

2023 Alberta Beer Awards Categories

NOTE: After entries are received, competition organizers reserve the right to divide or collapse categories based on the number of entries. Decisions to collapse/divide will be based on stylistic similarity.

On the entry form, breweries will be asked to indicate which ABA category in which the beer is entered. They will also be asked to identify the beer's categorization under the 2021 BJCP Style Guidelines or self-described style as well as any special ingredients or processes (if applicable).

1. **Light Bodied Lager.** A lager that is light-bodied and refreshing and not overly hopped. Lighter in colour and body. Emphasis is on balance and accessibility with no aggressive flavours. Malt should offer grainy, sweet notes but not be overly assertive. Hops should only offer balance. Should have a lager-like cleanliness and crisp character. **Beer with the addition of fruit, spices or with a significant percentage of wheat is not appropriate here and should be entered in the applicable category.** Includes but is not restricted to BJCP styles: 1A, 1B, 2A, 4A, 4B, 5A, 5C.
2. **Light Bodied Ale.** An ale that is light-bodied and refreshing and not overly hopped. Lighter in colour and body. Emphasis is on balance and accessibility with no aggressive flavours. Malt should offer grainy, sweet notes but not be overly assertive. Hops should only offer balance. Should have some ale-like fruity esters and may have adjunct characteristics (e.g., corn, rice). **Beer with the addition of fruit, spices or with a significant percentage of wheat is not appropriate here and should be entered in the applicable category.** Includes but is not restricted to BJCP styles: 1C, 5B, 12B, 18A
3. **Session Hoppy Beer.** A hop-forward and accessible beer with a noted but not overly aggressive hop flavour and bitterness. Hop flavour and bitterness are central characteristics of the beer, but are not as assertive as traditional pale ales or IPAs. The malt character is light and plays a supportive role. Can range in colour but is generally lighter in hue, and is moderate in alcohol strength (under 5.5%). Pilsners should be entered in category 3. Includes but is not restricted to India Session Ale and BJCP style 12A.
4. **German/Czech Style Pilsners.** A light-coloured lager with noted hop flavour and aroma. Entries should be designed to reflect the characteristics of traditional German and Czech style pilsner. North American interpretations should be entered in Category 3. BJCP styles: 3A, 3B, 5D
5. **American-Style Wheat Beer.** Ale or lager brewed featuring wheat as a key ingredient and wheat as a dominant flavour and characteristic of the beer but lacking the yeast characteristics of German or Belgian-style wheat beer. Can be any colour. Wheatwine and beer with fruit or non-traditional spice additions are not appropriate here and should be entered in the appropriate category. Includes but is not restricted to BJCP style 1D.

6. **German and Belgian-style Wheat Beer.** Ale brewed with wheat as a key ingredient and using traditional German or Belgian yeast. Wheat is a dominant flavour characteristic, balanced with a noted yeast character appropriate to regional sub-style. Can be any colour, as appropriate to the style. Entries should indicate the intended style. Includes BJCP styles: 10A, 10B, 10C, 24A.
7. **Amber Ale.** Amber-coloured, malt-accented ale. Malt flavours should be emphasized while hop character can be low to medium but in balance with the malt. Malt should have darker flavours without being overdone, including caramel, toast, bread and biscuit. Hops can vary in profile and perception, but without becoming too dominant in the balance. Both American and European interpretations are acceptable. Can have a range of alcohol strength, excluding imperial strength (which should be entered in Category 20). Includes but is not restricted to BJCP styles: 7B, 15A, 19A, 19B.
8. **Amber and Dark Lager.** Medium and darker-coloured lagers. Should have more malt character than light lagers, although the balance between malt and hops may vary. Entries should exhibit a clean lager character. Fruity esters or other ale characteristics are not acceptable. Includes but is not restricted to BJCP styles: 2B, 2C, 3C, 3D, 4C, 6A, 6C, 7A, 8A, 8B.
9. **Brown Ale.** Brown-coloured, malt-accented ale. Darker malt flavours should be emphasized and hop character can range from none to moderate. Can have a range of alcohol strength, excluding imperial strength (which should be entered in Category 20). Both American and British interpretations are acceptable. Includes but not restricted to BJCP styles: 13A, 13B, 14A, 14B, 14C, 17A, 17B, 19C.
10. **Porter.** Deep brown, malt-accented ales that are reflective of the traditional Porter style. Both American and British interpretations are acceptable. Entries with non-traditional ingredients or processes should be entered in the appropriate category. Includes BJCP styles: 9C, 13C, 20A.
11. **Stout.** Very dark ale designed to reflect the characteristics of a stout. All types of stout are appropriate except those with additions of non-traditional ingredients (e.g., coffee) which should be entered in the appropriate category. Imperial stouts should be entered in category 20. BJCP styles: 15B, 15C, 16A, 16B, 16C, 16D, 20B.
12. **Pale Ale/Bitter.** Medium-bodied pale to the amber-coloured ale with noted hop character and a balance of malt. A beer designed to reflect the characteristics of American Pale Ale or English Bitter is appropriate. Beer with less malt character and/or a stronger hop accent should be entered in the appropriate style. BJCP styles: 11A, 11B, 11C, 18B.
13. **IPA.** Light to amber-coloured hop-forward ale with a moderate to assertive bitterness, hop flavour and aroma, depending on sub-style. English or American versions of IPA are both appropriate. This category is designed for “traditional” IPAs. Double IPAs, New England IPAs and Specialty IPAs should be entered in the appropriate category. Beer with fruit, spice,

