

MEAD GUIDELINES (CATEGORIES M1-M4)

This introduction identifies common descriptions and characteristics for all types of mead and should be used as a reference and help with entering and professional judging of mead.

Main attributes

1. Sweetness

- a) Sweetness level of mead can be dry, semi-sweet, or sweet.
- B) Sweetness is nothing more than amount of residual sugar in the mead.
- C) Sweetness could be confused with fruitiness especially in a dry mead.
- D) Mead body is related to sweetness, but dry meads can still have some of body.
- E) Dry meads shouldn't be extremely dry.
- F) On sweet meads you should not taste a raw or unfermented honey.
- G) Sweetness is independent of strength.
- H) Levels of tannin could affect the perceived sweetness of mead (more tannin makes a mead seem drier)
- I) Acidity is related to the quality, balance and enjoyment of the sweetness.
- J) Minor differences from stated sweetness level should not be heavily penalized or considered a disqualifying fault.

2. Carbonation

- A) Mead could be still, petillant (pearly) or sparkling. Still meads don't necessarily need to be totally flat; they can have some very light and small bubbles. Petillant meads are lightly sparkling. Sparkling meads are not gushing but may have a character similar to Champagne or sparkling water.
- B) Minor differences from stated carbonation level should not be heavily penalized or considered a disqualifying fault

3. Strength

- A) We categorize meads as a hydromel, standard or sack strength.
- B) Strength refers to the alcohol content of the mead. Is also related to the amount of honey and fermentables used to make the mead.
- C) Stronger meads could have a more honey character and richer body. If stronger mead is well-made, level of alcohol should be difficult to detect.
- D) Minor differences from stated strength level should not be heavily penalized or considered a disqualifying fault.

4. Honey variety

- A) You need to remember that some honey has a strong and unusually varietal character (aroma, flavour, colour, acidity). If a honey is unusual, additional information should be provided to judges.
- B) Remember that wildflower honey (aka polyfloral) isn't a varietal honey. Official description for wildflower honey- "is derived from the nectar of numerous species of flowers or blossoms". Consider providing a description of the honey.

5. Special ingredients

- A) Mead styles are different, they may include fruit, spice, malt, vegetables etc.
- B) Judges need to know about the ingredients that provide a unique character in order to properly evaluate mead.
- C) Wood barrels, chips, cubes etc.. from oak or any other tree is not classified as additions. Oak/wood is acceptable in every mead style, but oak or other wood should be balanced and complimentary. Any additional wood should not be interpreted as a primary flavour.

Standard Description for Mead

When individual mead style descriptions use the phrase **Standard Description Applies**, please refer to the sections below that have the same names as one used in the style descriptions. These descriptions are incorporated by reference into every style where they are mentioned. Statements in the individual style descriptions build on, modify, or supersede the standard descriptions below.

1. Appearance:

Description applies to all mead's categories.

A) Clarity

May be good to brilliant. Crystal clear, reflective examples with a bright, distinct meniscus are best meads. Observable particles (even in an otherwise clear example) are undesirable.

B) Carbonation

Highly carbonated examples usually have a short-lasting head similar to Champagne or soda pop. Bubbles or head formation that may be observed and commented upon include:

- size (large or small),
- persistence (how long bubbles continue to form)
- quantity (how much bubbles are present),
- rate (how fast do they form)
- mousse (appearance or quality of foam stand).

In general, smaller bubbles indicates higher quality than larger bubbles.

C) Mead colour

Could be any. It is depending on honey variety and other ingredients (e.g., fruit, malts). Some styles have more specific colours.

D) Body

Stronger versions may show signs of body (e.g., legs, meniscus) but also higher carbonation levels meads can change this perception.

2. Aroma:

A) Depend of amount and intensity aroma of the used honey.

B) Stronger or sweeter meads could have a stronger honey aroma than drier or weaker versions.

C) Different varieties of honey have different intensities and characters

D) If honey varieties are declared, the varietal character of the honey should be apparent, even if subtle.

E) The aromatics may include fruity, floral, or spiced notes.

F) The bouquet (rich, complex aromatics arising from the combination of ingredients, fermentation and aging). The bouquet of mead should be pleasant and clean from fermentation character. Multi-faceted bouquet, sometimes known as a complexity, is always a positive attribute. The harmony and balance of the aroma and bouquet should be pleasant and enticing.

G) Fresh aromatics being preferred over dirty, muddled, yeasty, or sulfuric notes.

H) Phenolic aromatics should not be present.

I) Harsh or chemical aromatics should not be present.

J) Oxidation is a big detraction in most mead, and most frequently appears as a strong sherry-like or light molasses-like character. But subtle, sherry-like oxidation character can add complexity in some meads.

K) Strong alcohol aromatics, hot, solvent or irritating overtones are not

acceptable.

3. Flavour:

- A)** Sweetness and strength of the mead are depending of intensity and amount of the honey flavour. Stronger, sweeter meads will have a stronger honey flavour.
- B)** Different varieties of honey have different intensities and characters.
- C)** If honey varieties are declared in mead, the character of the that honey should be apparent, even if subtle.
- D)** The residual sweetness level depending of the sweetness of the mead. The residual sweetness should never be syrupy, cloying or seem like unfermented honey.
 - *dry meads will have no residual sugar,*
 - *sweet meads will have noticeable to prominent sweetness,*
 - *semi-sweet meads will have a balanced sweetness.*
- E)** Any additives like acid or tannin should lend balance to the overall character of the mead but not be excessively tart or astringent.
- F)** Tannin can make a mead seem drier than the residual sugar levels really is.
- G)** Artificial, chemical, harsh, phenolic or bitter flavours are faults.
- H)** Longer finish is generally most desirable.
- I)** A complexity, recognised also as a multi-faceted flavour, is a positive attribute.
- J)** Yeast or fermentation characteristics may be none to noticeable. Ester, fresh and clean flavours are most indicated.
- K)** If flavours of alcohol are present, they should be not hot and harsh.
- L)** Very light oxidation may be present, depending on age and style (e.g.: polish style mead), but molasses, sherry-like or papery character should not be there.
- M)** All flavours tend to become more subtle over time, and can deteriorate with extended aging.

