



Mazer Cup International

BJCP Mead Style Guidelines

Revision: 2008



The following discussion applies to all the mead styles, except where explicitly superseded in the sub-category guidelines. This introduction identifies common characteristics and descriptions for all types of mead, and should be used as a reference whenever entering or judging mead.

Important attributes that must be specified

Sweetness

A mead may be dry, semi-sweet, or sweet. Sweetness simply refers to the amount of residual sugar in the mead. Sweetness is often confused with fruitiness in a dry mead. Body is related to sweetness, but dry meads can still have some body. Dry meads do not have to be bone dry. Sweet meads should not be cloyingly sweet, and should not have a raw, unfermented honey character. Sweetness is independent of strength.

Carbonation

A mead may be still, petillant, or sparkling. Still meads do not have to be totally flat; they can have some very light bubbles. Petillant meads are "lightly sparkling" and can have a moderate, noticeable amount of carbonation. Sparkling meads are not gushing, but may have a character ranging from mouth-filling to an impression akin to Champagne or soda pop.

Strength

A mead may be categorized as hydromel, standard, or sack strength. Strength refers to the alcohol content of the mead (and also, therefore, the amount of honey and fermentables used to make the mead). Stronger meads can have a greater honey character and body (as well as alcohol) than weaker meads, although this is not a strict rule.

Honey variety

Some types of honey have a strong varietal character (aroma, flavor, color, acidity). If a honey is unusual, additional information can be provided to judges as to the character to be expected. Note that "wildflower" isn't a varietal honey; it is specifically a term used to describe a honey derived from unknown or mixed flowers.

Special ingredients

Different sub-styles may include fruit, spice, malt, etc. Judges need to understand the ingredients that provide a unique character in order to properly evaluate the mead.

Common Mead Characteristics

Appearance

Clarity may be good to brilliant. Crystal clear, reflective examples with a bright, distinct meniscus are highly desirable. Observable particulates (even in a clear example) are undesirable. Highly carbonated examples usually have a short-lasting head similar to Champagne or soda pop. Some aspects of bubbles or head formation that may be observed and commented upon include size (large or small), persistence (how long do they continue to form?), quantity (how much are present?), rate (how fast do they form?), and mousse (appearance or quality of foam stand). The components of bubbles or head will vary greatly depending on the carbonation level, ingredients and type of mead. In general, smaller bubbles are more desirable and indicative of higher quality than larger bubbles. The color may vary widely depending on honey variety and any optional ingredients (e.g., fruit, malts). Some honey varieties are almost clear, while others can be dark brown. Most are in the straw to gold range. If no honey variety is declared, almost any color is acceptable. If a honey variety is declared, the color should generally be suggestive of the honey used (although a wide range of color variation is still possible). Hue, saturation and purity of color should be considered. Stronger versions (standard and sack) may show signs of body (e.g., legs, meniscus) but higher carbonation levels can interfere with this perception.

Aroma

The intensity of the honey aroma will vary based upon the sweetness and strength of the mead. Stronger or sweeter meads may have a stronger honey aroma than drier or weaker versions. Different varieties of honey have different intensities and characters; some (e.g., orange blossom, buckwheat) are more recognizable than others (e.g., avocado, palmetto). If honey varieties are declared, the varietal character of the honey should be apparent even if subtle. The aromatics may seem vinous (similar to wine), and may include fruity, floral, or spicy notes. The bouquet (rich, complex smells arising from the combination of ingredients, fermentation and aging) should show a pleasant fermentation character, with clean and fresh aromatics being preferred over dirty, yeasty, or sulfury notes. A multi-faceted bouquet, also known as complexity or depth, is a positive attribute. Phenolic or diacetyl aromatics should not be present. Harsh or chemical aromatics should not

be present. Light oxidation may be present, depending on age, and may result in sherry-like notes, which are acceptable in low to moderate levels (if in balance, these can add to complexity). An excessive sherry character is a fault in most styles (except certain Polish-style specialties, or other meads attempting a sherry-like character). Oxidation resulting in a papery character is always undesirable. Alcohol aromatics may be present, but hot, solventy or irritating overtones are a defect. The harmony and balance of the aroma and bouquet should be pleasant and enticing.

