



STYLE GUIDE

Updated April 2020

The Australian Cider Awards promote and reward excellence in cider production and set the benchmark for cider judging in Australia.

The Awards are run by Cider Australia, a not-for-profit organisation that represents the interests of the craft cider and perry industry in Australia. Cider Australia's primary concern is to build a sustainable industry through maintaining and improving the quality of ciders produced and marketed in Australia.

This Style Guide has been developed to help participants in cider shows – entrants, judges and stewards – work to a common goal. Defining cider and perry styles acknowledges the diversity of products being made in Australia and aids judges by grouping comparable ciders for assessment.

We acknowledge that there are known styles not represented in the style guide classes. To suggest amendments, please email awards@cideraustralia.org.au

Standard Styles

New World Cider

- Class 1 Dry
- Class 2 Medium
- Class 3 Medium Sweet
- Class 4 Sweet
- Class 5 'MT' (disgorged)

New World' references the style, not a location, as ciders in this style are also made in England, the United States, Canada, Germany, etc. New World cider is made primarily from culinary/ table apples. Typically, these ciders are generally lower in tannin and higher in acidity. New World ciders serve well as a 'session' drink, and suitably accompany a wide variety of foods.

Cider that is fermented in bottle and aged on yeast lees and then disgorged should be entered as an MT or 'Method Traditional' Cider. New World and Traditional MT examples (Classes 5 and 10) may be judged together in the same class.

Aroma/Flavour: Sweet or lower-alcohol ciders may have apple aroma and flavour. Dry ciders will be more wine-like with some esters. Sugar and acidity should combine to give a refreshing character. Acidity is medium to high, refreshing, but must not be harsh or biting.

Appearance: Clear to brilliant, pale to yellow in colour.

Mouthfeel: Medium body.

Overall Impression: A refreshing drink – not bland or watery. Sweet ciders must not be cloying. Dry ciders must not be too austere.

Varieties: Commonly grown varieties such as Pink Lady, Royal Gala, Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, Fuji and Red Delicious.

Typical Vital Statistics: OG: 1.045 – 1.065 FG: 0.995 – 1.020 ABV: 5 – 8%

Commercial Examples [prior medals]: Core Cider CORE-upted 2015 [G, S], Jachmann Pink Lady Apple Cider [B, B, G, B, S], Sydney Brewery Oaked Organic Cider [G, B], The Barossa Valley Cider Co. Squashed Apple Cider [G, S, G, S, S, B, B], Sparkke Apple Cider [S, G], Westons Caple Road [G], Westons Old Rosie [G], Willie Smith's Organic Cider [S, G].

Traditional Cider

- Class 6 Dry
- Class 7 Medium
- Class 8 Medium Sweet
- Class 9 Sweet
- Class 10 'MT' (disgorged)

Encompasses the traditional cider of England and France, can include German and Spanish styles although these remain scarce in Australia. Competitors should give some thought to whether their ciders are seeking to be 'traditional' in style – or in fact are seeking to be more modern. Typically, these ciders will show some tannin derived from the apples used. While cider-specific bittersweet and bittersharp apples will contribute to this, other varieties may also be used. Malolactic secondary fermentation may be a feature, but is not essential. Wood aging should not contribute overt characters.

Cider that is fermented in bottle and aged on yeast lees and then disgorged should be entered as an MT or 'Method Traditional' Cider. There is an expectation that MT (disgorged) ciders should have a higher degree of clarity than non-disgorged ciders. New World and Traditional MT examples (Classes 5 and 10) may be judged together in the same class.

Aroma/Flavour: Can range from subtle or perhaps no overt apple character, but with various flavours and esters that suggest apples or transformation of apples, through to fruitier apple character/aromas from slow or arrested fermentation. There may be some malolactic fermentation which contributes to desirable spicy/smoky, phenolic, and farmyard/old-horse characters. These flavour notes may be positive but do not have to be present. If present, they must not dominate; in particular, the phenolic and farmyard notes should not be heavy. A strong farmyard character without spicy/smoky or phenolic suggests a *Brettanomyces* contamination, which is a fault. Mousiness is a serious fault.