or other additions or using non-traditional or mixed fermentation processes should be entered in the appropriate category. Includes but is not restricted to BJCP styles: 12C and 21A.

14. **New England-Style/Hazy Ale.** Hazy, light-coloured, medium-bodied hop-accented ale. Moderate to strong citrus fruit flavours and aromas with low to moderate bitterness. Mouthfeel will be full with a silky character. Designed to reflect the characteristics of the ales originating in Vermont. New England-style and Hazy IPAs should be entered into this category. Imperial New England IPAs should be entered in Category 16. Includes BJCP style 21C and Hazy/New England Pale Ales.
15. **Speciality IPA:** An IPA designed with features that deviate from traditional IPA, including colour, ingredients, or yeast. The central feature of the beer is bitterness and hop flavour and aroma with varying balances appropriate to variation. Colour may vary. Malt-hop balance may vary. New England/Hazy IPA should be entered in Category 14. Includes, but is not restricted to, BJCP style 21B.
16. **Double/Imperial IPA:** A higher-alcohol IPA. Exhibits moderate to high bitterness and hop characteristics. Malt character may vary from light to moderate. Warming, but not hot, alcohol is appropriate. Alcohol should be above 7% ABV. American, British and New England interpretations are acceptable and should be noted. Includes BJCP Style 22A.
17. **Belgian Ales.** Ale is designed to reflect Belgian Ale characteristics, including spicy yeast flavours and aromas with moderate alcohol content (below 7%). Colour may vary. Lower-strength Abbey Ale, Belgian Blonde and Belgian Pale Ale are all appropriate. Farmhouse-style Belgian ale should be entered in category 19. Belgian IPA should be entered in category 15. Includes but is not restricted to BJCP styles: 24B, 25A, 26A.
18. **Strong Belgian Ales:** Ale designed to reflect Belgian Ale characteristics, including spicy yeast flavours and aromas and with higher alcohol content (above 7%). Colour and malt/hop balance may vary. Trappist Dubbels and Tripels, as well as other strong Belgian ales, are appropriate. Farmhouse-style ales should be entered in Category 19. Includes but is not restricted to BJCP styles: 25C, 26B, 26C, 26D.
19. **Farmhouse Ale.** Highly attenuated ale with noted yeast characteristics. Colour, body and alcoholic strength may vary. Designed in the tradition of European farmhouse ale. Saison and Biere de Garde are appropriate. Other traditions, such as Finnish and Norwegian, are also acceptable. Versions fermented with alternative yeast/bacteria should be entered in category 27 Includes but is not restricted to BJCP styles: 24C, 25B.
20. **Imperial Strength Beer.** Ale or lager brewed to higher alcohol levels (usually above 8%). Body, colour and malt/hop balance will vary according to style. Imperial IPA should be entered in category 16 and strong Belgian-style ale should be entered in category 18. Includes but is not restricted to “imperialized” versions of other styles and BJCP styles: 9A, 9B, 17C, 17D, 20C, 22B, 22C, 22D.