Flavor

The intensity of the honey flavor will vary based upon the sweetness and strength of the mead. Stronger, sweeter meads will have a stronger honey flavor than drier, weaker versions. Different varieties of honey have different intensities and characters; some (e.g., orange blossom, buckwheat) are more recognizable than others (e.g., safflower, palmetto). If honey varieties are declared, the varietal character of the honey should be apparent even if subtle. The residual sweetness level will vary with the sweetness of the mead; dry meads will have no residual sugar, sweet meads will have noticeable to prominent sweetness, semi-sweet meads will have a balanced sweetness. In no case should the residual sweetness be syrupy, cloying or seem like unfermented honey. Any additives, such as acid or tannin, should enhance the honey flavor and lend balance to the overall character of the mead but not be excessively tart or astringent. Artificial, chemical, harsh, phenolic or bitter flavors are defects. Higher carbonation (if present) enhances the acidity and gives a "bite" to the finish. The aftertaste should be evaluated; longer finishes are generally most desirable. A multi-faceted flavor, also known as complexity or depth, is a positive attribute. Yeast or fermentation characteristics may be none to noticeable, with estery, fresh and clean flavors being most desirable. Alcohol flavors (if present) should be smooth and well-aged, not harsh or solventy. Light oxidation may be present, depending on age, but an excessive sherry-like or papery character should be avoided. Aging and conditioning generally smooth out flavors and create a more elegant, blended, rounded product. Flavors tend to become more subtle over time, and can deteriorate with extended aging.

Mouthfeel

Before evaluating, refer to the declared sweetness, strength and carbonation levels, as well as any special ingredients. These can all affect mouthfeel. Smooth texture. Well-made examples will often have an elegant wine-like character. The body can vary widely, although most are in the medium-light to medium-full range. Body generally increases with stronger and/or sweeter meads, and can sometimes be quite full and heavy. Similarly, body generally decreases with lower gravity and/or

drier meads, and can sometimes be quite light. Sensations of body should not be accompanied by an overwhelmingly cloying sweetness (even in sweet meads). A very thin or watery body is likewise undesirable. Some natural acidity is often present (particularly in fruit-based meads). Low levels of astringency are sometimes present (either from specific fruit or spices, or from tea, chemical additives or oak-aging). Acidity and tannin help balance the overall honey, sweetness and alcohol presentation. Carbonation can vary widely (see definitions above). Still meads may have a very light level of carbonation, lightly carbonated (petillant) meads will have noticeable bubbles, and a highly carbonated (sparkling) mead can range from a mouth-filling carbonation to levels approaching Champagne or soda pop. High carbonation will enhance the acidity and give a "bite" to the finish. A warming alcohol presence is often present, and this character usually increases with strength (although extended aging can smooth this sensation).

Overall Impression

A wide range of results are possible, but well-made examples will have an enjoyable balance of honey flavors, sweetness, acidity, tannins, alcohol. Strength, sweetness and age greatly affect the overall presentation. Any special ingredients should be well-blended with the other ingredients, and lead to a harmonious end product.

Ingredients

Mead is made primarily from honey, water and yeast. Some minor adjustments in acidity and tannin can be made with citrus fruits, tea, chemicals, or the use of oak aging; however, these additives should not be readily discernable in flavor or aroma. Yeast nutrients may be used but should not be detected. If citrus, tea, or oak additives result in flavor components above a low, background, balance-adjusting level, the resulting mead should be entered appropriately (e.g., as a metheglin or open category mead, not a traditional).

Vital Statistics

OG: hydromel: 1.035 - 1.080 standard: 1.080 - 1.120 sack: 1.120 - 1.140+

ABV: hydromel: 3.5 - 7.5% standard: 7.5 - 14% sack: 14 - 18%

FG: dry: 0.990 - 1.010 semi-sweet: 1.010 - 1.025 sweet: 1.025 - 1.040+

IBUs: not relevant for anything but braggot, but bittering hops are optional even in this style.

SRM: basically irrelevant since honey can be anything from almost clear to dark brown. Melomels and pyments can have orange, red, pink and/or purple hues. Cysers are most often golden. Braggots can be yellow to black. In all cases, the color should reflect the ingredients used (type of honey, and fruit and/or malt in some styles).

Entering and Categorizing Meads

Mandatory Requirements

- Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level (still; petillant or lightly carbonated; sparkling or highly carbonated).
- Entrants **MUST** specify strength level (hydromel or light mead; standard mead; sack or strong mead).
- Entrants **MUST** specify sweetness level (dry; semi-sweet; sweet).