Appearance: Cloudy to brilliant. Medium yellow to amber colour.

Mouthfeel: Medium to Full. Tannin/Acid/Sweetness perception and balance is important. Tannin astringency and some bitterness are acceptable. Moderate to high tannin, perceived as astringency and some bitterness. Carbonation still to moderate. Bottle-fermented or -conditioned ciders may have high carbonation, up to sparkling wine levels, but not gushing or foaming.

Overall Impression: Complex flavour profile, balanced components, long finish. A refreshing drink of some substance – not bland or watery. Sweet ciders must not be cloying. Dry ciders must not be too austere.

Varieties: Kingston Black, Dabinett, Yarlington Mill, Bulmers Norman, other cider specific bittersweet/bitterssharp, often blended with more widely available commercial varieties.

Typical Vital Statistics: OG: 1.050 – 1.075 FG: 0.995 – 1.015 ABV: 4 – 9%

Commercial Examples [prior medals]: [Aus] 3 Sons The Cranky Pom [G], Borrodell Vineyard's Heritage Apple Cider [G, B, S], Daylesford Cider Sweet Coppin 2016 [G, B], Flying Brick Cider Co MC Cider [G, S, S], Hart's Farm Dry Cider [G, S, S], Kangaroo Island Ciders Colony Cove Draught [G, S, S, S, B], Small Acres Cyder 2015 The Cat's Pyjamas [S, G], St Ronan's Method Traditional Apple Cider [G, B], Willie Smith's French Blend Cider [G, S, G], Willie Smith's Kingston Black Cider [S, G], [UK] Henney's Sweet [G], Henney's Dry [G, S, S, B], Westons Wyld Wood Organic Apple [G], [NZ] Zeffler Cidre Demi-Sec [G, G].

New World Perry

Class 21 Dry

Class 22 Medium

Class 23 Medium Sweet

Class 24 Sweet

Class 25 , 'MT' (disgorged)

New World perry is primarily made from culinary/table pears. Some table pears contain substantial amounts of sorbitol, a non-fermentable sweet-tasting natural component. Hence a 'dry' perry may give an impression of sweetness due to sorbitol in the pears. Perception of sorbitol as 'sweet' is highly variable from one person to the next. Entrants should specify sweetness per actual residual sugar amount. Judges must be aware that they might perceive more sweetness than is indicated by the reported sugar levels.

Perry that is fermented in bottle and aged on yeast lees and then disgorged should be entered as an MT or 'Method Traditional' Perry. New World and Traditional MT examples (Classes 25 and 30) may be judged together in the same class.

Aroma/Flavour: There is a pear character, but it does not need to be the primary feature, some transformation and fermentation characters are also often present. It tends toward that of a young white wine. No bitterness.

Appearance: Slightly cloudy to clear. Generally, quite pale.

Mouthfeel: Relatively full, low to moderate tannin apparent as astringency.

Overall Impression: Mild. Medium to medium-sweet. Drier styles less common. Still, to lightly sparkling. Only very slight acetification is acceptable. Mousiness, ropy/oily characters are serious faults.

Varieties: Packham, Beurre Bosc, Josephine, Corella.

Typical Vital Statistics: OG: 1.050 – 1.060 FG: 1.000 – 1.020 ABV: 4 – 7%

Commercial Examples [prior medals]: Carmel Cider Company Pear [S, S], Fils de Pomme L'Epatant [S, G], Small Acres Cyder 2017 Sparkling Perry [G] and 2016 Sparkling Perry [S], The Barossa Valley Cider Company Squashed Pear [S, S, B, S], The Hills Cider Company Pear [S, B, B, S, S, B, G, B], Hillbilly Pear Cider [S, B, S, S, S].

Traditional Perry

Class 26 Dry

Class 27 Medium

Class 28 Medium Sweet

Class 29 Sweet

Class 30 'MT' (disgorged)

Traditional perry made in Europe is from pears grown specifically for that purpose rather than for eating or cooking. There are very few perry pears available in Australia, but several producers are using culinary/table pears to produce perry that is obviously inspired by traditional perries. Entrants may wish to specify in their entry if traditional perry pears are being used.