4. Mouthfeel

- A)** Can be affect by sweetness, strength and carbonation levels and special ingredients.
- B)** Elegant wine-like character is perfect example for well-made meads.
- C)** The body could be anything from medium-light to medium-full range.
- D)** Body generally increases with strength and sweetness. Stronger and sweeter meads generally have fuller body and lower gravity. Drier meads can sometimes be quite light.
- E)** Overwhelmingly cloying sweetness (even in sweet meads) shouldn't be describe as a sensation of body.
- F)** If body is very thin or watery is likewise undesirable.
- G)** Some natural acidity is often present (particularly in fruit-based meads).
- H)** Low levels of astringency could be sometimes present (either from specific fruit or spices or from tea, chemical additives or oak aging).
- I)** Tannin and acidity (sometimes carbonation) helping to balance the overall honey, sweetness and alcohol presentation.
- J)** A warming alcohol present will usually increase with strength, but extended aging can smooth this sensation

5. Overall Impression

- A)** Well-made examples will have an enjoyable balance of honey flavours, sweetness, acidity, tannins, alcohol, special ingredients.
- B)** Mead should be well balance on every aspect. The proper balance of sweetness, acidity, alcohol, and honey character is the essential final measure of any mead.

6. Ingredients:

Description applies to all mead's categories.

- A)** Mead is made primarily from honey, water and yeast.
- B)** Adjustments of acidity and/or tannin can be made with citrus fruits, tea, or chemicals. These additives never should be dominant in flavour or aroma.
- C)** Yeast nutrients may be used but never should be detected.
- D)** Aging in oak or different wood is allowed in any category as a subtle to noticeable enhancement. If aroma and/or flavour of used wood are strong the mead should be classified as an experimental.

7. Complexity

- A)** It's an element that is present in all meads that are considered great, or of high quality.
- B)** Good complexity is the perfect combination of richness and deep flavour with intensity, balance, harmony and finesse.
- C)** Is the most subjective descriptor among the terms used to describe mead.
- D)** The more positive comments about variety of attributes made for a mead means that this mead is more complex.
- E)** Complex apply to aromas and flavours

8. Vital Statistics:

A)

Hydromel/Session:

OG 1.035 – 1.080

ABV: 3.5 – 7.5%

Standard:

OG 1.080 – 1.120

ABV: 7.5 – 14.0%

Sack:

OG 1.120 – 1.170

ABV 14.0 – 18.0%

B) Sweetness level is depending of finally gravity(FG)

dry: 0.990 – 1.010

semi-sweet: 1.010 – 1.025

sweet: 1.025 – 1.050

Note that the perception of sweetness is a function of the percentage of residual sugar, so don't rely only on FG to determine sweetness level. Consider the OG, strength, tannin levels, and to a lesser extent acidity, in assessing sweetness.

C) IBU: is use only in braggots.

D) SRM: mead can have any colour

Competition Entry Instructions

1. Entrants MUST specify:

A) carbonation level

- still
- petillant or lightly carbonated
- sparkling or highly carbonated

B) strength level

- session mead (very light usually under 7.5%)
- hydromel or light mead
- standard mead
- sack or strong mead

C) sweetness level

- dry
- semi-sweet or medium
- sweet

Small differences between declared description and stated levels should not be heavily penalized or be considered a disqualifying fault.

2. Optional information provided by entrants

A) honey varieties used, as well as the source and season of the honey. If honey varieties are declared, judges will look for the varietal character of the honey.

B) If a mead is oak-aged (or other wood-aged) and the oak/wood character is noticeable, the oaking/wood can be specified. Judges should expect to detect oak/wood, but not as a primary flavour.

C) additional information, particularly in categories other than traditional mead. For example, declaring specific fruit, spices, or special characteristics.

D) if an obscure or unusual ingredient or method is used that also should be provided to judges

M1. TRADITIONAL MEAD

For standard mead characteristics and detailed descriptions look to the MJP Mead Guidelines

Remember judging meads from dry to sweet is recommended as the primary ordering, with strength being the secondary ordering criteria.

Traditional Meads should have feature the character of a blended honey or a blend of honeys.

Simple description of tradition meads ingredients is water + honey+ yeast.

Varietal meads feature the distinctive character of certain honeys. Show meads feature no additives, but this distinction is usually not obvious to judges.

M1A. Dry Mead

1. Overall Impression:

Balance, body, finish and flavour intensity are very similar to a dry white wine, with a pleasant mixture of subtle honey character, soft fruity esters, and clean alcohol.

2. Aroma:

A) Honey aroma may be subtle, although not always identifiable.

B) Sweetness or significant honey aromatics should not be expected.

C) If a honey variety is declared, the variety should be distinctive. Remember different types of honey have different intensities and characters.

3. Appearance:

Standard description applies.

4. Flavour:

A) Honey character could be subtle but not necessarily recognizable. May feature subtle to noticeable varietal character if a varietal honey is declared (different varieties have different intensities).