Optional Requirements

Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties used. If honey varieties are declared, judges will look for the varietal character of the honey. Note that the character of a varietal honey will be identifiable as distinct to the source flowers, but may not resemble the source plant, tree, or fruit. For example, orange-blossom honey has the character of orange blossoms, not oranges; blackberry honey is only distantly like blackberries, although it is an identifiable character.

Category-Specific Requirements

Some categories require additional information, particularly in categories other than traditional mead. For example, declaring specific fruit, spices, or special characteristics. Supplemental materials may be provided to judges if an obscure ingredient or method is used.

Defaults

If no attributes are specified, judges should evaluate the mead as a semi-sweet, petillant, standard-strength mead with no varietal honey character and no special ingredients. Competition organizers should make every effort to ensure that judges are provided the full set of attributes of the meads being evaluated.

24. Traditional Mead

Styles

1. 24A. Dry Mead
2. 24B. Semi-sweet Mead
3. 24C. Sweet Mead

Notes

See the Introduction to Mead Guidelines for detailed descriptions of standard mead characteristics, an explanation of standard terms, and entering instructions.

24A. Dry Mead

Aroma: Honey aroma may be subtle, although not always identifiable. Sweetness or significant honey aromatics should not be expected. If a honey variety is declared, the variety should be distinctive (if noticeable). Different types of honey have different intensities and characters. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Appearance: Standard description applies.

Flavor: Subtle (if any) honey character, and may feature subtle to noticeable varietal character if a varietal honey is declared (different varieties have different intensities). No to minimal residual sweetness with a dry finish. Sulfury, harsh or yeasty fermentation characteristics are undesirable. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Mouthfeel: Standard description applies, although the body is generally light to medium. Note that stronger meads will have a fuller body. Sensations of body should not be accompanied by noticeable residual sweetness.

Overall Impression: Similar in balance, body, finish and flavor intensity to a dry white wine, with a pleasant mixture of subtle honey character, soft fruity esters, and clean alcohol. Complexity, harmony, and balance of sensory elements are most desirable, with no inconsistencies in color, aroma, flavor or aftertaste. The proper balance of sweetness, acidity, alcohol and honey character is the essential final measure of any mead.

Comments: See standard description for entrance requirements. **Entrants MUST specify carbonation level and strength. Sweetness is assumed to be DRY in this category. Entrants MAY specify honey varieties.**

Ingredients: Standard description applies. Traditional Meads feature the character of a blended honey or a blend of honeys. Varietal meads feature the distinctive character of certain honeys. "Show meads" feature no additives, but this distinction is usually not obvious to judges.

Commercial Examples: White Winter Dry Mead, Sky River Dry Mead, Intermiel Bouquet Printanier

24B. Semi-sweet Mead

Aroma: Honey aroma should be noticeable, and can have a light sweetness that may express the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey (different varieties have different intensities and characters). Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Flavor: Subtle to moderate honey character, and may feature subtle to noticeable varietal character if a varietal honey is declared (different varieties have different intensities). Subtle to moderate residual sweetness with a medium-dry finish. Sulfury, harsh or yeasty fermentation characteristics are undesirable. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Mouthfeel: Standard description applies, although the body is generally medium-light to medium-full. Note that stronger meads will have a fuller body. Sensations of body should not be accompanied by a residual sweetness that is higher than moderate.

Overall Impression: Similar in balance, body, finish and flavor intensity to a semisweet (or medium-dry) white wine, with a pleasant mixture of honey character, light sweetness, soft fruity esters, and clean alcohol. Complexity, harmony, and balance of sensory elements are most desirable, with no inconsistencies in color, aroma, flavor or aftertaste. The proper balance of sweetness, acidity, alcohol and honey character is the essential final measure of any mead.

Comments: See standard description for entrance requirements. **Entrants MUST specify carbonation level and strength. Sweetness is assumed to be SEMI-SWEET in this category. Entrants MAY specify honey varieties.**

Ingredients: Standard description applies. Traditional Meads feature the character of a blended honey or a blend of honeys. Varietal meads feature the distinctive character of certain honeys. "Show meads" feature no additives, but this distinction is usually not obvious to judges.

Commercial Examples: Lurgashall English Mead, Redstone Traditional Mountain Honey Wine, Sky River Semi-Sweet Mead, Intermiel Verge d'Or and Mélilo

24C. Sweet Mead

Aroma: Honey aroma should dominate, and is often moderately to strongly sweet and usually expresses the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey (different varieties have different intensities and characters). Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Appearance: Standard description applies.

