

## **NOTES FOR JUDGES**

### **CRAFT SPIRITS**

Home or craft distilled spirits must be true to type and free from all objectional odours and flavours.

Typical faults of poorly distilled spirits are

- Pungent aroma, Sulphur, cabbage, oily, musty
- Burnt flavor, heavy oiliness on the palate burning along the inner lips
- Specs, floc, sediment
- Poor clarity

Any entry exhibiting these characteristics should not be judged.

- Aroma should be judged on undiluted spirit, flavor on a 50/50 mix with water.

#### **1. RUMS –**

Produced from sugar cane products including white, brown gold sugars or molasses.

##### **a) DARK RUM**

- Slightly sweet with underlying molasses, licorice, caramel, toffee flavours. Black to dark brown in colour.
- Oak, tannin and vanilla may be present.
- Heavy aroma.

##### **b) GOLD RUM**

- Light sugary notes.
- Little oak.
- Higher vanilla.
- Soft and round.
- Solid aroma.

c) **WHITE RUMS**

- Clean, light sugary notes. Sweet but heavier mouthfeel than vodka.
- No oak, light molasses/sugar nose

d) **SPICED RUMS**

- As for Gold Rums but with distinct flavor of vanilla, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, cloves. Vanilla should not dominate.

## 2. MALT WHISKY

Basic ingredient Malted Barley Extract

### a) ISLAY STYLES (Single Malt)

- Dark golden with a distinctive phenolic reek.
- Soft in the mouth with some lip burn.
- Sweet oak in flavor.
- Phenols linger.

### b) HIGHLAND STYLE (Blended Malt)

- Lighter in colour.
- Less phenolics.
- Lighter mouthfeel and residue in the mouth.
- Still sharp on the lips.

### c) SPEYSIDE STYLES (Light blended low malt content)

- Lightest in colour and flavor.
- Only enough phenols to distinguish the spirit as Malt Whisky.
- Still sharp in taste but not lingering.

NB Blended Whisky can have less than 10% malt whisky blended with neutral grain spirit.

### d) IRISH WHISKEY

Traditionally distilled twice or more giving a lighter aroma than other Malt barley Whiskies.

- Barrel aging increases density and mouthfeel
- Colour is normally darker than other Whiskies.

### 3. GRAIN WHISKEY

Base grain 50% minimum corn with wheat, rye, barley permitted.

#### a) SOUR MASH BOURBON (Jim Beam style)

- Dark golden to dark brown.
- Distinctive aroma, sweet vanilla tones.
- Soft mouthfeel with some creaminess.
- Soft oak may impart caramel aftertaste.
- No mouth burn.

#### b) STRAIGHT CORN BOURBON (Jack Daniels style)

- Dark golden to dark brown.
- Aroma less of vanilla/perfume.
- Fuller flavour with some oakiness.
- Slight mouthburn but richer after taste.
- Vanilla should not dominate.

#### c) RYE WHISKEY

Malted Rye being the main ingredient, the spirit is light and aromatic.

- Colour pale gold to med brown.
- Aroma sweeter and sharper than Malted Barley and corn Whiskies.

#### 4. GIN

Very clean spirit required . Juniper must be evident, fresh herbs may impart a cut grass aroma. Other additions orange, lime, coriander, cardamom must fit into the overall flavour balance but not dominate.

- Overall sweetness is a fault.
- Dry gins should have a 'crinkle' effect on the mouth.
- Aroma distinctive juniper with hints of other herbs.
- Dry Gin must be exceptionally clean to taste.
- Aroma levels are traditionally low in 'London Dry' styles but dominant in Plymouth, Bombay and high value brands.
- Alcohol level should not be below 40%.

#### 5. VODKA

The test of all distillers. Perfectly crystal clear.

##### a) STRAIGHT VODKA

- Neutral, tending sweet nose
- No off aromas.
- No off flavours (burnt, bitter, Sulphur)
- Taste to be almost sweet and smooth.
- A trace of the base fermented material is acceptable, sugar, grape, potatoes, grain.
- No oiliness.

##### b) FRUIT VODKAS

May be lightly coloured

- Not overly sweet.
- Distinctive clean aroma and taste of the fruit.
- Can include not fruit, vanilla, chocolate, coffee etc

## 6. **BRANDY**

Classically golden to medium brown, red tinge is acceptable. Distinctive aroma.

- Clean taste with noticeable grape background.
- Some oakiness in aged product.
- Slightly heavy mouth feel.
- Initial taste sharp with some burn.
- Usually higher in methanol giving a sharpness.
- Brandy distilled on the skin or spirit that has been rested on dundar will have noticeable colour and flavour increases.

## **OTHER SPIRITS**

### **d) TEQUILA**

- Colour clear to amber.
- Nose slight to definite Agave.
- Taste distinctive oily, dry with residual agave taste.
- May have some cask aging which will concentrate flavour.

### **e) SCHNAPPS**

A large class covering traditional fruit brandy eau de Vie styles to blends using herbs steeped in spirit. Some merge into Apertif and liqueur classes.

- Heavier, oilier mouth feel distinguish these from fruit vodkas.