2027 Style Guidelines

New York State Craft Beer Competition presented by Ultimate Brew Service

1. American Lager

This category encompasses both traditional and modern versions of American Lager and American Light Lagers. Brewers should note the style of beer being entered and any additional information pertinent to the proper judging. Beers without a noted style and additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging.

Subcategories include: Light American Lager, Standard American Lager

2. Light Lagers – Pilsner

This category encompasses all traditional Pilsner beers brewed in the German or Czechs traditions. Brewers should note the style of lager entered in order to supply judges with appropriate information for evaluation. Beers without this additional information will be at a disadvantage during judging. American Pilsner, Italian Pilsner, Foeder-aged Pilsners should be entered elsewhere. Modern or contemporary interpretations of these styles should be entered elsewhere.

Subcategories include: German Pilsner, Czech Pale Lager

3. Light Lagers - Traditional

This category encompasses all light-colored lagers brewed in the German or Czechs traditions including Helles, Dortmunder, Kellerpils, Rauchbier, etc.… Unfiltered or "zwickel" versions are acceptable here. Brewers should note the style of lager entered in order to supply judges with appropriate information for evaluation. Beers without this additional information will be at a disadvantage during judging. Modern or contemporary interpretations of these styles should be entered elsewhere.

Subcategories include: Helles, Dortmunder Lager, Mexican Lager, Maibock, Rauchbier

4. Light Lagers – Modern

This category encompasses all light-colored lagers brewed outside the traditional German or Czech styles including, but not limited to Hoppy Lager, Foeder-aged lagers, Italian Pilsner, etc… Unfiltered or "zwickel" versions are acceptable here. Brewers should note the style of lager entered in order to supply judges with appropriate information for evaluation. Beers without this additional information will be at a disadvantage during judging.

Subcategories Include: Foeder Aged Lager, Italian Pilsner, Dry Hopped Lager, New Zealand Pilsner, West Coast Pilsner

5. Wheat Beer

Any beer brewed in a classic style featuring a significant amount of wheat may be entered in this category. This includes, but is not limited to: Belgian Wit, Hefeweizen, Dunkelweizen, and American Wheat. Berliner Weisse, Gose, and other sour wheat beers should be entered in another category. Unfiltered beers are allowed however the presence of yeast in the beer should not detract from the flavor profile. The use of some fruit and/or spice is permissible as it may be appropriate to the classic style however beers whose flavor profile is dominated by fruit or spice character should be entered in another category. For instance a witbier with orange peel and subtle spicing would be appropriate in this category, but a cherry vanilla hefeweizen should be entered in the Field Beer (non-sour) category.

Subcategories Include: American Wheat, Hefeweizen, Dunkelweizen, Belgian Wit

6. Cream Ale

This category covers any beer brewed in the Cream Ale style including traditional versions, pre-prohibition Cream Ales, and more modern interpretations of the style. Although called Cream "Ales," beers in this category may be fermented with either ale or lager yeast and may or may not include the use of adjuncts in the mash but the overall impression of the beer should be balanced and refreshing.

The Gold Medal winning beer in the Cream Ale category will receive entry to the Great American Beer Festival sponsored by the New York State Brewers Association.

7. Golden and Blonde Ale

This category encompasses all interpretations of light colored ales including (but not limited to) Kolsch, Golden, and Blonde Ale and may include more modern versions that have more hop character than is traditional in the areas of origin. Slight haze may be allowable depending on the style of beer. Winning beers should exhibit the malt, body, balance and fermentation profile of the intended style. Brewers should note the style of ale entered in order to supply judges with appropriate information for evaluation. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging.

Subcategories Include: Kolsch, Blonde Ale

8. Amber Lager

This category encompasses any amber lagers brewed in the German, Czech or American traditions and can include "modern" variants on these styles, which tend to have more hop character than is traditional in the areas of origin. Unfiltered or "zwickel" versions are acceptable here. Brewers should note the style of lager entered in order to supply judges with appropriate information for evaluation. Beers without this additional information will be at a disadvantage during judging.

Subcategories Include: Festbier, Bock, Vienna Lager, Marzen, California Common, Rauchbier

9. Amber and Red Ale

This category encompasses all interpretations of amber or red colored ales including (but not limited to) Irish Red, Scottish Ale, English Bitter, American Amber, Altbier, and may include more modern versions that have more hop character than is traditional in the classic style. Unfiltered versions are acceptable here although significant murkiness may be considered a fault. Winning beers should exhibit the malt, body, balance, and fermentation profile of the intended style. Brewers should note the style of ale entered in order to supply judges with appropriate information for evaluation. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging.