Flavor: Moderate to significant honey character, and may feature moderate to prominent varietal character if a varietal honey is declared (different varieties have different intensities). Moderate to high residual sweetness with a sweet and full (but not cloying) finish. Sulfury, harsh or yeasty fermentation characteristics are undesirable. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Mouthfeel: Standard description applies, although the body is generally medium-full to full. Note that stronger meads will have a fuller body. Many seem like a dessert wine. Sensations of body should not be accompanied by cloying, raw residual sweetness.

Overall Impression: Similar in balance, body, finish and flavor intensity to a well-made dessert wine (such as Sauternes), with a pleasant mixture of honey character, residual sweetness, soft fruity esters, and clean alcohol. Complexity, harmony, and balance of sensory elements are most desirable, with no inconsistencies in color, aroma, flavor or aftertaste. The proper balance of sweetness, acidity, alcohol, and honey character is the essential final measure of any mead.

Comments: See standard description for entrance requirements. **Entrants MUST specify carbonation level and strength. Sweetness is assumed to be SWEET in this category. Entrants MAY specify honey varieties.**

Ingredients: Standard description applies. Traditional Meads feature the character of a blended honey or a blend of honeys. Varietal meads feature the distinctive character of certain honeys. "Show meads" feature no additives, but this distinction is usually not obvious to judges.

Commercial Examples: Lurgashall Christmas Mead, Chaucer's Mead, Rabbit's Foot Sweet Wildflower Honey Mead, Intermiel Benoîte

25. Melomel (Fruit Mead)

Styles

1. 25A. Cyser (Apple Melomel)
2. 25B. Pymment (Grape Melomel)
3. 25C. Other Fruit Melomel

Notes

See the Introduction to Mead Guidelines for detailed descriptions of standard mead characteristics, an explanation of standard terms, and entering instructions.

Refer to Category 24 descriptions for additional detail on the character to be expected from dry, semisweet and sweet meads. Use those guidelines to judge distinctions between the various sweetness levels. Judging meads from dry to sweet is recommended as the primary ordering, with strength being the secondary ordering criterion.

25A. Cyser (Apple Melomel)

Aroma: Depending on the sweetness and strength, a subtle to distinctly identifiable honey and apple/cider character (dry and/or hydromel versions will tend to have lower aromatics than sweet and/or sack versions). The apple/cider character should be clean and distinctive; it can express a range of apple-based character ranging from a subtle fruitiness to a single varietal apple character (if declared) to a complex blend of apple aromatics. Some spicy or earthy notes may be present, as may a slightly sulfury character. The honey aroma should be noticeable, and can have a light to significant sweetness that may express the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey (different varieties have different intensities and characters). The bouquet should show a pleasant fermentation character, with clean and fresh aromatics being preferred. Stronger and/or sweeter versions will have higher alcohol and sweetness in the nose. Slight spicy phenolics from certain apple varieties are acceptable, as is a light diacetyl character from malolactic fermentation (both are optional). Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Appearance: Standard description applies, except with regard to color. Color may range from pale straw to deep golden amber (most are yellow to gold), depending on the variety of honey and blend of apples or ciders used.

Flavor: The apple and honey flavor intensity may vary from none to high; the residual sweetness may vary from none to high; and the finish may range from dry to sweet, depending on what sweetness level has been declared (dry to sweet) and strength level has been declared (hydromel to sack). Natural acidity and tannin in apples may give some tartness and astringency to balance the sweetness, honey flavor and alcohol. A cyser may have a subtle to strong honey character, and may feature noticeable to prominent varietal character if a varietal honey is declared (different varieties have different intensities). Slight spicy phenolics from certain apple varieties are acceptable, as are a light diacetyl character from malolactic fermentation and a slight sulfur character (all are optional). Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Mouthfeel: Standard description applies. Often wine-like. Some natural acidity is usually present (from the blend of apples) and helps balance the overall impression. Some apples can provide natural astringency, but this character should not be excessive.

Overall Impression: In well-made examples of the style, the fruit is both distinctive and well-incorporated into the honey-sweet-acid-tannin-alcohol balance of the mead. Some of the best strong examples have the taste and aroma of an aged Calvados (apple brandy from northern France), while subtle, dry versions can taste similar to many fine white wines.