B) Residual sweetness levels are minimal to none. Dry finish. May have more noticeable acidity due to low sweetness levels.

C) Sulfuric, harsh or yeasty fermentation characteristics are unacceptable.

5. Mouthfeel:

Standard description applies.

Body shouldn't be watery, but it could be medium to light. Stronger meads can have a fuller body than lighter. Sensations of body should not be accompanied by noticeable residual sweetness.

6. Ingredients:

Standard description applies.

7. Complexity:

Standard description of traditional mead applies.

M1B. Semi-Sweet Mead

1. Overall Impression:

Balance, body, finish and flavour intensity are very similar to a medium or semi-sweet white wine, with a pleasant mixture of honey character, light sweetness, soft fruity esters and clean alcohol.

2. Aroma:

Honey aroma should be noticeable and can have a light sweetness that may express the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey. Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

3. Appearance:

Standard description applies.

4. Flavour:

- A)** Subtle to moderate honey character and may feature subtle to noticeable varietal character if a varietal honey is declared .
- B)** Residual sweetness levels are subtle to moderate. Medium-dry to lightly sweet finish.
- C)** Tannin levels may make a sweet mead seem medium-dry.
- D)** Sulfuric, harsh or yeasty fermentation characteristics are not acceptable.
- E)** Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

5. Mouthfeel:

Body should be medium-light to medium-full. Stronger meads usually have a fuller body. Sensations of body should not be accompanied by a residual sweetness that is higher than moderate.

6. Ingredients:

Standard description for traditional mead applies.

7. Complexity:

Standard description traditional mead applies.

M1C. Sweet Mead

1. Overall Impression:

Similar in balance, body, finish and flavour intensity to a well-made dessert wine, but with a pleasant mixture of honey character, residual sweetness, soft fruity esters and clean alcohol.

2. Aroma:

Honey aroma should dominate and is often moderately to strongly sweet and usually expresses the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey.

Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

3. Appearance:

Standard description applies.

4. Flavour:

- A)** Moderate to significant honey character and may feature moderate to prominent varietal character if a varietal honey is declared (different varieties have different intensities).
- B)** Residual sweetness levels are moderate to high. Sweet and full (but not cloying) finish. Balanced acidity and/or tannin helps keep the sweetness agreeable to the palate without being overwhelming.
- C)** Sulfuric, harsh or yeasty fermentation characteristics are undesirable.
- D)** *Standard description applies*

5. Mouthfeel:

Standard description applies, although the body is generally medium-full to full. Note that stronger meads will have a fuller body. Many examples will seem like a dessert wine. Sensations of body should not be accompanied by cloying, raw (unfermented) residual sweetness.

6. Ingredients:

Standard description mead applies.

7. Complexity:

Standard description applies.

M2. FRUIT MEAD/Melomel

A mead made with fruit. This type is showing more entry categories than actual

styles. Names for certain types of melomels are based on the variety of fruit used.

To avoid the confusion MJP follows BJCP selected different names for the category and subcategories .

See the Mead Guidelines for detailed descriptions of standard mead characteristics, an explanation of standard terms, and entering instructions.

Fruit meads could be dry, medium and sweet.

For description of various sweetness level see description category M1.

M2A. Cyser

A Cyser is a melomel made with apples/generally cider.

1. Overall Impression:

A) Should be an appealing blend of the fruit and honey character but not necessarily an even balance.

B) In Cyser mead the fruit is distinctive and well-incorporated into the honey-sweet-acid-tannin-alcohol balance of the mead. Dry versions could taste like many fine white wines. Strong versions usually have the taste and aroma similar to Calvados (apple brandy from northern France).

C) Good balance between tannin and sweetness is desired, though very dry and very sweet examples do exist.

2. Aroma:

A) Depending on the sweetness and strength. Dry and/or hydromel versions will tend to have lower aromatics than sweet one.

B) The apple/cider character should be clean and distinctive; it can express a range of apple-based character ranging from a subtle fruitiness to a single varietal apple character (if declared) to a complex blend of apple aromatics.

C) Some spicy or earthy notes may be present, as may a slightly sulfuric character.

D) The honey aroma always should be noticeable. Honey aroma could have a light to significant sweetness that may express the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey.

E) The bouquet should show a pleasant fermentation character, with clean and fresh aromatics being preferred. Stronger and/or sweeter versions will have higher alcohol and sweetness in the nose.

F) Slight spicy phenolics from certain apple varieties are acceptable, as is a light diacetyl character from malolactic fermentation (both are optional).

G) *Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.*

3. Appearance:

Standard description applies, with except regarding to colour. Colour may range from pale straw to deep golden amber (most are yellow to gold) depending on the variety of honey and blend of apples or ciders used.

4. Flavour:

A) The apple and honey flavour intensity may vary from none to high.

B) The residual sweetness may vary from none to high. The finish may range from dry to sweet, depending on what sweetness level has been declared (dry to sweet) and strength level has been declared (hydromel to sack).

C) Natural acidity and tannin in apples may give some tartness and astringency to balance the sweetness, honey flavour and alcohol.

D) Tannin levels may make a cyser seem drier than the residual sugar levels might suggest.

E) May have a subtle to strong honey character and may feature noticeable to prominent varietal character if a varietal honey is declared (different varieties have different intensities).

F) Slight spicy phenolics from certain apple varieties are acceptable, as are a light diacetyl character from malolactic fermentation and a slight sulfuric character (all are optional).

