3 year program:

- Wine education
- Calibration of palate
- Tested on levels of:
 1. Acid
 2. Tannins
 3. Alcohol
 4. Flavor
 5. Aromas
 6. Faults/Flaws

Wine competitions are held in well lighted and temperature controlled locations.

Flights typically kept to 6 wines at a time.

Common denominator to the flight of wines:

Species Specific: V.Vinifera, Natives, French-American

Hybrids

Varietal specific:

Type of wine: Sweet, Fortified, Fruit Wines, etc.

Or style of class, ie: Bordeaux, Rhone, Blends etc.

Wines served blind to judges.

Maybe poured behind curtains and served in glasses.

Might be poured in front of the judges with labels hidden.

De-mystifying the comments:

One judge says: “Silky tannins” and another says “Harsh” .. ?!?!

One Judge gives high marks, another gives it No Award .. ?!?!

My wine is entered in one competition, I receive a gold
and in another Competition, I receive nothing. ?!?!?

To answer the first common comment about an inconsistency of judges' remarks:

There are many things going on that can distract from a wine's nuances.

1. Order of wines,
2. Other Entries' flaws or faults
3. Where your wine falls, by sheer luck, in that flight's order.
4. Other environmental smells, lighting, distractions.
5. Available nibbles to assist a judge palate cleansing between entries
6. Judge's level of knowledge and experience with judging.

One Judge gives high marks, another gives it No Award . . .?!?!

Robert T. Hodgson,

Professor Emeritus, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA

Analysis of judges' performance at wine competitions between 2005-2008.

- 1) Imbedding triplicate wines in a 30 wine flight, to see if same wine could be found and receive same award twice.
- 2) See if Judge bias exists
- 3) Bottle to bottle variance exists
- 4) To what extent is there a difference of opinions within a panel of judges

Dr. Robert Hodgson's findings:

- 1) Judges could judge the same wine in the 30 bottle flight, 18% consistently.
- 2) Judges bias is consistent in what they don't like vs what they do like.
 - If everyone marks a wine low, there is something going on with that wine.
 - It is more rare to have judges give higher merits on a wine.
- 3) Bottle variance less likely to show up. Unless Cork Taint, or dirty bottle.
- 4) Difference of opinion:
 - After wines are judged, the judges confer with each other.
 - Good judges will agree with each other.
 - Medium range of difference is about 4 points
 - The wine is important, not the judges' bias.

The consistency of a judge giving higher merits to wines is a reflection on a judge being good at what they do. Verses a stricter judging approach.
The takeaway here is trust what the higher awarding judge notes are saying.

My wine is entered in one competition, I receive a gold
and in another Competition, I receive nothing. ?!?!?

Another finding from Dr. Hodgson's research is that:

99% of wines that get a gold medal on place get no award someplace else.

Wines are typically evaluated twice:

Once individually by a judge.

Secondly, the panel of judges talk to see if all are in concordance.

If not in concordance, further discussion will be had until in a 4 point spread.

When a wine is less than a 4 point spread, then it is agreed the wine is at that level of quality agreed on. This is example of good judging.

	Awarded Points
Appearance (maximum 3 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent – Brilliant with outstanding characteristic color (3 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Good – Clear with characteristic color (2 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement – Slight haze and/or slight off color (1 point) <input type="checkbox"/> Objectionable – Cloudy and/or off color (0 points) Comments _____	
Aroma and Bouquet (maximum 6 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional – Wonderful characteristic aroma of grape variety or wine type. Outstanding and complex bouquet. Exceptional balance of aroma and bouquet. (6 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent – Strong characteristic aroma of grape variety or wine type. Complex bouquet. Good balance of aroma and bouquet. (5 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Good – Good characteristic aroma of grape variety or wine type. Admire bouquet. (4 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Pleasant – Good characteristic aroma of grape variety or wine type. Pleasant bouquet. (3 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable – No perceptible aroma or bouquet or with slight off odors (2 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement – Off odors very detectable (1 point) <input type="checkbox"/> Objectionable – Offensive odors (0 points) Comments _____	
Taste (maximum 6 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional – Wonderful characteristic flavor of grape variety or wine type. Outstanding balance. Smooth, full-bodied and outstanding. (6 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent – Strong characteristic flavor of grape variety or wine type. Excellent balance and body, but not quite outstanding. (5 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Good – Good characteristic flavor of grape variety or wine type. Good balance. May have some minor imperfections. (4 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Pleasant – Pleasant flavor of grape variety or wine type. May be slightly out of balance and/or have minor off flavors. (3 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable – A hint of flavor of grape variety or wine type. Detectable out of balance flavors with more pronounced faults than above. (2 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement – Disagreeable off flavors and a poor balance. (1 point) <input type="checkbox"/> Objectionable – Offensive flavors (0 points) Comments _____	
Aftertaste (maximum 3 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent – Lingering outstanding aftertaste (3 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Good – Pleasant aftertaste (2 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement – Little or no distinguishable aftertaste (1 point) <input type="checkbox"/> Objectionable – Unpleasant aftertaste (0 points) Comments _____	
Overall Impression (maximum 2 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent (2 points) <input type="checkbox"/> Good (1 point) <input type="checkbox"/> Objectionable (0 points) Comments _____	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> Judge # </div> <div> Judge Signature _____ Verification _____ </div> </div>	Total Points Awarded _____