Comments: There should be an appealing blend of the fruit and honey character but not necessarily an even balance. Generally a good tannin-sweetness balance is desired, though very dry and very sweet examples do exist. See standard description for entrance requirements. Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level, strength, and sweetness. Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties. Entrants **MAY** specify the varieties of apple used; if specified, a varietal character will be expected. Products with a relatively low proportion of honey are better entered as a Specialty Cider.

Ingredients: Standard description applies. Cyser is a standard mead made with the addition of apples or apple juice. Traditionally, cysers are made by the addition of honey to apple juice without additional water. A spiced cyser, or a cyser with other ingredients, should be entered as an Open Category Mead.

Commercial Examples: White Winter Cyser, Rabbit's Foot Apple Cyser, Long Island Meadery Apple Cyser^{25B}. Pymment (Grape Melomel)

25C. Other Fruit Melomel

Aroma: Depending on the sweetness and strength, a subtle to distinctly identifiable honey and grape/wine character (dry and/or hydromel versions will tend to have lower aromatics than sweet and/or sack versions). The grape/wine character should be clean and distinctive; it can express a range of

grape-based character ranging from a subtle fruitiness to a single varietal grape character (if declared) to a complex blend of grape or wine aromatics. Some complex, spicy, grassy or earthy notes may be present (as in wine). The honey aroma should be noticeable, and can have a light to significant sweetness that may express the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey (different varieties have different intensities and characters). The bouquet should show a pleasant fermentation character, with clean and fresh aromatics being preferred. Stronger and/or sweeter versions will have higher alcohol and sweetness in the nose. Slight spicy phenolics from certain red grape varieties are acceptable, as is a light diacetyl character from malolactic fermentation in certain white grape varieties (both are optional). Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Appearance: Standard description applies, except with regard to color. Color may range from pale straw to deep purple-red, depending on the variety of grapes and honey used. The color should be characteristic of the variety or type of grape used, although white grape varieties may also take on color derived from the honey variety.

Flavor: The grape/wine and honey flavor intensity may vary from subtle to high; the residual sweetness may vary from none to high; and the finish may range from dry to sweet, depending on what sweetness level has been declared (dry to sweet) and strength level has been declared (hydromel to sack). Natural acidity and tannin in grapes may give some tartness and astringency to balance the sweetness, honey flavor and alcohol. A pyment may have a subtle to strong honey character, and may feature noticeable to prominent varietal character if a varietal honey is declared (different varieties have different intensities). Depending on the grape variety, some fruity, spicy, grassy, buttery, earthy, mineral, and/or floral flavors may be present. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Mouthfeel: Standard description applies. Wine-like. Some natural acidity is usually present (from grapes) and helps balance the overall impression. Grape tannin and/or grape skins can add body as well as some astringency, although this character should not be excessive. Longer aging can smooth out tannin-based astringency.

Overall Impression: In well-made examples of the style, the grape is both distinctively vinous and well-incorporated into the honey-sweet-acid-tannin-alcohol balance of the mead. White and red versions can be quite different, and the overall impression should be characteristic of the type of grapes used and suggestive of a similar variety wine.

Comments: There should be an appealing blend of the fruit and honey character but not necessarily an even balance. Generally a good tannin-

sweetness balance is desired, though very dry and very sweet examples do exist. See standard description for entrance requirements. Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level, strength, and sweetness. Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties. Entrants **MAY** specify the varieties of grape used; if specified, a varietal character will be expected.

Ingredients: Standard description applies. A pyment is a standard mead made with the addition of grapes or grape juices. Alternatively, the pyment may be a homemade grape-based wine sweetened with honey, or a mead mixed with homemade grape-based wine after fermentation. A spiced pyment *hippocras*, or a pyment with other ingredients should be entered as an Open Category Mead.

