

British Columbia Amateur Winemakers Association

2026 Entry Class Descriptions



Class A. Aperitif Sherry

This class is intended for dry and not very sweet sherry, Madeira and related wines. The very sweet wines of these types belong in the After Dinner Class.

Class B1. Aperitif

Wines in this class are designed as an aperitif to be drunk **before** a meal. They can be created to exhibit a strong stimulating effect on the salivary glands due to ingredients such as citrus or other strongly flavoured fruit as well as a diversity of aromatic and slightly bitter herbs. They can be fortified and may range from dry to sweet. They include Vermouth styles, Aperol, Campari, Dubonnet, Noilly Prat, Lillet, and similar commercially patented aperitifs.

Class B2. Digestif

Entries in this class are designed as an Digestif to be drunk **after** a meal. A digestif is an alcoholic beverage served after a meal with the intention of aiding digestion and extending the enjoyment of a meal. They can be bitter, herbal or sweet. They may range from dry to sweet. These beverages are typically stronger in alcohol content than apéritifs and are often enjoyed neat. Common types of digestifs include Amari, Pernod, Chartreuse, Calvados, Brandies, Limoncello, Orange cello, Slivovitz, Prugna, herbal liqueurs, Grand Marnier, Amaretto, and other commercially recognized liqueurs.

Class C1. Chardonnay

A white wine to be consumed with food. Wines must contain at least 85% Chardonnay.

Class C2. Aromatic White Vinifera

A dry to off-dry white wine (0% to 3% Residual Sugar) from Vitis vinifera grapes such as any of the muscats,, Bacchus, Ehrenfelser, Gewürztraminer, Malvasia, Optima, Ortega, Pearl of Csaba, Scheurebe, Schönburger, Siegerrebe, Symphony, Viognier, or White Riesling. Aromatic non-vinifera grape wines are acceptable in this class. Unblended varietals that

demonstrate a striking perfumed quality tend to be more successful than blends. Aromatic quality may reflect floral characters, fruit characters, or both. Preferred examples will usually have been coldfermented. The final decisions about which entries best represent the concept of 'aromatic' must be left to the judges. Wines in this class should be judged cool.

Class C4. Other Dry White

This class contains all other white wines, either varietals or blends, which do not fit the descriptions of Classes C1 (Chardonnay), C5 (White Pinot), or C2 (Aromatic White Vinifera). A white wine to be consumed with food. Varietal vinifera wines in this class must contain 85% or more of vinifera varieties such as Auxerrois, Chasselas, Chenin blanc, Colombard, Grüner Veltliner, Madeleine Angevine, Sauvignon blanc, Semillon, or Trebbiano. The remaining 15% may be any ingredient. Blends in this class must not fit the definitions of C1, C5, or C2. Wines that include interspecific hybrid grapes

are acceptable in this class and their ingredient percentages must be specified so their eligibility in the appropriate AWC class can be determined. Aromatic white grape varieties are acceptable in blends provided their impact is subdued. Non-grape dry white table wines belong in either this class or J1 (Country Table).

Class C5. Dry White Pinot

A white wine to be consumed with food. Varietal wines in the Dry White Pinot Family Class must contain at least 85% of any one of the following varieties: Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, white juice from Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier or Gamay Noir.

Class D. Rosé

Light, refreshing pink wines. In grape rosé wines, varietal characteristic is a definite plus. Strongly aromatic wines such as raspberry are generally unsuitable for use as table wines.

Class E1. Dry Bordeaux Style Red

Varietal (= single variety) wines in this class are those that contain at least 85% of any one of the following five varieties: Cabernet franc, Carmenere, Malbec, Merlot, or Petit Verdot. Note that any other grape variety or varieties may be used in the remaining 15%. Note that varietal Cabernet Sauvignon wines belong only in Class E7.

Blended wines in this class must contain at least 85% of any two or more of the following six varieties: Cabernet franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Carmenere, Malbec, Merlot, or Petit Verdot. Note that any other grape variety or varieties may be used in the remaining 15%. Note that Cabernet Sauvignon is permitted in this class as a component of a blend.

Theoretically, a wine with 84% Cabernet Sauvignon and 16% other Bordeaux varieties would belong in this class, but the best wines will usually be those in which no single variety monopolizes the blend and in which the several varieties have combined to produce elegant complexity.

Class E2. Dry Red Pinot

Wines in the Dry Red Pinot Class must contain at least 85% of one or more of the following varieties: Pinot noir, Pinot Meunier, or Gamay noir. Ideally, these wines exhibit fruity attributes and may be at their peak when young. The best mature examples demonstrate complexity and finesse while retaining substantial fruit.

Class E3. Non-Vinifera Red Grape

A red table wine made from grapes of which at least 95% are interspecific hybrid varieties. They include, as varietals or blends, Baco noir, Castel, Chambourcin, Chancellor, De Chaunac, Frontenac, Landal, Landot, Lucie Kuhlmann, Léon Millot, Maréchal Foch, Michurinetz, Sabrevois, and St. Croix among many others.

The remaining 5% may be any ingredient. As with any table wine, the sugar-acid balance must convey the impact of dry table wine style. Judges should have sufficient general familiarity with these wines that they recognize their positive attributes and realize that entries should not be penalized for characters that are typical of the varietal.

Class E4. Dry Red Zinfandel

Wines in this class must contain at least 85% Zinfandel.

Class E5. Rhone Style Dry Red

A dry red table wine made from at least 85% of one or more of the following grape varieties: Alicante Bouschet, Carignane, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Petite Sirah

(Durif), and/or Syrah (Shiraz). Blends may also contain any other variety permitted in Chateaufort-du-Pape. The remaining 15% may be any ingredient.