G) *Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.*

5. Mouthfeel:

Standard description applies. Often wine-like. Very often natural acidity is present (from the apples). That helps balance the overall impression. Some apples can provide natural astringency, but this character should not be excessive.

6. Ingredients:

Standard description applies. Traditionally, cyser is made from honey, water and apple juice (where apple juice is at least 30% of additional liquid). That particular percentage of apple level is not necessary.

7. Complexity:

Standard description applies.

8. Entry Instructions:

See Introduction to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements.

Entrants MAY specify the varieties of apple used; if specified, a varietal character will be expected. Products with a relatively low proportion of honey are better entered as a Specialty Cider. A spiced cyser should be entered as a Fruit and Spice Mead. A cyser with other fruit should be entered as a Melomel. A cyser with additional ingredients should be entered as an Experimental Mead.

M2B. Pyment

A Pyment is a melomel made with grapes juice. Colour of pyments can be red, white, or blush, just like colour of wines.

1. Overall Impression:

A) In well-made pyments, the grape and honey are well incorporated into the honey-sweet-acid-tannin-alcohol balance of the mead.

B) White and red versions can be quite different and the overall impression should be characteristic of the type of grapes used and suggestive of a similar variety of wine.

C) There should be an appealing blend of the fruit and honey character but not necessarily an even balance. Generally, a good tannin-sweetness balance is what you should expect from good pyment.

D) This style could vary from very dry to very sweet.

2. Aroma:

A) Is depending on the sweetness and strength, a subtle to distinctly identifiable honey and grape/wine character. Drier versions will tend to have lower aromatics than sweet versions.

B) The grape/wine character should be clean and distinctive; it can express a range of grape-based character ranging from a subtle fruitiness to a single varietal grape character (if declared) to a complex blend of grape or wine aromatics.

- C)** Some complex, spicy, grassy or earthy notes may be present (as in wine).
- D)** The honey aroma should be noticeable and can have a light to significant sweetness that may express the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey.
- E)** The bouquet should show a pleasant fermentation character with clean and fresh aromatics being preferred.
- F)** Stronger and/or sweeter versions will have higher alcohol and sweetness in the nose.
- G)** Slight spicy phenolics from certain red grape varieties are acceptable, as is a light diacetyl character from malolactic fermentation in certain white grape varieties (both are optional).
- H)** Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

3. Appearance:

Standard description applies, except with regard of colours. Colours may range from pale straw to deep purple-red, depending on the variety of grapes and honey used. The colour should be characteristic of the variety or type of grape used, although white grape varieties may also take on colour derived from the honey variety.

4. Flavour:

- A)** The grape/wine and honey flavour intensity may vary from subtle to high
- B)** Residual sweetness may vary from none to high; and the finish may range from dry to sweet, depending on what sweetness level has been declared (dry to sweet) and strength level has been declared (hydromel to sack).
- C)** Acidity and tannin in grapes may give some tartness and astringency to balance the sweetness, honey flavour and alcohol.
- D)** May have a subtle to strong honey character and may feature noticeable to prominent varietal character if a varietal honey is declared.
- E)** Depending on the grape variety, some fruity, spicy, grassy, buttery, earthy, mineral, and/or floral flavours may be present.
- F)** Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

5. Mouthfeel:

Standard description applies. Some natural acidity is usually present (from grapes) and helps balance the overall impression. Grape tannin and/or grape skins can add body as well as some astringency, although this character should not be excessive. Use of oak can also add this character. Longer aging can smooth out tannin-based astringency.

6. Ingredients:

Standard description applies. A pyment is a mead made with the addition of grape juices or grapes.

7. Complexity:

Standard description applies.

8. Entry Instructions:

See Introduction to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements.

Entrants MAY specify the varieties of grape used; if specified, a varietal character will be expected. A spiced pyment (hippocras) should be entered as a Fruit and Spice Mead. A pyment made with other fruit should be entered as a Melomel. A pyment with other ingredients should be entered as an Experimental Mead.

M2C. Berry Mead

A Berry Mead is category for melomels made with berries, such as:

- blackberries
- elderberries
- marionberries
- raspberries
- and many more
- blueberries
- huckleberries
- mulberries
- currants (black, red, and white)
- cranberries
- lingonberries
- strawberries

Combinations of berries can be entered here.

More culinary than botanical definition of berry it's used here. To make easier we can said any fruit with 'berry' in the name would qualify to that category.

Berries can have seeds, but do not have stones/pits; some are aggregates of drupelets.

1. Overall Impression:

In well-made examples of the style, the fruit is both distinctive and well-incorporated into the honey-sweet-acid-tannin-alcohol balance of the mead. Different types of berries can result in widely different characteristics.

2. Aroma:

A) Depending on the sweetness and strength, a subtle to distinctly identifiable honey and fruit character (dry and/or hydromel versions will tend to have lower aromatics than sweet and/or sack versions). The fruit character should display distinctive aromatics associated with particular berry. Remember some fruit (e.g., raspberries) have stronger aromas and are more distinctive than others (e.g., blueberries, strawberries) — allow for a range of fruit character and intensity from subtle to aggressive. In a blended berry mead, not all fruit may be individually identifiable or of equal intensity.

B) The fruit character should be pleasant and supportive.

C) The honey aroma should be noticeable and can have a light to significant sweetness that may express the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey (different varieties have different intensities and characters).

D) The artificial, raw, and/or inappropriately overpowering (considering the character of the fruit) shouldn't be noticeable.

E) The bouquet- *Standard description applies.*

3. Appearance:

Standard description applies, with exception to colour. Colour may take on a very wide range, depending on the variety of fruit and/or honey used.

