

Documentation and Competition as a Brewer



Taught By:

Brother Brian Crawford

of Woodside Priory

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Overview:

We have a large number of brewers in our Kingdom, but often there are few entries at brewing competitions. I have spoken to a number of brewers who express concerns about competing, many of them stemming from concerns over documentation and over the judging systems. This class will provide information that will hopefully alleviate those concerns and take some of the confusion out of documenting your brewing efforts and sharing them in competition.

Documentation:

Why Bother?:

- Allows for Consistency/Repeatability
- Can inspire unique recipes.
- Separates the SCA from other Home-brew clubs
- Worth 25 points in Atlantian competitions and 10 points for Inter-Kingdom Brewers Guild (IKBG) Competitions

How Much Documentation do I need?:

- Depends on the type of competition you intend to enter
- IKG only requires documenting your brewing process (NOT an A&S competition)
- Atlantian Brewers Guild competitions want documentation of process and documentation to show that the recipe is Authentic to Period (this IS an A&S Competition)
- Three to Four pages for Atlantian Competitions is usually sufficient
- If your documentation is longer consider adding a summary up front that hits the key points

Getting Started:

- Ideally document first, and then brew.
- Don't reinvent the wheel.
- Avoid plagiarism, cite everything.

Formatting:

Elements to Include:

- Ideally documentation includes all of the following:
 1. Copy of Period Recipe.
 2. Redaction of Recipe.
 3. Process used.
 - Times and amounts
 - Measurements taken (if any)
 4. How and why Process differed from period recipe.
 5. Lesson's learned.
 6. References.

- If period recipe was not used include the following:
 1. Copy of modern Recipe
 2. Description (with references) of how it fits into period style.
 3. Elements 3-6 from above.
- General Historical notes are nice, but not necessary.
 - Too much unrelated info is distracting

Structure:

- No hard and fast standards, but APA and MLA formats are good.
- Needs to be easy to understand and flow logically.
- References must be easy to follow.
- Generally formatting elements in the order stated above works well.

References:

- Use either footnotes or in-text citations.
- Include author, year of publication, title, publisher, and city of publication

Sources:

Types:

- Primary and Secondary sources.
- Period Recipes
 - Good starting point but often lack specifics.
- Descriptions of Process
 - Help fill in the blanks of Recipes
- Description of Context
 - Help with gaps and put in broader perspectives.

Using Sources:

- Always cite your source.
- Use direct quotes sparingly (recipes are an exception)
- Make sure information is directly relevant.
- Keep context in mind.

Internet Sources:

- Not all are bad, however some are problematic.
- Avoid Wikipedia and similar sites when better resources are available.
- Good source for finding primary sources.

Pitfalls to Avoid:

- Keep time and place of sources in mind.
- For secondary sources, check references.
- When drawing conclusions from sources:
 - Simplest explanation is best.
 - Don't assume period people were stupid/primitive

Competitions:

Why Compete?:

- It is a great way to get clear feedback on your brewing from people familiar with the brewing process.
- This is the primary way to get exposure as a member of the A&S community
- Competitions can provide motivation to “up your game” as a brewer.
- Winning doesn’t suck.

The Basics:

What you will need:

Bare Minimum:

- 1 bottle of each entry, with the container clearly labeled (for items in 12oz bottles such as beers, 2 is better)
- List of ingredients for each entry

Highly Encouraged:

- Each entry in a bottle of size and style appropriate to type (see presentation below).
- Documentation including, recipe, processes, and references (see above).

Competition Process:

Before:

- Details such as time, place, categories being judged, number of entries per person, etc. should be announced prior to the event.
- Have all necessary materials prepared in advance e.g. type documentation, prepare labels
- Taste test your entry before the competition.

During:

Sign In:

- Be sure to sign in ahead of the deadline, also make note if you need to fill out separate forms for each entry or if a blanket form is being used.
- If unsure what category an entry fits in (e.g. braggots) ask judges or place in category in which it will do best.