Subcategories Include: Scottish Ale, Irish Red, Altbier, Bitter/ESB, American Amber

10. Brown Ale

All brown ales should be entered in this category. Color should be light to dark brown and chill haze is allowable at low temperatures. Hop bitterness, flavor and aroma may range from low to medium. Malt character from roasted, toasted or caramelized malts may be low to medium-high but should be evident. Fruity esters are allowable provided they are in balance with the other flavors. Diacetyl, if present at all, should be very low. Any beers with substantial wood, sour, or wild/Brettanomyces/spontaneous character should be entered elsewhere. Any beer brewed with specialty ingredients, such as fruit or spices, should be entered elsewhere.

Subcategories Include: British Brown Ale, American Brown Ale

11. Dark Lager

This category encompasses any dark colored lagers brewed in the German, Czech or American traditions and can include "modern" variants on these styles, which tend to have more hop character than is traditional in the areas of origin. Unfiltered or "zwickel" versions are acceptable here. Brewers should note the style of lager entered in order to supply judges with appropriate information for evaluation. Beers without this additional information will be at a disadvantage during judging.

Subcategories Include: Dunkel, Schwarzbier, Czech Dark Lager, Rauchbier

12. Porters – Non-Imperial

All porters with the exception of Imperial Porter and Baltic Porter should be entered in this category. This includes Smoked Porter, Brown Porter, London Porter, and Robust Porter. Porters should be dark brown to black with low to medium hop bitterness. Malt character, particularly from roasted malts, should be medium to medium-high. Fruity esters are allowable provided they are in balance with the other flavors. Diacetyl, if present at all, should be very low. Any beers with substantial, barrel, wood, sour, or wild/Brettanomyces/spontaneous character should be entered elsewhere. Imperial or Baltic Porters should be entered in the Imperial Stout & Porter category. Any beer brewed with specialty ingredients, such as fruit or spices, should be entered elsewhere.

Subcategories Include: London Porter, Brown Porter, Smoked Porter, Robust Porter

13. Stout – Non-Imperial

All variations of stout with the exception of Imperial Stout should be entered in this category. This includes Classic Irish Dry Stout, Export Stout, American Stout, Oatmeal Stout, and Sweet/ Milk Stout. Stouts may be of varying abv levels however all should exhibit medium to high roasted malt character. Color should be black and body should be medium to full. Any beers with substantial, barrel, wood, sour, or wild/Brettanomyces/spontaneous character should be entered elsewhere. Imperial Stouts should be entered in the Imperial Stout category. Any beer brewed with specialty ingredients such as fruit or spices should be entered elsewhere. Brewers should note the style of stout entered in order to supply judges with appropriate information for evaluation. Beers without this additional information will be at a disadvantage during judging.

Subcategories Include: Irish Stout, Milk Stout, Oatmeal Stout, American Stout, Foreign Export Stout

14. Belgian Farmhouse

This is a broad category for all interpretations of farmhouse ales. This may include dark, light, imperial, or session versions of farmhouse ales. Beers in this category may have moderate Brettanoymces, bacterial/ sour, or spice character, though they are not required. The unifying thread for this category is farmhouse yeast: while non-Saccharomyces character may be present, expressive farmhouse yeast character is a requirement. Similarly, winning examples should finish dry to very dry. Heavily fruited, spiced, soured, or Bretted versions should be entered elsewhere, particularly if the "specialty" character is more dominant than the original farmhouse yeast character. Beers entered in this category may range from traditional DuPont-esque versions to experimental "Bretted imperial black saisons". As such, beers entered in this category may require substantial explanation from the brewer in order to be judged appropriately. Brewers should note process, ingredients and objectives in order to paint a full picture of the beer being judged. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging.