Pears may contain substantial amounts of sorbitol, a non-fermentable sweet-tasting natural component. Hence a perry can be completely dry (no residual sugar) yet taste sweet. Entrants should specify sweetness per actual residual sugar amount. Judges must be aware that they might perceive more sweetness than is indicated by the reported sugar levels.

Perry that is fermented in bottle and aged on yeast lees and then disgorged should be entered as an MT or 'Method Traditional' Perry. There is an expectation that MT (disgorged) ciders should have a higher degree of clarity than non-disgorged ciders. New World and Traditional MT examples (Classes 25 and 30) may be judged together in the same class.

Aroma/Flavour: There is a pear character, but not obviously fruity. It tends toward that of a young white wine. Some slight bitterness and modest astringency.

Appearance: Slightly cloudy to clear. Generally, quite pale.

Mouthfeel: Relatively full, moderate tannin apparent as astringency.

Overall Impression: Medium to medium-sweet. Still, to lightly sparkling. Some tannin present. Only very slight acetification is acceptable. Mousiness and ropy/oily characters are serious faults.

Varieties: Beurre Bosc, Packham, Josephine, Corella and other commercially available pears. Traditional perry pears varieties, Butt, Gin, Brandy, Barland, Blakeney Red, Thorn, Moorcroft, etc.

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

Commercial Examples [prior medals]: Napoleone Methode Traditionelle Pear Cider [B, B, B, G], St Ronan's Methode Traditionelle Pear Cider [B, S, S, S, G, G], Small Acres Cyder 2013 Sparkling Perry [G, B, B].

Speciality Styles

Experimental Cider or Perry Class 31

This is an open-ended category for cider or perry with other ingredients such that it does not fit any other class. It is deliberately open to allow novel ciders to be entered. Products should be commercially available and may be either WET or Excise taxed. This must be specified on the entry form.

Entrants must explain the intention of the cider when entering, for example, 'Nettle Cider', could be accompanied by the note 'Dried nettles used in production to give herbal notes'. This information will be provided to the judges to assist in understanding the products before them. Where ingredients are added that flavour the cider they must be derived from the actual ingredients, not flavouring agents - for example Vanilla bean rather than Vanilla flavour essence. It is anticipated that hopped, spiced and heavily oaked ciders would be entered in this class.

Medals will be awarded, but entries in this class are not eligible for trophies at this point in time. Should there be significant entries or interest in particular novel styles within this class, Cider Australia reserves the right to create sub-classes.

Aroma/Flavour: The cider character must always be present, and must fit with added ingredients.

Appearance: Slightly cloudy to brilliant. Colour should be that of a standard cider unless other ingredients are expected to contribute colour.

Mouthfeel: Average body, may show tannic (astringent) or heavy body as determined by other ingredients.

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

Commercial Examples [prior medals]: FUNK Cider American Hustle [S], Sydney Brewery Agave Ginger Cider [S, B], The Hills Cider Company Hop Edition [B, S, B]

Apple and Pear Blends

Class 32

It is expected that this class will be mostly blends containing more than 25% of the minor component – for example 60% apple and 40% pear – which cannot be entered in the Standard Styles. Blends with less than 25% of the minor component can be entered in the Standard Styles, or in this class if preferred. **Aroma/Flavour:** The cider character must show the dominant fruit to the fore, with the secondary fruit present.

Appearance: Cloudy to brilliant, colour expected to reflect the dominant fruit but could range from pale to medium amber.

Mouthfeel: Will depend on composition, drier styles may show some apparent sweetness from the pear component.

Overall Impression: The blend should be harmonious, and have both apple and pear characters. Some astringency and tannin particularly in drier styles. Sweeter styles need balance.

Typical Vital Statistics: OG: 1.050 – 1.0850 FG: 0.995 – 1.020 ABV: 4 – 12%

Commercial Examples [prior medals]: LOBO Cider Apple & Pear [S, B, S, B], Mock Red Hill Apple & Pear [S, S].