2025 *WineMaker*
International Amateur
WINE COMPETITION

	Awarded Points
<p>Appearance (maximum 3 points)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellent – Brilliant with outstanding characteristic color (3 points)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Good – Clear with characteristic color (2 points)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement – Slight haze and/or slight off color (1 point)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Objectionable – Cloudy and/or off color (0 points)</p> <p>Comments _____</p>	<p>_____</p>
<p>Aroma and Bouquet (maximum 6 points)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional – Wonderful characteristic aroma of grape variety or wine type. Outstanding and complex bouquet. Exceptional balance of aroma and bouquet. (6 points)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellent – Strong characteristic aroma of grape variety or wine type. Complex bouquet. Good balance of aroma and bouquet. (5 points)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Good – Good characteristic aroma of grape variety or wine type. Admirable bouquet. (4 points)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pleasant – Good characteristic aroma of grape variety or wine type. Pleasant bouquet. (3 points)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable – No perceptible aroma or bouquet or with slight off odors (2 points)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement – Off odors very detectable (1 point)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Objectionable – Offensive odors (0 points)</p> <p>Comments _____</p>	<p>_____</p>

Appearance
and Bouquet
Color

Aroma

Intensity

White

Typificitiy

Red

Complexity

Rose

Balanced

Clarity

Flawless

Appearance:

Excellent: Brilliant with outstanding characteristic color (3 points)

Good: Clear with characteristic color (2 points)

Needs Improvement: Slight haze and/or slight off color (1 point)

Objectionable: Cloudy and/or off color (0 points)

Aroma and Bouquet:

Exceptional- Wonderful characteristic aroma of grape variety or wine type.

Outstanding and complex bouquet. Exceptional balance of aroma and bouquet (6 pts)

Excellent- Strong characteristic aroma of grape variety or wine type. Complex bouquet.

Good balance of aroma and bouquet. (5 pts)

Good- Good characteristic aroma of grape variety or wine type. Admirable bouquet. (4pts)

Pleasant- Good characteristic aroma of grape variety or wine type. Pleasant bouquet. (4pts)

Acceptable- No Perceptible aroma or bouquet or with slight off odors. (2 pts)

Needs Improvement- Off odors very detectable (1 pt)

Objectionable- Offensive odors (0 pts)

Taste (maximum 6 points)

- ☐ Exceptional – Wonderful characteristic flavor of grape variety or wine type. Outstanding balance. Smooth, full-bodied and outstanding. (6 points)
- ☐ Excellent – Strong characteristic flavor of grape variety or wine type. Excellent balance and body, but not quite outstanding. (5 points)
- ☐ Good – Good characteristic flavor of grape variety or wine type. Good balance. May have some minor imperfections. (4 points)
- ☐ Pleasant – Pleasant flavor of grape variety or wine type. May be slightly out of balance and/or have minor off flavors. (3 points)
- ☐ Acceptable – A hint of flavor of grape variety or wine type. Detectable out of balance flavors with more pronounced faults than above. (2 points)
- ☐ Needs Improvement – Disagreeable off flavors and a poor balance. (1 point)
- ☐ Objectionable – Offensive flavors (0 points)

Comments _____

Aftertaste (maximum 3 points)

- ☐ Excellent – Lingering outstanding aftertaste (3 points)
- ☐ Good – Pleasant aftertaste (2 points)
- ☐ Needs Improvement – Little or no distinguishable aftertaste (1 point)
- ☐ Objectionable – Unpleasant aftertaste (0 points)

Comments _____

Overall Impression (maximum 2 points)

- ☐ Excellent (2 points)
- ☐ Good (1 point)
- ☐ Objectionable (0 points)

Comments _____

Taste

Aftertaste

Character of the grape (s) - Typificity

Finish

Balance

Balance

Texture

Length

Off flavors

Integration

Offensive flavors

Complexity

Taste

Exceptional- Wonderful characteristic flavor of grape variety or wine type.
Outstanding balance. Smooth, full-bodied, and outstanding (6 pts)

Excellent- Strong characteristic flavor of grape variety or wine type.
Excellent balance and body, but not quite outstanding. (5 pts)

Good- Good characteristic flavor of grape variety or wine type. Good balance.
May have some imperfections (4pts)

Pleasant- Pleasant flavor of grape variety or wine type.
May be slightly out of balance and/or have minor off flavors. (4pts)

Acceptable- A hint of flavor of grape variety or wine type.
Detectable out of balance flavors with more pronounced faults than above. (2 pts)

Needs Improvement- Disagreeable Off flavors and in poor balance. (1 pt)

Objectionable- Offensive flavors (0 pts)

Aftertaste

Excellent- Lingering outstanding aftertaste (3 pts)
Balanced, Lengthy, Integration, Complexity,

Good- Pleasant aftertaste (2 pts)

Needs Improvement- Little or no distinguishable aftertaste (1 pt)

Objectionable- Unpleasant aftertaste (0 pts)

Overall Impression

Excellent- (2 points)

Good- (1 point)

Objectionable- (0 points) This requires an explanation as to why, you should get it.