Subcategories Include: Grissette, Saison, Biere de Garde

15. Belgian Other

This category encompasses all Belgian-style beers that do not fall elsewhere in the style guidelines. Classic styles appropriate to this category include Abbey styles (dubbel, tripel, quad), as well as Belgian blonde and pale ales, Belgian IPA, Belgian-strong golden ales, and obscure styles such as Belgian biere de table. Belgian Farmhouse ales have their own dedicated category and should be entered there. Classifying Belgian-style beers can be difficult, but any beer that does not fit the mold of one of the Belgian classic styles should be entered elsewhere. Some of the above styles may allow for slight acidic, Brett, or spice character; however, any beers with substantial wood, sour, or wild/Brettanomyces character should be entered elsewhere. For judging purposes, please note the classic style on your entry form. Beers without this additional information will be at a disadvantage during judging. Beers will be grouped and judged by classic styles where possible until the medal round.

Subcategories Include: Pale Ale, Blonde, Dubbel, Tripel, Golden Strong, Quad

16. Pale Ale

This category encompasses all classic and contemporary styles of Pale Ale including American Pale Ale, British Pale Ale and more modern lower abv “golden” pale ales. Unfiltered versions are acceptable here. Winning entries should be hop forward but may include more classic pales that exhibit malt/hop balance and modern versions which are more hop focused. Unfiltered versions are acceptable here although significant murkiness may be considered a fault. No production notes are necessary for this category.

Subcategories Include: British Pale Ale, American Pale Ale

17. American IPA

Beers in this category include those brewed in the style of classic American IPA. Classic American IPA ranges in color from light golden to dark copper. Beers in this category exhibit clarity that are often bright but may exhibit some chill haze or slight hop haze; beers that are murky or opaque should be entered in Hazy IPA. However flavors and aromas of hops--described often as citrusy, piney, resinous, tropical, fruity, woody, sulfuric, and/or dank--are the signature elements of this beer, and are the most noticeable element of the flavor and aroma. The presence of yeast should not detract

from the overall flavor of the beer. The hop flavor and aroma should be intense, complex and harmonious. Diacetyl should not be present. Malt flavor and aroma is present and balanced, and serves as a secondary actor to hops. Beers above 7.5% abv should be entered in the American DIPA category. No production notes are necessary for this category.

18. Hazy Pale Ale

This category is intended for pale ales brewed in the recently popular New England or Hazy/Juicy style. Hazy Pale Ales range in color from light golden to dark copper. Beer clarity may range from light haze to murky. Hop flavors and aromas should dominate with mild to medium bitterness. Fruit forward hop character is common but not required. The hop flavor and aroma should be intense, complex and harmonious. Diacetyl should not be present. Malt flavor and aroma is present and balanced and serves as a secondary actor to hops and a high level of residual sweetness may be present. Any beer brewed with specialty ingredients, such as fruit or spices, should be entered elsewhere. Hazy Pale Ale is stylistically similar to Hazy IPA and it is at the discretion of the brewer to choose the proper category for their beer. No production notes are necessary for this category.

19. Hazy IPA

This category is intended for beers brewed in the New England or Hazy/Juicy IPA style. Hazy IPA ranges in color from light golden to dark copper. Beer clarity may range from light haze to murky. Hop flavors and aromas should dominate with mild to medium bitterness. Fruit forward hop character is common but not required. The hop flavor and aroma should be intense, complex and harmonious. Diacetyl should not be present. Malt flavor and aroma is present and balanced, and serves as a secondary actor to hops and a high level of residual sweetness is common. The use of lactose is permissible to enhance the body but should not overwhelm the flavor character of the beer. Any beer brewed with specialty ingredients, such as fruit or spices, should be entered elsewhere. Beers above 7.5% should be entered in the Hazy DIPA category. No production notes are necessary for this category.

20. American DIPA

This category encompasses hop-forward beers that are above 7.5% ABV. Classic Double IPA and stronger versions of the contemporary variations listed in the American IPA

category may be entered here. As with American IPA, the overall flavor of these beers should strongly favor hops with malt and yeast characters in balance. No production notes are necessary for this category.

21. Hazy DIPA

This category encompasses all Hazy hop-forward beers that are above 7.5% ABV. Hazy Double IPA and stronger versions of the contemporary variations listed in the Hazy IPA category may be entered here. As with Hazy IPA, the overall flavor of these beers should strongly favor hops with malt and yeast characters in balance. The use of lactose is permissible to enhance the body but should not overwhelm the flavor character of the beer. No production notes are necessary for this category.