Cider or Perry with Fruit

Class 33

This is a cider or perry with other fruits or fruit juices added – for example, raspberry. Entrants must specify all fruit(s) and/or fruit juice(s) added. This information will be provided to the judges to assist in understanding the products before them. Essences and artificial flavours are not permitted. Products may be either WET or Excise taxed (this must be specified on the entry form), however products with added ethyl alcohol from any other source are not permitted.

Medals will be awarded, but entries in this class are not eligible for trophies at this point in time.

Aroma/Flavour: The cider character must be present and must fit with the other fruits. It is a fault if the added fruit(s) completely dominate a judge might ask, “*Would this be different if neutral spirits replaced the cider?*” A fruit cider should not be like an alco-pop (RTD). Oxidation is a fault.

Appearance: Slightly cloudy to brilliant. Colour appropriate to added fruit, but should not show out of balance oxidation characteristics.

Mouthfeel: Full to Substantial. May be significantly tannic, depending on fruit added.

Overall Impression: Like a white wine with complex flavours. The apple character must marry with the added fruit so that neither one dominates the other.

Typical Vital Statistics: OG: 1.055 – 1.0850 FG: 0.995 – 1.010 ABV: 4 – 12%

Commercial Examples [prior medals]: Cheeky Rascal Passionfruit Pink Lady [S], Easy Rider Blood Orange Cider [S], FUNK Cider Feijoa Cider [S]

Lighter Strength Cider or Perry

Class 34

Entries in this class must be prepared from the complete or partial fermentation of apples and/or pears, be subject to WET and contain 1.15-3.5% ABV. Reflects market trends of lower alcohol predominantly New World ciders. Existing styles of traditional lighter strength ciders, for example in the style of French Cidre Doux, may choose to enter in New World or Traditional Sweet classes, or in this class if preferred.

Aroma/Flavour: Should have evident apple or transformed apple cider characters, lower intensity is typical.

Appearance: Clear to brilliant, pale to yellow in colour.

Mouthfeel: Lighter to medium bodied.

Overall Impression: A refreshing drink, balanced to suit the alcoholic strength.

Typical Vital Statistics: ABV: 1.15 – 3.5%

Commercial Examples: n/a

Intensified and Distilled Styles

Ice Cider or Perry

Class 41

This is a cider style in which the juice is concentrated before fermentation either by freezing fruit before pressing or freezing juice and removing water. Fermentation stops or is arrested before reaching dryness. Sweeteners may not be used to increase gravity. The ice cider process increases not only sugar (hence alcohol) but acidity and all fruit flavour components proportionately. This dessert style cider is believed to have originated in Quebec in the 1990s.

Aroma/Flavour: Fruity, smooth, sweet-tart. Acidity must be enough to prevent it being cloying.

Appearance: Brilliant. Colour is deeper than a standard cider, gold to amber.

Mouthfeel: Full body. May be tannic (astringent and/or bitter) but this should be slight, to moderate at most.

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

Typical Vital Statistics: OG: 1.130 – 1.180 FG: 1.060 – 1.085 ABV: 7 – 13%

Commercial Examples [prior medals]: [Aus] Small Acres Cyder Pomona Ice 2015 [S, S], 2012 [S] and 2009 [S], [Canada] Domaine Pinnacle, Les Vergers de la Colline, and Cidrerie St-Nicolas (Quebec).

Pommeau

Class 42

Pommeau is cider fortified with apple, grape or neutral spirits (as port is wine fortified with grape spirits). Entrants should supply background information when entering, i.e. spirit used, ageing method etc. This information will be provided to the judges to assist in understanding the products before them.

Cider that has been strengthened in alcohol (and aroma and flavour) after fermentation by the addition of spirits is most generally called 'fortified cider.' A range of sweetness is possible by choosing how far into primary fermentation to add the spirits. At the sweeter end of the range with high residual sugar lies 'Pommeau.' Originally from Normandy, Pommeau is essentially a blend of apple brandy with apple juice. The juice is typically fermented as little as local jurisdiction will allow. The pear equivalent may be made but has no recognised traditional name. A cider that has been allowed to ferment mostly or completely to dryness before the spirit addition will be much less fruity. Such a cider is known to some as 'royal cider'.