Commercial Examples: Redstone Pinot Noir and White Pyment Mountain Honey Wines

25C. Other Fruit Melomel

Aroma: Depending on the sweetness and strength, a subtle to distinctly identifiable honey and fruit character (dry and/or hydromel versions will tend to have lower aromatics than sweet and/or sack versions). The fruit character should display distinctive aromatics associated with the particular fruit(s); however, note that some fruit (e.g., raspberries, cherries) have stronger aromas and are more distinctive than others (e.g., blueberries, strawberries) – allow for a range of fruit character and intensity from subtle to aggressive. The fruit character should be pleasant and supportive, not artificial and inappropriately overpowering (considering the character of the fruit). In a blended fruit melomel, not all fruit may be individually identifiable or of equal intensity. The honey aroma should be noticeable, and can have a light to significant sweetness that may express the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey (different varieties have different intensities and characters). The bouquet should show a pleasant fermentation character, with clean and fresh aromatics being preferred. Stronger and/or sweeter versions will have higher alcohol and sweetness in the nose. Some tartness may be present if naturally occurring in the particular fruit(s), but should not be inappropriately intense. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Appearance: Standard description applies, except with regard to color. Color may take on a very wide range of colors, depending on the variety of fruit and/or honey used. For lighter-colored melomels with fruits that exhibit distinctive colors, the color should be noticeable. Note that the color of fruit in mead is often lighter than the flesh of the fruit itself and may take on slightly different shades. Meads made with lighter color fruits can also take on color from varietal honeys. In meads that produce a head, the head can take on some of the fruit color as well.

Flavor: The fruit and honey flavor intensity may vary from subtle to high; the residual sweetness may vary from none to high; and the finish may range from dry to sweet, depending on what sweetness level has been declared (dry to sweet) and strength level has been declared (hydromel to sack). Natural acidity and tannin in some fruit and fruit skin may give some tartness and astringency to balance the sweetness, honey flavor and alcohol. A melomel may have a subtle to strong honey character, and may feature noticeable to prominent varietal character if a varietal honey is declared (different varieties have different intensities). The distinctive flavor character associated with the particular fruit(s) should be noticeable, and may range in intensity from subtle to aggressive. The balance of fruit with the underlying mead is vital, and the fruit character should not be artificial and/or inappropriately overpowering. In a blended fruit melomel, not all fruit may be individually identifiable or of equal intensity. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Mouthfeel: Standard description applies. Most will be wine-like. Some natural acidity and/or astringency are sometimes present (from certain fruit and/or fruit skin) and helps balance the overall impression. Fruit tannin can add body as well as some astringency. High levels of astringency are undesirable. The acidity and astringency levels should be somewhat reflective of the fruit used.

Overall Impression: In well-made examples of the style, the fruit is both distinctive and well-incorporated into the honey-sweet-acid-tannin-alcohol balance of the mead. Different types of fruit can result in widely different characteristics; allow for a variation in the final product.

Comments: Generally a good tannin-sweetness balance is desired, though very dry and very sweet examples do exist. Some fruits, notably darker ones like Blackberries, may contribute a tannin presence similar to a red wine. Some oxidative properties may be appropriate in certain fruit meads, giving them a sherry or port wine character. See standard description for entrance requirements. Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level, strength, and sweetness. Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties. Entrants **MUST** specify the varieties of fruit used.

Ingredients: Standard description applies. A melomel is a standard mead made with the addition of other fruit or fruit juices. There should be an appealing blend of the fruit and honey character but not necessarily an even balance. A melomel can be made with a blend of fruits; however, a melomel that is spiced or that contains other ingredients should be entered as an Open Category Mead. Melomels made with either apples or grapes should be entered as Cysers and Pyments, respectively.

White Winter Blueberry, Raspberry and Strawberry Melomels, Redstone Black Raspberry and Sunshine Nectars, Bees Brothers Raspberry Mead, Intermiel Honey Wine and Raspberries, Honey Wine and Blueberries, and Honey Wine and Blackcurrants, Long Island Meadery Blueberry Mead, Mountain Meadows Cranberry and Cherry Meads

26. Other Mead

Styles

1. 26A. Metheglin
2. 26B. Braggot
3. 26C. Open Category Mead

Notes

See the Introduction to Mead Guidelines for detailed descriptions of standard mead characteristics, an explanation of standard terms, and entering instructions.

Refer to Category 24 descriptions for additional detail on the character to be expected from dry, semisweet and sweet meads. Use those guidelines to judge distinctions between the various sweetness levels. Judging meads from dry to sweet is recommended as the primary ordering, with strength being the secondary ordering criterion.