Judging:

- Judging time should be made known to you when you sign in.
- You may be asked to be present for judging to answer questions.
- Typically there are three judges, but there can be more.
- Judges will often collaborate to reach a consensus for a score rather than average three separate scores.

After:

- Be sure to pick up your entries and score sheets.
- If you've done well, the judges may ask if you'd like to have your entry offered to high table.

Etiquette:

- Courtesy is a pillar of the Society, always be polite, whether you are judge, entrant, or onlooker
- Please do not ask for samples of others entries during judging, this applies double if you aren't

- an entrant yourself. After judging often entries are shared, but this is at the discretion of the entrant who owns the bottle.
- If there are a large number of entries, please hold extensive questions to the end, often the judges have a deadline in order to report the results to court. Don't be surprised if they need to move quickly from one entry to another.

Scoring:

- Both the Atlantian Brewer's Guild and the IKBG uses a rubric to help ensure fairness in judging.
- Judge's personal preferences are set aside and entries judged on their own merit.
- Currently the Atlantian rubric has 9 categories that total to 100 possible points with a heavy emphasis on documentation and authenticity worth 10 and 15 points respectively.
- Currently the IKBG has three rubrics (one each for beer, wine/mead, and cordials). Each has 10 categories all worth 10 points for a total of 100. IKBG Rubrics break down components of flavor into multiple subcategories.
- Samples of Both Rubrics are at the back of this document.

Notes on Scoring by Category:

Documentation:

- Always include a minimum of an ingredients list for food safety reasons
- IKBG is only looking for details of your brewing process
- See above for details for Atlantian Competitions

Authenticity:

- IKBG does not have this category.
- Info for this often comes from documentation, without it judges will be hard pressed to give a good score.
- Don't give up on this even if using a modern recipe, citing sources showing period style can bring score up significantly.

Presentation:

- Bottling conventions for Atlantian and IKBG competitions:
 - Beer: Brown 12oz brown beer bottle with crown cap filled to ~1" below cap.
 - Wine/Mead: 750 ml clear wine bottle with cork filled to ~1" below cork.
 - Cordials: Same as wine/mead, or nice presentation bottle with cork.
- Proper bottle and fill aren't purely cosmetic, they insure proper preservation of the contents and proper carbonation.
- Period containers for presentation are great, need to be food grade.
- Labels are easy and can add the extra "wow" for a 10

Appearance:

- Covers how the beverage itself looks.
- Generally looking for good color, clarity, color consistent with style, lack of sediment
- May also cover type specific aspects of appearance, e.g. head

Aroma/Bouquet:

- Ideally, all ingredients used should be detectable in the aroma.
- Should be free of "funky" smells.
- IKBG breaks this into two categories for Cordials
- Should be typical of type (e.g. a stout should smell like a stout).
- Good documentation helps the judges know what to look for.

Alcohol Balance:

- Ideally, should be exemplary of the type.
- Shouldn't have a burn or overpower flavor elements
- Having specific gravity in the documentation is a big help.

Body/Sugar Balance:

- Ideally should be typical to type and should complement the taste.
- Judged using mouth fell and "legs"
- Certain types (cordials, desert wines) are expected to be thicker.

Taste/Flavor Profile:

- Ideally should be consistent with the style and be complex.
- All ingredients should be detectable in the flavor.
- Score is based on standards for style, not judge preferences.
- IKG breaks this into multiple categories that are specific to the type e.g. hop flavor and aroma for beers, tannins for wine/mead, etc.

Overall Impression:

- Judges have the most flexibility with this category
- Place to reward a beverage where all elements compliment or that has an extra "wow"
- Based largely on drink-ability and pleasantness.
- IKG lacks this category

For further information:

Digital copies of this hand out, hand outs from other classes I have taught, resource listings, and samples of my documentation can be found at my webpage: <http://www.haakonstead.org/brian.html>

Atlantian Brewing Links can be found at <http://moas.atlantia.sca.org/wsnlinks/> under the beverages, brewing, and vinting category.