Class E6. Other Dry Red

This class contains all other red wines, either varietals or blends, that do not fit the definitions of Classes E1 (Dry Red Bordeaux), E2 (Dry Red Pinot), E4 (Dry Red Zinfandel), E7 Cabernet Sauvignon), E5, (Rhone Style Red) or E3 (Non-Vinifera Red Grape). So, dry red wines that contain less than 85% Bordeaux varieties, less than 85% Cabernet Sauvignon, less than 85% Pinot, less than 85% Zinfandel, less than 85% Rhone Style reds or less than 95% dry red non-vinifera grape belong in this Other Dry Red Class. Varietal vinifera wines in this class must contain 85% or more of vinifera varieties such as Lemberger, Barbera, Dornfelder, Nebbiolo, Ruby Cabernet, Sangiovese, Touriga Nacional, Tempranillo (Valdepeñas), or Zweigelt. The remaining 15% may be any other ingredient. Wines that include interspecific hybrid grapes are eligible for this class provided they are from less than 95% hybrid. Non-grape dry red table wines belong in either this class or J1 (Country Table).

Class E7. Dry Red Cabernet Sauvignon

Wines in this class must contain at least 85% Cabernet Sauvignon.

Class F. Dessert

Wines to be drunk with the dessert course of the meal. Should be sweet and luscious, but with sufficient acid to prevent them from being cloying. Alcohol must have been developed by fermentation of the wine. These are NOT fortified wines.

Wines such as ports, sweet sherries, Madeira types, and other wines that are fortified, baked or otherwise made using port, sherry, Madeira etc. processes do NOT belong in this class.

Class G. After Dinner

Wines in this class are for use after dinner, perhaps with nuts and cheese, or in place of a liqueur. Wines such as ports, sweet sherries, Madeiras, or other wines that are fortified, baked or otherwise made using port, sherry etc. type processes belong in this class. This does not however prevent a competitor from entering in this class an appropriate wine naturally fermented to high alcohol.

Class H. Sparkling

There are Sparkling wines made that are appropriate for all occasions. They can be drunk alone, or with virtually any food. Wines sparkled by the Champagne method have an unmistakable yeasty flavour which adds to their complexity. Those that have been carbonated tend to

exhibit fruitier characteristics. Sediment is unacceptable. Cider is included in this class.

Class I. Social Wine

A Social wine should be enjoyable without the accompaniment of food. Colour can fall into a wide range but it should be inviting. The wine should have an inviting fruity aroma. The wine should be neither dry nor excessively sweet. It should not be noticeably high in alcohol. In many types of wine a peak or peaks appear in the flavour spectrum - for example a White Table wine might have an acid peak; in the Aperitif class, a bitter peak is not out of place. There should be no such peaks in a Social wine. Good balance between sugar and acid is essential. A touch of "spritz" is permissible. This is a patio wine not a table wine and may be served alone or with light style foods (snacks).

Country Classes

A country wine is any wine made from at least 95% nongrape ingredients. **Some country wines are intentionally made in a style closely matching the description of one of the "functional" grape classes: A (Aperitif Sherry), B (Aperitif), F (Dessert), G (After Dinner), or H (Sparkling) and must be entered in those classes.** Others may fit the definitions of classes E6 (Other Dry Red), D (Rosé), C4 (Other Dry White), or I

(Social) and may be entered there or in Class J1 (Country Table) or J2 (Country Social), whichever seems most appropriate. The Country Wine Classes J1 and J2 are intended for those country wines which depend heavily on their non-grape origins for their interest and character and have been made in a functionally table or functionally social style. Still meads and melomels are appropriate for this class and should be entered in either J1 or J2 depending on sweetness.

Class J1: Country Table Wine

Any dry to medium dry (0-3% Residual Sugar) country wine intended as table wine. Balance is of great importance in determining a successful wine. Flavour may range from very delicate to very intense. A touch of "spritz" is acceptable, especially in lower alcohol or lighter flavoured wines.

Class J2. Country Social Wine

Any country wine intended to be appreciated on its own, rather than to accompany food. Country Social Wines are medium dry to medium sweet (3-8% Residual Sugar) and are not sweet enough to be dessert wines. Class J2 is intended primarily for wines which are outside the parameters of Class I (Social) because of their fruit characteristics and often, sweetness. Country Social Wines typically have one or more dramatic

"peaks" in their profile - an immediately recognizable intensity of fruit aroma and/or flavour, or noticeable acidity and freshness, or a hint of bitterness, or a higher alcohol level through fermentation than is suitable for Class I (Social). Astringency and/or bitterness and/or high acidity are not faults in themselves but must have been balanced by appropriate sweetness and/or flavour intensity and/or mouthfeel. A touch of spritz is acceptable, especially in lower alcohol or less intensely

Class P. Sparkling Cider

A sparkling beverage of 6 to 10% alcohol content, dry to medium sweetness, low to medium acidity, made from either or both apple juice (Cider), or pear juice (Perry) or from some combination of one or both of those juices with other fruit (non-grape) juice. The other juice must be less than 50% of the blend and the flavour of the other fruit should not dominate. The difficult to define, zesty character of traditional cider must be present and will be a direct reflection of the cidemaker's skill in selecting ingredients. Any form of carbonation acceptable in the Sparkling Class is also acceptable in the Sparkling Cider Class. Sparkle should be controlled and prolonged. Fine champagne-like bubbles trailing from the bottom of the glass are preferred. Cider may be disgorged or presented on the priming yeast. In the latter case the cider must pour clear to within 3 cm of the bottom of the bottle.