26A. Metheglin

Aroma: Depending on the sweetness and strength, a subtle to distinctly identifiable honey and herb/spice character (dry and/or hydromel versions will tend to have lower aromatics than sweet and/or sack versions). The herb/spice character should display distinctive aromatics associated with the particular herbs/spices; however, note that some herbs/spices (e.g., ginger, cinnamon) have stronger aromas and are more distinctive than others (e.g., chamomile, lavender) –allow for a range of herb/spice character and intensity from subtle to aggressive. The herb/spice character should be pleasant and supportive, not artificial and inappropriately overpowering (considering the character of the herb/spice). In a blended herb/spice metheglin, not all herbs/spices may be individually identifiable or of equal intensity. The honey aroma should be noticeable, and can have a light to significant sweetness that may express the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey (different varieties have different intensities and characters). The bouquet should show a pleasant fermentation character, with clean and fresh aromatics being preferred. Stronger and/or sweeter versions will have higher alcohol and sweetness in the nose. Some herbs and spices may produce spicy or peppery phenolics. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Appearance: Standard description applies, except perhaps to note that the color usually won't be affected by spices and herbs (although flowers, petals

and peppers may provide subtle colors; tea blends may provide significant colors).

Flavor: The herb/spice flavor intensity may vary from subtle to high; the honey flavor intensity may vary from subtle to high; the residual sweetness may vary from none to high; and the finish may range from dry to sweet, depending on what sweetness level has been declared (dry to sweet) and strength level has been declared (hydromel to sack). The distinctive flavor character associated with the particular herbs/spices may range in intensity from subtle to aggressive (although some herbs/spices may not be individually recognizable, and can just serve to add a background complexity). Certain herbs and spices might add bitter, astringent, phenolic or spicy (hot) flavors; if present, these qualities should be related to the declared ingredients (otherwise, they are faults), and they should balance and blend with the honey, sweetness and alcohol. Metheglins containing more than one herb/spice should have a good balance among the different herbs/spices, though some herbs/spices will tend to dominate the flavor profile. A metheglin may have a subtle to strong honey character, and may feature noticeable to prominent varietal character if a varietal honey is declared (different varieties have different intensities). Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Mouthfeel: Standard description applies. Some herbs or spices may contain tannins that add a bit of body and some astringency, but this character should not be excessive.

Overall Impression: In well-made examples of the style, the herbs/spices are both distinctive and well-incorporated into the honey-sweet-acid-tannin-alcohol balance of the mead. Different types of herbs/spices can result in widely different characteristics; allow for a variation in the final product.

Comments: Often, a blend of spices may give a character greater than the sum of its parts. The better examples of this style use spices/herbs subtly and when more than one are used, they are carefully selected so that they blend harmoniously. See standard description for entrance requirements. Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level, strength, and sweetness. Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties. Entrants **MUST** specify the types of spices used.

Ingredients: Standard description applies. A metheglin is a standard mead made with the addition of spices or herbs. Meads made with flowers (such as rose petal mead, or rhodomel) or chile peppers (capsimel / capsicumel) may also be entered in this category, as can meads made with a blend of spices. If spices are used in conjunction with other ingredients such as fruit, cider, or other fermentables, then the mead should be entered as an Open Category Mead.

Commercial Examples: Bonair Chili Mead, Redstone Juniper Mountain Honey Wine, Redstone Vanilla Beans and Cinnamon Sticks Mountain Honey Wine, Long Island Meadery Vanilla Mead, iQhilika Africa Birds Eye Chilli Mead, Mountain Meadows Spice Nectar

26B. Braggot

Aroma: Depending on the sweetness, strength and base style of beer, a subtle to distinctly identifiable honey and beer character (dry and/or hydromel versions will tend to have lower aromatics than sweet and/or sack versions). The honey and beer/malt character should be complementary and balanced, although not always evenly balanced. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey (different varieties have different intensities and characters). If a base style of beer or type of malt is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable character reflective of the beer style (different styles and malts have different intensities and characters). A hop aroma (any variety or intensity) is optional; if present, it should blend harmoniously with the other elements. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Appearance: Standard description does not apply due to beer-like characteristics. Clarity may be good to brilliant, although many braggots are not as clear as other meads. A light to moderate head with some retention is expected. Color may range from light straw to dark brown or black, depending on the variety of malt and honey used. The color should be characteristic of the declared beer style and/or honey used, if a variety is declared. Stronger versions may show signs of body (e.g., legs).