22. Experimental IPA

This category includes all variations of IPA that would be considered stylistically independent. This may include, but is not limited to, Session IPA, Black IPA, Brett IPA, Brut IPA, fruited IPA, or "milkshake" IPAs. Winning entries should still exhibit the flavors of and aromas of hops common to IPA but may also include non-traditional malt profiles, yeast strains, abv levels, or added ingredients. However the overall impression should be of a beer that is a variation of IPA. Brewers should note any specialty ingredients or processes in order to supply judges with appropriate information for evaluation.

23. Field Beer – Non-Sour

This category includes any beer made with any fruit, vegetable, or nut where the added ingredient(s) is moderate to strong and is well pronounced and dominates the overall impression of the beer. When entering the beer, the brewer should note his/her goal in creating this beer. While citing a traditional base style is not required for judging, it does help give the judges some useful context, even if the beer does not adhere strictly to that base style. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging. The specialty ingredients used should be stated in the production notes. Brewers should avoid using descriptive words like puree, fresh, natural, organic, canned, etc. For example, Fresh Organic Peaches and Peach Puree would both be listed as just "Peach." Beers entered in this category should not exhibit any wild or sour character. Beers may include additional ingredients that compliment but do not overpower the expression of Fruit or Vegetable in the beer.

24. Kettle and Simple Sours (WITHOUT FRUIT!!!)

This category encompasses the currently popular sour beers being produced through the addition of Lactobacillus or other acid producing bacteria or yeast either in the Kettle, Fermenter, or added post-fermentation. **Beers with fruit, spice or other flavor additions should not be entered in this category and will be disqualified.** Beers in this category may be brewed in a traditional style such as Berliner Weisse or Gose, or may be modern non-traditional versions of sour containing high hop levels. Wood-aging is an acceptable component of beers in this category, but strong oak or barrel-related flavors should be secondary. Beers brewed with mixed cultures or Brett should be not be entered in this category**.** Enteric (fecal), butyric (vomit), or isovaleric (cheesy, rubbery) character is not appropriate as they are widely considered flaws. Beers in this category may beexhibit high levels of hop character however they should not detract from the overall sour beer profile. Beers in this category may require explanation of process and intent. Beers without this additional information will be at a disadvantage during judging.

Subcategories Include: Berliner Weisse, Gose

25. Wild & Sour and Barrel Aged Sours

This category encompasses a wide range of beers that have notable "wild" yeast character from the use of non-Saccharomyces yeast and bacteria. Beers in this category may be brewed in a traditional style such as Flanders Red or Lambic or may be brewed with traditional mixed culture fermentations, spontaneous fermentations, or blending. "Funky" notes of Brettanomyces or other non-traditional yeast may be present in high levels. Beers in this category may show elevated levels of acidity, due to the presence of bacteria. Acid levels in these beers may vary from very low to medium-high. This category may include beers with fruits, spices, or other flavorings. **Wood-aging is an acceptable component of beers in this category and wood and barrel flavor may be a dominant character in the beer.** Enteric (fecal), butyric (vomit), or isovaleric (cheesy, rubbery) character is not appropriate as they are widely considered flaws. If present, acetic character is balanced and sweet rather than harsh or sharp. Beers in this category may be exhibit high levels of hops however they should not detract from the overall sour beer profile. Beers entered in this category will require substantial explanation from the brewer in order to be judged appropriately. Brewers should note process,

ingredients and objectives in order to paint a full picture of the beer being judged. Beers without this additional information will be at a disadvantage during judging.

Subcategories Include: Lambic, Gueuze, Flanders Red, Oud Bruin

26. Field Beer (Sour)

This category includes any beer made with any fruit, vegetable, or nut where the added ingredient(s) is moderate to strong and is well pronounced and dominates the overall impression of the beer. When entering the beer, the brewer should note his/her goal in creating this beer. While citing a traditional base style is not required for judging, it does help give the judges some useful context, even if the beer does not adhere strictly to that base style. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging. The specialty ingredients used should be stated in the production notes. Brewers should avoid using descriptive words like puree, fresh, natural, organic, canned, etc. For example, Fresh Organic Peaches and Peach Puree would both be listed as just "Peach." Beers may include additional ingredients that compliment but do not overpower the expression of Fruit or Vegetable in the beer. Beers with tartness, acidity, Brett character, or barrel character are allowable in this category whether the perceived wild/sour character is achieved through the addition of wild yeast/microbes or "kettle souring."