But basically it boils down to this:

Overall:

Good Sh_t!

Ok

Do I have to drink this?!

Some wine terms used and meanings:

Cloying, Fat, Flat, Thin, Abrasive, Hazy, Bitter,
Leggy/tears, Astringency, Silky, Gritty/rough

Can be Both Positive and Negative

Earthy,
Woody,
Butter,
Phenolic
Coffee
Yeasty
Sweet

Wine Flaws and Faults

The
GOOD

The
BAD

The
UGLY

The Good: Complexity is desired by every winemaker:

Complexity is balance of all the elements in wine:

Acid Alcohol Tannins Sugar

Some winemakers will try to enhance complexity with these :

Brett

VA

Oak

Sugar

Lees/Yeast

Leaving residual particles

HOWEVER: Anyone of these can be considered a **FLAW**.

The BAD: Common flaws in wine competitions:

Bland tasting, or Insipid:	Low Acid
Sharp tasting or excessive tartness:	Too High Acid
Vinegar:	
Volatile Acid unbalanced	
Harsh, Rough wines:	Tannins
unbalanced/too young	
Back of throat burning sensation:	High alcohol
Rancid buttery, Excessive vinegar:	VA-ethyl acetate-
diecetyl	
Nutty, clove, musty, woody:	Excess Oak
Stale, Cheesy, Burnt rubber, bruised apple:	Oxidized
Sherry, straw smell, sneezing:	Acetaldehyde
Wet Dog, Barnyard, Leather:	Brettanomyces

The UGLY: Faults, not flaws, that are often found:

Bubble Gum, Geranium:	Potassium Sorbate
Finger Nail Polish smell:	Contamination at crush
Dirty Dish rag smell:	MLF in bottle
Burned match, choking/coughing:	Excess SO ₂
Rotten Eggs, Garlic, Onion:	Volatile Sulfur
Compounds	
Carbonation:	Dirty wine,
bottles or equipment	
Band-Aid, Medicinal, BBQ smokiness, spicy:	Brettanomyces
Moldy, damp wood, pine-like, mouthwash:	Cork
Faint	

This wraps up the portion regarding the objective judging of wines, covering the judges' comments one might receive on judging forms.

Receiving comments is the whole reason we compete, how we grow as winemakers. Take time to read the forms returned to you. Look up terms provided. Learn and research how that wine can be improved.

Judges are limited on time and have to spend it equally with each entry in each category of wine.

Different competitions have their different approach in taking the objective assessment and comments on the wines and assigning them the awards.

The Competition

Registerin
g

Shipping

Tricks

Registration: Review all of the categories to see where your wine fits.

- Always read rules of the competition.
- If your wine is minimally 75% a varietal, It is a single varietal.
- It may also eligible for a “blend” category, which might improve chances of medals.
- There might be separate category for a kit wine, or estate grown fruit wines that improve chances of medals.
- But there may also be disqualifications if you try to stray too far.
- Know what the grapes are, do not enter hybrids, natives, in with vinifera.
- If there is no category for natural wines or sparkling, they are entered in still wine categories, and they most likely will be considered flawed.



Wine Shipping

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WINE SHIPPERS AND SUPPLIES



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Corrugated Bottle Carriers



When to Ship?

As soon as you decide to participate.

- 1) This avoids bottle shock from shipping**
- 2) Notification on delivered,**
- 3) If a bottle is broken, can still send another one.**

GET TRACKING NUMBER,

TRACK YOUR OWN DELIVERY



**Follow
Competition
instructions on
where to ship to!**

**Use Provided
Addresses.**

Tricks:

- If your wine is tasting young, wait a year or two before competing it.
- If your wine has an off aroma or taste to you, don't hold high expectation for awards, but enter it to see what advice you might gleem.
- Don't enter your wine if you just bottled it. There is such a thing as bottle shock.
- It is rumored some competitors will open a bottle, check it, top it and recork.
- It is rumored some commercial winemakers will enter their own hooch from home for fun. Read the rules to make sure this doesn't disqualify the wine.
- Read the rules regarding if a special label needs to be placed over your own, as the competition will not do this for you.

It is interesting to learn how many amateur winemakers grow confidence and improve from these competitions and go on to open their own wineries?

Wine competition are judged by a collection of those that have been recognized for having the palate to discern different wine elements, characters and faults and then can provide feedback to the winemaker. WineMaker Magazine competition is one of the best at providing such feedback from the judges.

Although, us winemakers take great pride and educate ourselves on the technics, advice from someone else who is comparing our creation to another's is insightful.

It is up to us to review the feedback receive and look up terms provided. Or reach out to “experts” via the magazine or other competitions (if available) and ask for more information. If you are not satisfied with the feedback, enter another competition. It's all for our own fun and development.

Your wine is uniquely Yours!
Be Proud, Show it off!

Have Fun & Good Luck!



Remember,

**If we don't
participate in wine
competitions,
they will go away.**

**We can't have
that.**