4. Flavour:

- A)** The fruit and honey flavour intensity may vary from subtle to high; the residual sweetness may vary from none to high; and the finish may range from dry to sweet, depending on what sweetness level has been declared (dry to sweet) and strength level has been declared (hydromel to sack).
- B)** The natural acidity and tannin levels from fruit and fruit skins will balance with sweetness, honey flavour, and alcohol. This character is expected to be present in that mead. Tannin levels may make some meads seem drier than the residual sweetness might suggest.
- C)** A berry mead may have a subtle to strong honey character and may feature noticeable to prominent varietal character if a varietal honey is declared (different varieties have different intensities). The distinctive flavour character associated with the particular fruit(s) should be noticeable and may range in intensity from subtle to aggressive.
- D)** The balance of fruit with the underlying mead is vital, and the fruit character should not be artificial, raw (unfermented), and/or inappropriately overpowering.
- E)** In a blended berry mead, not all fruit may be individually identifiable or of equal intensity.
- F)** Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

5. Mouthfeel:

- A)** Standard description applies. Most will be like wine. Some natural acidity and/or tannin are sometimes present (from certain fruit and/or fruit skin) and helps balance the overall impression.
- B)** Fruit tannin can add body as well as some astringency.
- C)** The acidity and tannin levels should be somewhat reflective of the fruit used.

6. Ingredients:

- A)** Standard description applies.
- B)** A berry mead is a mead made with the addition of other berries or berry juices, including a blend of berries.
- C)** There should be an appealing blend of the fruit and honey character but not necessarily an even balance.
- D)** Good tannin-sweetness balance is desired, though very dry and very sweet examples do exist.

7. Complexity:

Standard description applies.

8. Entry Instructions:

See Introduction to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements.

Entrants MAY specify honey varieties. Entrants MUST specify the varieties of berry/berries used.

A mead made with both berries and non-berry fruit (including apples and grapes) should be entered as a Melomel.

A berry mead that is spiced should be entered as a Fruit and Spice Mead. A berry mead containing other ingredients should be entered as an Experimental Mead.

M2D. Stone Fruit Mead

The fruit with a single large pit or stone is called stone fruit. We are using culinary, not botanical, definition of stone fruit here, such as:

- cherries
- plums
- peaches
- apricots
- mangoes.

Combinations of stone fruit can be entered here.

1. Overall Impression:

In well-made examples of the style, the fruit is both distinctive and well-incorporated into the honeysweet-acid-tannin-alcohol balance of the mead. Different types of fruit can result in widely different characteristics.

2. Aroma:

A) Depending on the sweetness and strength, a subtle to distinctly identifiable honey and fruit character (dry and/or hydromel versions will tend to have lower aromatics than sweet and/or sack versions). The fruit character should display distinctive aromatics associated with particular stone fruit. Remember some fruit (e.g., tart cherries) have stronger aromas and are more distinctive than others (e.g., peaches) — allow for a range of fruit character and intensity from subtle to aggressive. In a stone fruits mead made from few different stone fruits, not all fruit may be individually identifiable or of equal intensity.

B) The fruit character should be pleasant and supportive.

C) The honey aroma should be noticeable and can have a light to significant sweetness that may express the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey (different varieties have different intensities and characters).

D) Artificial, raw, and/or inappropriately overpowering (considering the character of the fruit) shouldn't be noticeable.

E) The bouquet- *Standard description applies.*

3. Appearance:

Standard description applies, with exception of colour. Colour may take on a very wide range, depending on the variety of fruit and/or honey used.

4. Flavour:

A) The fruit and honey flavour intensity may vary from subtle to high; the residual sweetness may vary from none to high; and the finish may range from dry to sweet, depending on what sweetness level has been declared (dry to sweet) and strength level has been declared (hydromel to sack).

B) The natural acidity and tannin levels from fruit and fruit skins will balance with sweetness, honey flavour, and alcohol, and this character is expected to be present in that mead. Tannin levels may make some meads seem drier than the residual sweetness might suggest.

C) A stone fruit mead may have a subtle to strong honey character and may feature noticeable to prominent varietal character if a varietal honey is declared

(different varieties have different intensities). The distinctive flavour character associated with the particular fruit(s) should be noticeable and may range in intensity from subtle to aggressive.

D) The balance of fruit with the underlying mead is vital and the fruit character should not be artificial, raw (unfermented), and/or inappropriately overpowering.

E) In a blended stone fruit mead, not all fruit may be individually identifiable or of equal intensity.

F) Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

5. Mouthfeel:

A) Standard description applies. Most will be like wine. Some natural acidity and/or tannin are sometimes present (from certain fruit and/or fruit skin) and helps balance the overall impression.

B) Fruit tannin can add body as well as some astringency.

C) The acidity and tannin levels should be somewhat reflective of the fruit used.

6. Ingredients:

A) Standard description applies.

B) A stone fruit mead is a mead made with the addition of stone fruit or juices from them, including a blend of stone fruits.

C) There should be an appealing blend of the fruit and honey character but not necessarily an even balance.

D) Good tannin-sweetness balance is desired, though very dry and very sweet examples do exist.

7. Complexity:

Standard description applies.

8. Entry Instructions:

See Introduction to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements.

Entrants MAY specify honey varieties. Entrants MUST specify the varieties of stone fruit/fruits used.

A mead made with both stone fruit and non-stone fruit (including apples and grapes) should be entered as a Melomel.

A stone fruit mead that is spiced should be entered as a Fruit and Spice Mead. A stone fruit mead containing other ingredients should be entered as an Experimental Mead.