Flavor: Displays a balanced character identifiable as both a beer and a mead, although the relative intensity of flavors is greatly affected by the sweetness, strength, base style of beer, and variety of honey used. If a beer style is declared, the braggot should have some character traceable to the style although the flavors will be different due to the presence of honey. If a variety of honey is declared, the braggot should feature a subtle to prominent varietal character (different varieties have different intensities). Stronger and/or sweeter braggots should be expected to have a greater intensity of flavor than drier, lower gravity versions. The finish and aftertaste will vary based on the declared level of sweetness (dry to sweet), and may include both beer and mead components. A wide range of malt characteristics is allowable, from plain base malts to rich caramel and toast flavors to dark chocolate and roast flavors. Hop bitterness and flavor may be present, and may reflect any variety or intensity; however, this optional character should always be both suggestive of the base beer style and well blended with the other flavors. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

Mouthfeel: Standard description does not apply due to beer-like characteristics. Smooth mouthfeel without astringency. Body may vary from

moderately light to full, depending on sweetness, strength, and the base style of beer. Note that stronger meads will have a fuller body. A very thin or watery body is undesirable, as is a cloying, raw sweetness. A warming sense of well-aged alcohol may be present in stronger examples. Carbonation will vary as described in the standard description. A still braggot will usually have some level of carbonation (like a cask bitter) since a completely flat beer is unappetizing. However, just as an aged barleywine may be still, some braggots can be totally still.

Overall Impression: A harmonious blend of mead and beer, with the distinctive characteristics of both. A wide range of results are possible, depending on the base style of beer, variety of honey and overall sweetness and strength. Beer flavors tend to somewhat mask typical honey flavors found in other meads.

Comments: Sometimes known as "bracket" or "brackett." The fermentable sugars come from a balance of malt or malt extract and honey, although the specific balance is open to creative interpretation by brewers. See standard description for entrance requirements. Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level, strength, and sweetness. Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties. Entrants **MAY** specify the base style or beer or types of malt used. Products with a relatively low proportion of honey should be entered in the Specialty Beer category as a Honey Beer.

Ingredients: A braggot is a standard mead made with both honey and malt providing flavor and fermentable extract. Originally, and alternatively, a mixture of mead and ale. A braggot can be made with any type of honey, and any type of base beer style. The malt component may be derived from grain or malt extracts. The beer may be hopped or not. If any other ingredients than honey and beer are contained in the braggot, it should be entered as an Open Category Mead. Smoked braggots may be entered in this category if using smoked malt or a smoked beer as the base style; braggots made using other smoked ingredients (e.g., liquid smoke, chipotles) should be entered in the Open Category Mead style.

Commercial Examples: Magic Hat Braggot, Brother Adams Braggot Barleywine Ale, White Winter Traditional Brackett

26C. Open Category Mead

An Open Category Mead is a honey-based beverage that either combines ingredients from two or more of the other mead sub-categories, is a historical or indigenous mead (e.g., tej, Polish meads), or is a mead that does not fit into any other category. Any specialty or experimental mead using additional sources of fermentables (e.g., maple syrup, molasses, brown sugar, or agave nectar), additional ingredients (e.g., vegetables, liquors, smoke, etc.), alternative processes (e.g., icing, oak-aging) or other unusual ingredient, process, or technique would also be appropriate in this category. No mead can

be "out of style" for this category unless it fits into another existing mead category.

Aroma, appearance, flavor, mouthfeel generally follow the standard descriptions, yet note that all the characteristics may vary. Since a wide range of entries are possible, note that the characteristics may reflect combinations of the respective elements of the various sub-categories used in this style. Refer to Category 25 for a detailed description of the character of dry, semisweet and sweet mead. If the entered mead is a combination of other existing mead categories, refer to the constituent categories for a detailed description of the character of the component styles.

Overall Impression: This mead should exhibit the character of all of the ingredients in varying degrees, and should show a good blending or balance between the various flavor elements. Whatever ingredients are included, the result should be identifiable as a honey-based fermented beverage.

Comments: See standard description for entrance requirements. Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level, strength, and sweetness. Entrants **MAY** specify honey varieties. Entrants **MUST** specify the special nature of the mead, whether it is a combination of existing styles, an experimental mead, a historical mead, or some other creation. Any special ingredients that impart an identifiable character **MAY** be declared.

Commercial Examples: Jadwiga, Hanssens/Lurgashall Mead the Gueuze, Rabbit's Foot Private Reserve Pear Mead, White Winter Cherry Bracket, Saba Tej, Mountain Meadows Trickster's Treat Agave Mead, Intermiel Rosée

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