Traditionally, fortified ciders and perries are made with white spirit or oak aged spirit of the same kind of fruit, and the spirits should not be neutral. Other spirits may be permitted. Spirits used for fortification do not have to be distilled by the entrant. Whether sweet or dry, the object of a fortified cider/perry is to create a very full-flavoured, heavy-bodied, 'bigger than life' profile – but not as intense as an ice cider. They are well suited to after dinner, aperitifs and use in cocktails.

Fruit should be forward. Acidity is well balanced – juice like. Fermentation/yeast character reserved. Spirits evident and warming, not harsh. Spirit 'headiness' would be a fault. Tannins may run the spectrum but should not be distracting. Oak ageing of spirits and/or final product is allowable. As such, some oxidation character is allowable if balanced with the oak and barrel profile.

Typical Vital Statistics: ABV: Typically, less than 30% ABV, includes 'liqueur' styles.

Commercial Examples [prior medals]: Charles Oates Distilling Pommeau [S], Small Acres Cyder Pommeau 2015 [S], 2010 [G, S, S, S] and 2009 [S].

Apple or Pear Spirits

Class 43 Eau de Vie

Class 44 Aged Spirit

Apple or Pear Spirit is obtained from the distillation of cider or perry and/or the fermented preparations of apples/pears or apple/pear products. The spirit must be derived entirely from apples and/or pears. Entrants should supply background information when entering, i.e. ageing method, length of ageing, etc. The age should be determined by the age of the youngest component of any blend. This information will be provided to the judges to assist in understanding the products before them.

A non-oak-aged fruit spirit, colourless, is referred to as Eau de vie (EDV). Oak aged apple/pear spirits have more colour. In general, oak aged spirits follow the same guidelines as Eau de vie.

These spirits are often drunk as a digestive, like grappa. For either apple or pear, the spirit should be round in the mouth and free of head (acetates and aldehydes – nail polish remover) and tail (fusel oils, often stemmy or fuel-like, head in an empty glass and are most evident as smell in an emptied glass) characteristics.

Apple spirits are usually subtle on the fruit and may carry a hint of spice. Varietal character may be difficult to discern, and could be a feature. Overt apple character should raise concerns. Pear spirits, on the other hand, can be overt and may be heavily aromatic to the point of perfume. Pear spirits often bear a subtle spicy aftertaste which should linger a long time. Bartlett pear – also known as William – is readily identifiable. Barrel character may range from toasted wine barrel (toast and coconut, light yellow colour) to charred whiskey barrel (smoke, spice, dark amber colour) – but you should be able to taste the barrel.

Entries must comply with the Excise Act 1901. Consistent with Standard 2.7.5 of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, apple or pear spirit may have any of the following added during production: water, sugars, honey and spices. In addition, apple/pear brandy may also have any of the following added during production: apple or pear juice, apple or pear juice concentrate, cider and perry. Apple/pear brandy must be matured by storage in wood for at least 2 years.

Typical Vital Statistics: ABV: Typically 30 – 50%

Commercial Examples: Charles Oates Distilling Apple Blanco [G, B], Charles Oates Distilling Fine Apple Brandy Tokay Barrel [S, S].

Entry Requirements and Instructions

Entrants must provide the information specified in Appendix A, and entries must comply with the listed product requirements of the class entered. In most cases (exceptions are noted in the table), entries must fall under the definitions set out in Standard 2.7.3 of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code and be Wine Equalisation Tax (WET) eligible.

Where a product made from a mixture of apple and pear is in transition between classes and does not fit under the definition of cider or perry in the Code (in particular, that cider may contain no more than 25% pear juice and perry no more than 25% apple juice), it is ineligible for entry into the Standard classes but may be eligible for the Specialty classes. The percentage of each component must be specified when entering (for example, apple 45% and pear 55%).

There is not a separate class for bottle conditioned and cloudy ciders. These should be entered in the appropriate Standard or Specialty class.

Entrants are able to specify if the cider should be roused (i.e. rolled to mix the sediment), otherwise the stewards will carefully pour a clear cider.