M2E. Other fruit

This subcategory sometimes is called as a melomel.

The "other fruit" subcategory is for fruit meads made with any fruit not associated with any other fruit mead subcategory, or with a combination of fruits from multiple fruit mead subcategories. The culinary, not botanical, definition of fruit is used here.

For example:

- citrus fruit
- pears
- pomegranates
- bananas
- and most of other tropical fruit
- dried fruits (dates, prunes, raisins, etc.)
- figs
- prickly pear
- pineapples

1. Overall Impression:

- A)** The fruit is both distinctive and well-incorporated into the honey-sweet-acid-tannin-alcohol balance of the mead.
- B)** This style could vary from very dry to very sweet
- C)** *Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.*

2. Aroma:

- A)** Depending on the sweetness and strength, a subtle to distinctly identifiable honey and fruit character (dry and/or hydromel versions will tend to have lower aromatics than sweet and/or sack versions).
- B)** The fruit character should display distinctive aromatics associated with particular fruit/fruits. Some fruit have stronger aromas and are more distinctive than others — allow for a range of fruit character and intensity from subtle to aggressive.
- C)** The fruit character should be pleasant and supportive, not artificial, raw (unfermented), and/or inappropriately overpowering (considering the character of the fruit).
- D)** If mead is made from a blended fruit, not all the fruits may be of equal intensity.
- E)** The honey aroma should be noticeable and can have a light to significant sweetness that may express the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey.
- F)** The bouquet - standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

3. Appearance:

Standard description applies, with exception of the colour. Colour is depending on the variety of fruit and/or honey used.

4. Flavour:

- A)** Standard description applies.
- B)** The natural acidity and tannin levels from fruit and fruit skins is expected to be present in the mead, although in balance with sweetness, honey flavour, and alcohol
- C)** The distinctive flavour character associated with the particular fruit(s) should be noticeable and may range in intensity from subtle to aggressive.
- D)** In a melomel made with a combination of fruits, not all the fruits may be individually identifiable or of equal intensity

5. Mouthfeel:

Standard description applies. Most will be like wine.

6. Ingredients:

- A)** Standard description applies.
- B)** Any fruit or fruit juices not specifically reserved for other entry subcategories should be entry to "others fruit" .
- C)** There should be an appealing blend of the fruit and honey character but not necessarily an even balance.

7. Complexity:

Standard description applies.

8. Entry Instructions:

See Introduction to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements. Entrants **MUST** specify the varieties of fruit used. Other fruits melomel that is spiced should be entered as a Fruit and Spice Mead, also if other fruits melomel containing other ingredients should be entered as an Experimental Mead.

Other fruits category with apples or grapes, plus other fruit should be entered in this category.

M3. SPICED MEAD

See the Mead Guidelines for detailed descriptions of standard mead characteristics and explanation of standard terms.

Use description of M1 category to understand difference between the various sweetness levels. Judging meads from dry to sweet is recommended as the primary ordering, with strength being the secondary ordering criterion.

M3A. Fruit and Spice Mead

It's a mead containing one or more fruits and one or more spice.

1. Overall Impression:

- A)** The fruits and spices both should be distinctive and well-incorporated into the honey-sweet-acid-tannin-alcohol balance of the mead.
- B)** Different types of fruits and spices can result in widely different characteristics.
- C)** *Standard description applies*

2. Aroma:

- A)** Depending on the sweetness and strength, a subtle to distinctly identifiable honey, fruit, and spice character (dry and/or hydromel versions will tend to have lower aromatics than sweet and/or sack versions).
- B)** The spice and fruit character both should display distinctive aromatics associated with the particular spices and fruits. Allow for a range of spice and fruit character and intensity from subtle to aggressive. Some spices and fruits (e.g., ginger, cinnamon, tart cherry, raspberry) have stronger aromas and are more distinctive than others (e.g., chamomile, lavender, peach, blueberry).
- C)** The spice and fruit character should be pleasant and supportive, not artificial and inappropriately overpowering (considering the character of the spice and fruit).
- D)** The honey aroma should be noticeable and can have a light to significant sweetness that may express the aroma of flower nectar. If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey.
- E)** The bouquet - *standard description applies*

3. Appearance:

Standard description applies,

Colour mostly won't be affected by spices, but some flowers, petals and peppers may provide subtle colours and tea usually provide significant colours.

Fruit may provide significant colour (like in Melomels)

4. Flavour:

- A)** The spice, fruit and honey flavour intensity may vary from subtle to high the residual sweetness may vary from none to high.
- B)** Finish may range from dry to sweet
- C)** Strength level could be any (hydromel to sack).
- D)** The distinctive flavour character associated with the particular spices and fruits may range in intensity from subtle to aggressive.

- E)** Some spices and fruits might add bitter, astringent, phenolic or spicy (hot) flavour. If they are present, these qualities should be related to the declared ingredients otherwise, they are classified as faults.
- F)** Spices should balance and blend with the honey, sweetness and alcohol.
- G)** Meads containing more than one fruit or spice should have a pleasant balance of the different fruits and spices. But is not necessary that all fruits and spices need to be of equal intensity or even individually identifiable.
- H)** The mead may have a subtle to strong honey character and may feature noticeable to prominent varietal character if a varietal honey is declared.
- I)** Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

5. Mouthfeel:

Standard description applies.

6. Ingredients:

Standard description applies.

7. Complexity:

Standard description applies

8. Entry Instructions:

See Introduction to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements. Entrants **MUST** specify the varieties of fruit and spice used. If fruit and spice mead is containing other ingredients, it should be entered as an Experimental Mead.