27. Strong Ales & Lagers

This is a catch-all category for any strong (above 7.5% abv) beer not covered by other categories. This may include, but is not limited to, British and American Barleywines, Scotch Wee Heavy, Imperial Brown or Red Ale, Imperial Pilsner, and Dopplebock. Imperial Stouts, Imperial Porters, Double/Triple IPAs and Belgian strong ales should be entered elsewhere. Winning entries should exhibit the flavor profile and balance that would be appropriate to the base style of beer. Beers with noticeable barrel, fruit, or spice flavor should be entered elsewhere. Brewers should note the intended style of the beer, or the classic style that they have used as their bDidase (i.e. Imperial Pilsner or Imperial Red Ale). Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging.

Subcategories Include: Doppelbock, Strong/Old Ale, Scotch Ale, Barleywine, Weizenbock

28. Imperial Stouts & Porters

All classic Imperial Stouts, Imperial Porters and Baltic Porters should be entered in this category. This may include modern variations, but winning beers should exhibit the roasted malt, full body, higher abv, balance and fermentation profile appropriate to the style. Any beers with substantial barrel, coffee, or spice characters should be entered elsewhere.

Subcategories Include: Imperial Porter, Imperial Stout, Baltic Porter

29. Barrel Aged Non-Sour

This category includes all barrel-aged beers that are not sour or wild. Beers in this category should demonstrate a balance of flavor between the barrel(s) and base beer. Pleasant oxidative notes may enhance the character of these beers due to extended aging. Beers entered in this category will require explanation from the brewer in order to be judged appropriately. Brewers should note the base beer (or variation on a classic style) and the barrel(s) used in order to paint a full picture of the beer being judged. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging. Beers with light to moderate fruit, spice or other "culinary" character may be entered here, but if the intensity of the "adjunct" character is high, they would be better entered in another category.

30. Specialty Beer: Light & Amber Ales and Lagers

This category includes any beer made with Coffee, Chocolate, Spices or other Adjuncts where the added ingredient(s) is moderate to strong and is well pronounced and dominates the overall impression of the beer **and the base beer is light or amber colored**. When entering the beer, the brewer should note his/her goal in creating this beer. While citing a traditional base style is not required for judging, it does help give the judges some useful context, even if the beer does not adhere strictly to that base style. Bee/rs without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging. The specialty ingredients used should be stated in the production notes. Brewers should avoid using descriptive words like extract, powder, natural, organic, canned, etc. For example, organic coffee with chocolate extract and maple syrup would both be listed as just "coffee, chocolate, maple." Beers entered in this category should not exhibit any wild or sour character. Beers that include additional ingredients that compliment but not overpower the expression of Coffee, Chocolate, Spice or other Adjunct in the beer.

31. Specialty Beer: Stouts, Porters, & Lagers

This category includes any stout or porter made with Coffee, Chocolate, Spices or other Adjuncts where the added ingredient(s) is moderate to strong and is well pronounced and dominates the overall impression of the beer. When entering the beer, the brewer should note his/her goal in creating this beer. While citing a traditional base style is not required for judging, it does help give the judges some useful context, even if the beer does not adhere strictly to that base style. Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging. The specialty ingredients used should be stated in the production notes. Brewers should avoid using descriptive words like extract, powder, natural, organic, canned, etc. For example, organic coffee with chocolate extract and maple syrup would both be listed as just "coffee, chocolate, maple." Beers entered in this category should not exhibit any wild or sour character. Beers that include additional ingredients that compliment but not overpower the expression of Coffee, Chocolate, Spice or other Adjunct in the beer.

32. Experimental

This category is a catch-all to encompass any beers that do not fit elsewhere in the style guidelines. If an entering brewer is dissatisfied with the way another style is written, s/he can enter the beer here. Beers entered into this category should use some nontraditional ingredient, adjunct or process. This may include beers that strive for flavors outside the normal realm of beer (e.g. "cocktail beers" or savory beers), as well as beers that do not have an identifiable classic base style. Beers entered in this category will require substantial explanation from the brewer in order to be judged appropriately.

Beers without this additional information may be at a disadvantage during judging. Brewers should note process, ingredients, and objectives in order to paint a full picture of the beer being judged.

NYS Beer (as defined by the current 60% standard)

The medal winners will not be its own category, but instead, the top 3 highest scores chosen from submissions from all of the other categories will be the deciding factor. Please be sure to specify if your submission meets this years 60% NYS labeled definition when registering your beer.