Units and Measures

Sweetness: Refers to the apparent amount of sugar present in the cider after fermentation. Cider Australia has adopted the standard wine industry test method of Enzymatic Glucose + Fructose + Sucrose expressed in grams per litre. This test is widely available from many laboratories in Australia and has become the preferred method of expressing sweetness.

	Residual Sugar (g/L)
Dry:	<9g/L
Medium:	~ 9 – 25g/L
Medium Sweet:	~ 25-40g/L

Sweet:	>40g/L

Carbonation: Describes the level of dissolved gas in the cider, and does not refer to the process used to put the gas into the cider.

	Carbonation
Still:	Still means little or no carbonation, still cider may still have a slight 'prickle'
Moderate:	Moderate carbonation, petillant, less than would be expected in a sparkling wine (1.5g/L (~0.75 vol) – 4g/L (~2 vol))
High:	Highly carbonated, significant presence of carbon dioxide – sparkling, may retain some head or mousse. Gushing, foaming and excessive head formation however, are considered as faults (>4g/L (~2vol))
Method Traditional (MT):	Fermented in bottle and then disgorged. May have high carbonation.

Alcohol: Refers to the ethanol component present in the cider or perry.

ABV: Alcohol by volume (abbreviated as ABV) is a standard measure of how much alcohol (ethanol) is contained in a given volume of an alcoholic beverage, expressed as a volume percent. A legal requirement on the labels of alcoholic beverages.

Acknowledgements

Our thanks to the Great Lakes International Cider and Perry Competition (GLINTCAP) for allowing Cider Australia to base our Style Guidelines with a high degree of similarity to their own, which serves very well in aligning our evolving marketplace with that of other significant global markets.

Appendix A: Entry Information and Product Requirements

Class	Category	Class	Sub Classes	Do I need to specify residual sugar in g/L?	Do I need to specify level of carbonation?	Entries in this class must meet these requirements*	Additional information that must/may be submitted with entry
1-5	Apple	New World	Dry, M, MS, Sweet and MT	yes	yes	Defined as cider and subject to WET	
6-10	Apple	Traditional	Dry, M, MS, Sweet and MT	yes	yes	Defined as cider and subject to WET	May specify apple variety for single varietal cider
21-25	Pear	New World	Dry, M, MS, Sweet and MT	yes	yes	Defined as perry and subject to WET	
26-30	Pear	Traditional	Dry, M, MS, Sweet and MT	yes	yes	Defined as perry and subject to WET	May specify if traditional perry pears are used
31	Speciality	Experimental Cider or Perry		yes	yes	Defined as cider, perry or fruit wine. Can be subject to WET or Excise	Must specify % apple vs pear and all flavouring ingredients added May explain the ‘intention’ of the product
32	Speciality	Apple and Pear Blends		yes	yes	Blend of cider and perry and subject to WET	Must specify % apple vs pear
33	Speciality	Ciders with Fruit		yes	yes	Defined as cider, perry or fruit wine Can be subject to WET or Excise Added ethyl alcohol not permitted	Must specify all fruits and fruit juices added Must specify if WET or Excise taxed
34	Speciality	Lighter strength (1.15 – 3.5%)		yes	yes	Defined as cider and/or perry and subject to WET	
41	Intensified	Ice Cider or Perry		yes	no	Defined as fruit wine and subject to WET	
42	Intensified	Fortified Cider (Pommeau)		yes	no	Defined as fruit wine and subject to WET	May specify spirit used, ageing method and any other relevant information
43	Intensified	Distilled	White	no	no	Defined as a spirit in the <i>Excise Act 1901</i> and subject to Excise	May specify ageing method, length of ageing** and any other relevant information

44	Intensified	Distilled	Aged	no	no	Defined as a spirit in the <i>Excise Act 1901</i> and subject to Excise Apple/pear brandy must be matured by storage in wood for at least 2 years	May specify ageing method, length of ageing** in wood and any other relevant information
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* Definitions set out in Standard 2.7.3 of Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code and the *Excise Act 1901*. Note that under Standard 2.7.3, cider must contain no more than 25% pear and perry must contain no more than 25% apple.

** The age should be determined by the age of the youngest component of any blend.