M3B. Spice, Herb or Vegetable Mead

Contains one or more spices, herbs, or vegetables. You need remember that classification of ingredients is culinary, not botanical.

In addition to the more obvious spices, herbs, and vegetables that fit into this subcategory, the following ingredients also are explicitly included:

- Roses and rose hips
- Rhubarb
- Chilli peppers
- Citrus peels/zest
- Chocolate (cocoa beans or ready product)
- Tea (only if adding flavour to mead, not if only been used for increasing tannin levels)
- Hops (only if adding flavour to mead, not if only been used for increasing tannin levels or as an anti-bacterial agent- often used like that in historical meads)
- Ginger
- Pumpkin
- Coffee
- Nuts (including coconut)

1.Overall Impression:

- A)** Spices should be distinctive and well-incorporated into the honey-sweet-acid-tannin-alcohol balance of the mead.
- B)** Different types of vegetables, herbs and spices can result in widely different characteristics.
- C)** *Standard description applies*

2.Aroma:

- A) *Standard description applies*
- B) Description for spices and fruit meads applies
- C) The bouquet - standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

3.Appearance:

Standard description applies and description for spices and fruit meads applies
Colour may be affected by used ingredients (in case of some vegetables- like beetroot, or herbs and teas)

4.Flavour:

Standard description applies and description for spices and fruit meads applies

5.Mouthfeel:

- A) Standard description applies and description for spices and fruit meads applies
- B) Warming spices and hot peppers/chillies might impart a warming or numbing impression, but this character should not be extreme or make the mead undrinkable.

6.Ingredients:

- A) Standard description applies and description for spices and fruit meads applies
- B) If spices are used in combination with other ingredients, then the mead should be entered as an Experimental Mead.

7.Complexity:

Standard description applies

8. Entry Instructions:

See Introduction to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements. Entrants MUST specify the varieties of vegetable, herb and/or spice used. If spice, herb or vegetable mead is containing other ingredients, it should be entered as an Experimental Mead.

M4. SPECIALTY MEAD

See the Mead Guidelines for detailed descriptions of standard mead characteristics and explanation of standard terms.

Use description of M1 category to understand difference between the various sweetness levels. Judging meads from dry to sweet is recommended as the primary ordering, with strength being the secondary ordering criterion.

M4A. Braggot

A Braggot is a mead made with malt.

1. Overall Impression:

- A)** A harmonious blend of mead and beer, with the distinctive characteristics of both.
- B)** Depending on the base style of beer and variety of honey and overall sweetness and strength.
- C)** Beer flavours may mask typical honey flavours.

2. Aroma:

- A)** Depending on base style of beer and the sweetness, strength and variety of honey.
- B)** Honey and beer character should be well balanced and complementary, but not always need be evenly balanced.
- C)** If a variety of honey is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable varietal character reflective of the honey.
- D)** If a base style of beer or type of malt is declared, the aroma might have a subtle to very noticeable character reflective of the beer style.
- E)** A hop aroma is optional and depending of beer style and used hops.
- F)** Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

3. Appearance:

- A)** Standard description does not apply due to beer like characteristics.
- B)** Clarity may be good to brilliant, although many braggots are not as clear as other meads. In some cases (when dark beer is used) it may be difficult to establish clarity.
- C)** Colour may range from light straw to dark brown or black, depending on the variety of malt and honey used. The colour should depend on beer style and/or honey used.
- D)** Stronger versions may show signs of body

4. Flavour:

- A)** Displays a balanced character identifiable as both a beer and a mead
- B)** Intensity of flavours is greatly affected by the sweetness, strength, base style of beer, and variety of honey used.
- C)** If a beer style is declared, braggot should have some character traceable to that style but the flavours will be different due to the presence of honey.

- D)** If a variety of honey is declared, braggot should feature a subtle to prominent varietal character.
- E)** Stronger and/or sweeter braggots should be expected to have a greater intensity of flavour than drier, lower gravity versions. The finish and aftertaste will vary based on the declared level of sweetness (dry to sweet),
- F)** Finish may include both beer and mead components.
- G)** Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics.

5. Mouthfeel:

- A)** Standard description does not apply due to beer like characteristics.
- B)** Body may vary from moderately light to full, depending on sweetness, strength, and the base style of beer. Note that stronger meads will have a fuller body.
- C)** Carbonation is depending of beer style.

6. Ingredients:

- A)** It's a mead made with both honey and malt providing flavour and fermentable extract.
- B)** Originally and alternatively, a mixture of mead and ale.
- C)** Can be made with any type of honey, and any type of base beer style.
- D)** The malt component may come from grain or malt extracts.
- E)** If any other ingredients than honey and beer are contained in the braggot, it should be entered as an Experimental Mead.

7. Complexity:

Standard description applies

8. Entry Instructions:

See Introduction to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements. Entrants MAY specify the base style or beer, or types of malt used as well as varietal type of honey. If any other ingredients than honey and beer are contained in the braggot, it should be entered as an Experimental Mead.

M4B. Historical Mead

It's a historical or indigenous mead that doesn't fit into another subcategory (e.g., Ethiopian Tej, Polish meads).

1. Overall Impression:

This mead should exhibit the character of all of the ingredients in varying degrees and should show a good blending or balance between the various flavour elements. Whatever ingredients are included, the result should be identifiable as a honey-based fermented beverage.

2. Aroma:

Standard description applies.

