



# **ASVO WINE SHOW PROJECT**

## **RECOMMENDATION IV**

### **WINE SHOW STANDARDS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In March 1986, an ASVO Wine Show Committee published the Australian Wine Show Model Standards, which covered class description, judge accreditation, judging conditions, judging systems and educational forum. Complementing this standards publication was a table of Australian Wine Show Class comparisons (circa 1986). It is understood that these documents were circulated to Australian wine shows and standards recommended. Some were adopted, but others proved unpopular with many shows.

The ASVO Wine Show Committee has undertaken a comprehensive review of these 1986 Standards in order to develop a more effective and up-to-date set of standards for use by wine shows.

#### **CURRENT PROBLEMS / PRACTICES**

- No comprehensive set of guidelines exists to assist wine shows organisers in their management of wine shows.
- Entry regulations vary from show to show and may not be relevant to current wine show practices.
- Class descriptions and volume requirements vary significantly between shows. Many allocated class volumes are unrealistically small.
- Increasing entry numbers, and in turn class sizes, contribute to judge fatigue.
- Responsibilities of wine show organisers, exhibitors and judges are not always clearly defined.
- Unfinished wines which were awarded medals may change significantly by the time the wines are released.
- Exhibitors enter unfinished wines into designated classes
- Exhibitors may enter a wine under any company or brand name

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To assist wine show organisers in the regulation and formation of guidelines for a wine show.
- To ensure that all wine show schedules reflect the current direction and requirements of the industry, while allowing individual show objectives.
- To promote consistency of regulations between Australian wine shows, whilst ensuring that each individual show maintains a form of uniqueness.
- To encourage judge training and succession planning and reduce judge fatigue.
- To ensure that all exhibitors correctly enter wines into specified classes and comply with all entry criteria.
- To improve the integrity of wine shows and discourage unfair exploitation by any exhibitor.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Class Description**

- Drop all references to subjective criteria to avoid confusion.

### **Definition of Style**

- Style definitions as an instruction to judges are not necessary. Decisions should be left to the discretion of experienced judges.
- However, if subjective style, rather than varietal classes are retained, eg. *Dry red - medium bodied, soft finish*, style definitions **may** be useful for exhibitors.

### **Classes Sizes (general)**

- A maximum of 60 wines should be judged in a single bracket.
- A maximum of 150 wines to be tasted per judge or associate judge per day
- It is recommended that wine shows use either of the two systems below for judging larger volume classes:-
  - i) Classes split into brackets of 60 wines, with the potential golds and perhaps high silvers compared by panel chairs before final awards are decided. (Adelaide method.)
  - ii) Initially split wines into brackets of 60 and judge to a) bronze and below and b) silver and above. The wines from the second group are pooled and re-judged for final gold and silver awards. (Melbourne method.)

## **Volumes**

- Volume needs to be realistic for a Consumer Class (eg 20,000L). Alternatively, allow entries from smaller and larger volume exhibitors alike and split class by volume not price point to allow smaller exhibitors to enter.
- For One Year Old Classes smaller producers (<500T) should have a smaller entry volume specified, but all wines, from small and large producers, should be judged together.
- Have different volume requirements for smaller and larger producers rather than just small volumes, as this could discriminate against smaller producers.
- In Museum Classes, volumes should be decided by each individual wine show.

## **Large Volume Class**

- Introduce a Higher Volume Class (Large Volume) under Consumer Class category to keep up with current consumer market trends.
- Minimum of 10,000 cases (90,000L)
- Varietal or blends
- Exhibits must be commercially available for sale in the consumer marketplace.
- Can include cask wines (bag-in-box)

## **Consumer (née Commercial) Class**

- “Consumer” Class should replace “Commercial” Class descriptor.
- Volume needs to be realistic for a Consumer Class (eg 20,000L). However, to allow entries from smaller as well as larger volume exhibitors, smaller exhibitors could have smaller volume requirements (eg 5,000L). Entries should be judged together. This method could replace Consumer Classes judged at price point.
- All entries in Consumer Classes should be judged together regardless of volume or price point.
- Trophy judging of Consumer Classes should then be split on price point (>\$20 or <\$20) and trophies awarded for best in respective price ranges.
- All exhibits must be commercially labeled and available for sale in the consumer marketplace at the time of submission of samples.
- Current vintage wines should be in a separate class.
- One year old and older wines should be in a separate class.

**Open (Premium) Class**

- What is Premium? What is Limited Release? These terms are meaningless in the current market. Classes should be named *Open*, without ‘Premium’ references.
- There is a case for Open Classes to be divided by pricepoint (RRP) or volume in the same way as Consumer Classes.

**Unwooded Chardonnay Classes**

- *Unwooded Chardonnay* should be current vintage (most recent vintage) only.
- *Unwooded Chardonnay* and *Chardonnay* should be separate classes in national shows.
- In small regional shows, unwooded Chardonnays could be permitted in Chardonnay classes but these should be identified to judges. Unwooded and other Chardonnays could be placed in groups within the same class. However, if entry numbers warrant it, a separate class for unwooded Chardonnay should be included.