Information on the IKG can be found at <http://greydragon.org/ikbg/index.html> and general brewing information from House Gray Dragon is at <http://greydragon.org/brewing/index.html>

An excellent SCA Brewing blog can be found at <http://mishabrews.blogspot.com/>

And of course friends of Woodside Priory can follow us on Facebook at Woodside Priory - Haakon Brewery

Judging Guidelines For Atlantian Brewers' Guild

Documentation:

- 10 pts – Ingredients, Recipe/Process, Citations & Historical Notes, Photocopy of Original Sources
- 9 pts – Ingredients, Recipe/Process, Citations & Historical Notes, No Photocopy of Original Sources
- 8 pts – Ingredients, Recipe/Process, Citations
- 5 pts – Ingredients, Recipe/Process
- 1 pt – Ingredients only
- 0 pts – Nothing

Authenticity

- 15 pts – Period recipe given, and followed exactly, liberties taken only where 'logical'
- 12 pts – Period recipe(s) given, modified extensively
- 8 pts – Modern recipe, evidence of period style presented with citations given
- 4 pts – Modern recipe, evidence of period style presented without citations given
- 0 pts – Recipe from a modern source, no historical relationship given

Presentation:

- 10 pts – Period container or extra 'wow' in presentation (label/bottle/etc)
- 9 pts – Appropriate bottle to type, appropriately sealed, proper fill for style
- 8 pts – Appropriate bottle/seal, fill incorrect (or Grolsch bottle)
- 5 pts – Inappropriate bottle or seal
- 2 pts – Completely modern apparatus (Keg)
- 0 pts – plastic jug with duct tape

Appearance:

- 10 max ...points should be deducted on a 1 to 3 point basis on varying aspects, such as: Color, Head Retention, Carbonation, Clarity, absence of 'floaters'
- 1 for a slight issue in that category, -2 for a major issue, -3 for completely wrong

Aroma/Bouquet:

- 10 pts – Wonderful bouquet to type, everything you expect, bonus aspects as well
- 9 pts – A plain bouquet. Nothing wrong, but nothing impressive either.
- 8 pts – Something 'off'; however, inability to detect exactly what
- 7 pts – One distinct off odor
- 4 pts – Two distinct off odors; lack of correct bouquet elements
- 1 pt – Multiple distinct off odors; no correct bouquet elements
- 0 pts – Completely rank

Alcohol Balance:

- 10 pts – Perfect to type
- 8 pts – Balance slightly off, hot or low
- 5 pts – Balance noticeably off, very hot, or not there at all
- 0 pts – Balance completely gone. To one, undesired, extreme

Body/Sugar Balance:

10 pts – Perfect to type and taste

8 pts – Slight imbalance, but not enough to adversely affect enjoyment of beverage

5 pts – Imbalanced to the point of affecting enjoyment

0 pts – Maple syrup or water consistency

Taste/Flavor Profile:

10 pts – Decently complex, no off flavors, flavors you expect, pleasant

9 pts – Nothing wrong, flavors you expect, but no complexity

8 pts – Something ‘slightly off’, but so small that you cannot place it

5 pts – A distinct off-flavor that is very noticeable

0 pts – Unable to be consumed

Overall Impression:

(NOTE: While these scores may be more flexible due to judges' discretion, this category should always be scored with the judge putting aside their own preferences in drink, and judging the drink independent of their own likes/dislikes)

15 pts – An amazing beverage, everything right, nothing wrong, fit for King/Queen

12 pts – A solid beverage, quite enjoyable, would ‘buy it if available’

8 pts – A decent beverage. Potable.

4 pts – Beverage needs work before it would be drunk

0 pts – Beverage is unable to be consumed