3. Appearance:

Standard description applies

4. Flavour:

Standard description applies

5. Mouthfeel:

Standard description applies

6. Complexity:

Standard description applies

7. Ingredients:

Standard description applies.

8. Entry Instructions:

- A)** See to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements.
- B)** Entrants **MUST** specify the special nature of the mead, providing a description of the mead for judges.

M4C. Experimental Mead

Experimental Mead is mead that does not fit into any other mead subcategory. That could be to meads that blend multiple mead subcategories.

Mead is classified as experimental, if any additional sources of fermentables were used, like:

- maple syrup
- brown sugar
- molasses
- agave nectar

Any additional ingredients or alternative processes will also classify mead as experimental:

- liquors
- distillate
- aging in oak/wood barrel previously containing other alcohol beverage
- icing
- smoke

Using any non-traditional yeasts (but only if yeast brings some aromas and flavours to mead)

- Brettanomyces
- Lambic
- and many others
- Kveik
- Ale

1. Overall Impression:

- A)** This mead should exhibit the character of all the ingredients.
- B)** Should show a good blending or balance between the various flavour ingredients.
- C)** Result always should be noticeable as a honey-based fermented beverage.

D) Refer to Category M1 for a detailed description of the character of dry, semi-sweet and sweet mead if the entered mead is a combination of other existing mead categories.

E) In this subcategory mead is judged on very subjective and personal preference of the judge.

2. Aroma:

Standard description applies.

3. Appearance:

Standard description applies

4. Flavour:

Standard description applies

5. Mouthfeel:

Standard description applies

6. Complexity:

Standard description applies

7. Ingredients:

Standard description applies.

8. Entry Instructions:

A) No mead can be "out of style" for this category unless it fits into another existing mead category.

B) See to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements.

C) Entrants need specify the experimental nature of the mead, could be a combination of existing styles, experimental ingredients or some other creation

M4S Session Mead

Session Mead is a "weaker" version of other meads. The main criterion determining mead as a session is the level of alcohol in it. MJP recognize mead as a session when alcohol level is lower than 7.5%.

Use description of M1 category to understand difference between the various sweetness levels. Judging meads from dry to sweet is recommended as the primary ordering, with strength being the secondary ordering criterion.

The variety and specifics of session mead makes it difficult to clearly define the style characteristic. Main flavour and aroma usually come from additional ingredients like fruits or/and spices etc.

In theory, session meads could be a separate category. Session mead could be also one of subcategory in main mead categories M1, M2, M3, M4 . See the Mead Guidelines for detailed descriptions of standard mead characteristics, an explanation of standard terms.

At this moment MJP is recognising session as a subcategory in M4 category. This however may change in the future, depending on the popularity of this style.

1. Overall Impression:

- A)** This mead should exhibit the character of all the ingredients, however, due to smaller amount of honey used in production, honey characteristic may be subtle to non-existent
- A)** *Standard description applies*
- B)** The Session mead should be light and easy to drink.
- C)** Honey aroma may be subtle, although not always identifiable due to smaller amount of honey used in production process.
- D)** Honey and/or used ingredients should be well balanced and complementary, but not always need to be evenly balanced.
- E)** Result may be similar to: beer, cider, perry or combination of the above.
- F)** Session meads without any additional ingredients should have the distinctive characteristics of used honey/honeys

2. Aroma:

- A)** It will mainly come from the other ingredients, rather than honey (fruit, hops, spices)
- B)** If spice and/or fruit been used then spice/fruit character should be pleasant and supportive, not artificial and inappropriately overpowering (considering the character of the spice and fruit).
- C)** Mead may have a subtle to strong honey aroma, and may feature noticeable to prominent varietal character if a varietal honey is declared
- C)** *Standard description applies*

3. Appearance:

- A)** Session mead will most likely be sparkling. There may be examples of still session and it should be taken into consideration when judging, although it should be specified
- B)** Clarity may be good to brilliant, although many sessions are not as clear as other meads. Hazy or cloudy meads are acceptable but always better if clarity is closer to brilliant.
- C)** Colour is depending on the variety of fruit and/or honey used
- D)** *Standard description applies*

4. Flavour:

- A)** Honey aroma may be subtle, although not always identifiable.
- B)** If spice and/or fruit been used, their flavour intensity may vary from subtle to high
- C)** Finish may range from dry to sweet
- D)** Some spices and fruits might add bitter, astringent, phenolic or spicy (hot) flavour. If they are present, these qualities should be related to the declared ingredients otherwise, they are classified as faults
- E)** Good balance between the honey, sweetness, used ingredients and alcohol are recommended but not necessarily
- F)** The mead may have a subtle to strong honey character, and may feature noticeable to prominent varietal character if a varietal honey is declared.
- G)** Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics

5. Mouthfeel:

- A)** Body may vary from moderately light to full, depending on sweetness and strength. Note that stronger meads will have a fuller body.
- B)** Carbonation is not necessary but is recommended.
- C)** Standard description applies for remainder of characteristics

6. Complexity:

Standard description applies

7. Ingredients:

Standard description applies.

8. Entry Instructions:

- A)** See to Mead Guidelines for entry requirements, alcohol content is the main criterion.
- B)** Entrants **MUST** specify the nature of the mead, providing a description of the mead for judges
- C)** Entrants **MUST** provide a list of additional ingredients (fruits, herbs, spices etc.)
- D)** Session mead could as well be entered in any other category, however MJP thinks that it's better if weaker (less honey used) mead does not compete with full strength mead. It makes judging more accurate and prevent, otherwise disadvantaged mead, from being evaluate too low.