**Mixed Varietal and Blended Classes**

- Non-varietal specific classes (eg *Other varieties and blends*) should be sorted into groups by variety, and then vintage, ensuring a judge can do justice to those varieties and styles which might otherwise suffer in mixed company, eg. Chenin blanc, Nebbiolo.

**Museum / Aged Wines**

- Must be five years or older at time of entry
- An entered wine does not necessarily have to be available in the market place.
- Museum wines should not awarded “general” trophies, but awarded a specific trophy for a museum class

**Individual Vineyards**

- Entry criteria need to be very specific as to what is an individual vineyard (IV).
- Entries should be judged with other exhibits in nominated classes.
- Gold medal winning wines claiming IV status should then be judged separately for a specific trophy.
- Results for IV wines should be highlighted when printing show results.

**Unfinished Wines**

- Unfinished wines, when accepted as entries, should be given only points. The WSC does not support the use of *Commended* etc awards.
- Finished and unfinished wines should remain in the same class and be presented in a normal line up for judging.
- Medals should be awarded only to “finished” wines.

**International Entries**

- Individual shows should determine if entry by overseas exhibitors is permitted

**Entry Criteria of Exhibits**

- Wines to be entered under brand name as opposed to parent company name.
- Rules of entry should be amended so that a medal can be claimed or advertised only for the name under which the wine was entered.
- All exhibits in consumer classes must be commercially labeled and available for sale in the consumer market place at time of submission of samples.
- Wines must strictly comply with all entry criteria.

**Randomisation of Exhibits**

- Wine shows should adopt some form of randomisation technique to prevent entries from appearing in a predictable sequence or those from a large company appearing in blocks within a class. Entries should be allocated a new “judging number”.
- Randomisation could either be computerised at time of entry, or by manual scrambling prior to the time of pouring, perhaps by moving a block of wines within the class.
- Wine show organising committees should announce to judges at the beginning of the show that randomisation will occur, at least on some (unspecified) classes.

**Points, Medals & Trophies**

- Trophies should be awarded only to gold medal winners. If the highest award in eligible classes is a silver medal, no trophy should be awarded.
- Point scoring in the catalogue of results should be standardised, being expressed out of 20 for consistency and to avoid exhibitor / consumer misunderstanding.

- Points for non medal winners should be given in the results catalogue, so that an exhibitor receives an indication of whether the exhibited wine was of acceptable quality or faulty.
- Museum wines should not be awarded “general” trophies, but awarded a specific trophy for museum classes.
- *Best Exhibitor* awards should be discontinued.

### **Responsibility of Wine Show Organisers and Societies**

- To recruit and train suitably qualified wine show judges and associates. Use the ASVO Wine Show Judge Register.
- 2 associate judges should be included on every judging panel
- Wines should be poured out of the sight of judges, for judging of both classes and trophies. All bottles should be removed from the vicinity of judges. A glimpse of a bottle finish or screwcap can compromise a judge's impartiality.
- Include brief judging comments on each class in the catalogue of results.
- Include a code of responsibility for exhibitors in relation to correct medal use. Wine Shows may refuse to accept exhibits or disqualify exhibitors who are demonstrated to have failed to comply with the Winemakers’ Federation of Australia Code of Practice.
- Minimise time lag between entry and sample submission.
- Fully fund all travel, accommodation and out-of-pocket expenses incurred by an invited wine show judge for the duration of the judging period and, if appropriate, for attendance at the exhibitors tasting.
- Seek recognition of the show for EU export purposes

### **Responsibility of an Exhibitor**

- An exhibitor should enter wines in a wine show strictly according to show and class entry regulations and in line with potential audit criteria.
- An exhibitor should use wine show results, medals & trophies fairly and in the spirit in which they were intended. Awarded medals can only be used on the blend that the entry represents at the time of judging. Medals & trophies should not be used for marketing purposes on subsequent re-blends of an awarded wine.
- Exhibitors are expected to comply with the Winemakers’ Federation of Australia (WFA) Code of Practice for the display of awards. The wine show may refuse to accept exhibits from those demonstrated to have failed to comply with this code.

**Responsibility of a Judge**

- All judges should assess wines impartially and provide an accurate score which they can justify.
- There should be no discussing the attributes of wines during tasting. Discussion of wines is only to occur after all wine assessment has been undertaken.
- Judges should declare any conflict of interest, discretely to the Chairman of Judges
- The panel chair or senior judge should be prepared to provide formal feedback to an exhibitor.
- All judges should be encouraged to attend the exhibitors tasting and provide feedback and comment to exhibitors.
- If a judge is not available to attend the exhibitors tasting, his/her comments should be made available in the written form, or the panel chairman briefed to act as a proxy.