21. **Fruit Beer.** Any lager or ale where the addition of fruit or vegetable is a key ingredient and important flavour/aroma component. Milkshake IPAs are to be included in this category. Entries should indicate the base style and fruit/vegetable used. Beer with fruit and spice additions should be entered in the category the entrant believes reflects the dominant characteristic of the beer. Sour fruit beer should be entered into category 25. Includes but is not restricted to BJCP styles: 29A, 29B, 29C, 29D.
22. **Spiced Beer.** Any lager or ale where the addition of spice or another adjunct (e.g., coffee) is a key ingredient and important flavour/aroma component. Entries should indicate the base style and adjuncts used. Beer with fruit and spice additions should be entered in the category the entrant believes reflects the dominant characteristic of the beer. Includes but is not restricted to BJCP styles: 30A, 30B, 30C, 30D.
23. **Other Flavoured Beer.** Ale or lager brewed with the addition of alternative ingredients that do not fit into other categories. Includes beer made with alternative grains (e.g., gluten-free) and/or alternative sugars (e.g., honey), and smoked beer. Entries should indicate alternative ingredients/processes used. Includes but is not restricted to BJCP styles: 6B, 31A, 31B, 32A, 32B, 34B, 34C.
24. **Sour Beer.** Any ale or lager where sourness is a feature of the flavour and aroma. Beer produced through kettle sour processes or “traditional” souring methods are both acceptable. Versions fermented with *Brettanomyces* or other yeast/bacteria should be entered in category 27. Sour beer with fruit additions should be entered in category 25. Colour and alcohol content may vary. Includes BJCP styles: 23A, 23B, 23C, 23G and 28D.
25. **Sour Beer with Fruit.** Any ale or lager where sourness is a feature of the flavour and aroma, and fruit has been added to the beer. Beer produced through kettle sour processes or “traditional” souring methods are both acceptable. Versions fermented with *Brettanomyces* or other yeast/bacteria should be entered in category 28. Colour and alcohol content may vary. Entries should indicate which fruit(s) were added.
26. **Barrel-Aged Beer.** Any beer that was aged in wood barrels exhibits flavour and aroma characteristics of the barrel. Entries should indicate the base style and type of barrel used. Versions fermented with *Brettanomyces* or other yeast/bacteria should be entered in category 27. Includes but is not restricted to BJCP styles: 33A, 33B.
27. **Mixed Fermentation Beer:** Sometimes referred to as natural/wild fermentation, this is a beer produced using non-traditional yeast and bacteria, including *Brettanomyces*, and/or through spontaneous fermentation. Should exhibit the flavour profiles of the organisms used, including earthiness, spiciness, sourness, mustiness and cellar characteristics. Colour and malt and hop profile may vary. Entry should indicate the base style and method used. Beer that has had fruit added should be entered in Category 28. Brett IPAs should be entered in category 15. Includes but is not restricted to BJCP styles: 23D, 23E, 28A, 28B, 28C.
28. **Mixed Fermentation Beer with Fruit:** Sometimes referred to as natural/wild fermentation, this is a beer produced using non-traditional yeast and bacteria, including *Brettanomyces*,

and/or through spontaneous fermentation and has the addition of fruit. Should exhibit the flavour profiles of the organisms used, including earthiness, spiciness, sourness, mustiness and cellar characteristics as well as the flavours and aromas of the added fruit. Colour and malt and hop profile may vary. Entry should indicate the base style, the method used and the fruit added. Includes but is not restricted to BJCP style: 23F.

29. **Feature Beer Style (2023): Low-Alcohol Beer.** Any style of beer with a final alcohol content of 3.9% or less. Entry must indicate the alcohol percentage.
30. **All-Alberta Malt Beer:** A beer brewed exclusively with grains grown and malted in Alberta. All styles are acceptable but the beer should highlight the flavours and aromas derived from malt. Entry must identify the malt house(s) from which the grain was processed, as well as the intended beer style. Entries may be subject to verification from the malt house(s) listed.
31. **All-Alberta Malt and Hops Beer.** A beer brewed exclusively with grains grown and malted in Alberta and hops grown and processed in Alberta. Any style of beer is acceptable, but the beer should highlight the flavours and aromas derived from the malt and hops. Entry must identify the malt house(s) and hop farm(s) from which the product originated, as well as the intended beer style. Entries may be subject to verification from the malt house(s) and hop farm(s) listed.
32. **Non-Alcoholic Beer:** Any all-malt beer style with a final alcohol content of 0.5% or less.
33. **Craft Soda and Lemonade:** Non-alcoholic soda and lemonade beverages produced on the premises of an Alberta craft brewery. This category will have a two-stage judging process. A panel of children will narrow the entries to the top five, then beer judges will determine medal winners. Not eligible for Best of Show and does not count toward Brewery of the Year.
34. **Seltzer and Ready-to-Drink Beverages.** Alcoholic beverages are made with spirits, grain-based alcohol or non-grain-based alcohol created at the brewery. May be mixed with other ingredients. Includes hard seltzer, hard iced tea and fruited mixed spirits. Not eligible for Best of Show and does not count toward Brewery of the Year.

Best of Show: Gold/silver/bronze will be awarded to the best among gold medal winning beer in the competition

Brewery of the Year: The brewery with the highest number of points will be awarded Brewery of the Year. Points are to be awarded for medaling in categories only (not BOS) on the following basis: 4-gold, 2-silver, 1-bronze. Only ONE medal will be awarded. Medals awarded in categories 33 and 34 do not count toward Brewery of the Year.

New Brewery of the Year: Awarded to the brewery which opened after January 1, 2022, has not previously submitted an entry to the Alberta Beer Awards and received the most Brewery of the Year points. Only ONE medal will be awarded.

If you have any questions about the categories and their interpretation, please email the Alberta Beer Awards Administrators at AlbertaBeerAwards@AlbertaBrewers.ca