



Beer Styles

Past, Present, and the Future

Homebrew Con Seminars Archive



<https://www.homebrewersassociation.org/seminars/>



Gordon Strong

Principal Author, BJCP Style Guidelines

Beer Judge Certification Program

Why Have Beer Styles?

- Common language for discussing beer
- Original purposes
 - Homebrew competition reference
 - BJCP exam reference
 - Learning about beer styles
- More widely used now
 - Commercial competitions, international, consumers, trade groups, vendors
- What guidelines are not
 - Specifications, categorize every beer, dictates to breweries

Style Guideline Milestones

- 1977, Michael Jackson first used phrase *beer style*
- 1997, first BJCP style guidelines published
- 1999, first detailed BJCP style guidelines published
- 2000, AHA uses BJCP guidelines
- 2004, expanded BJCP guidelines (revised 2008)
- 2015, major rewrite to BJCP guidelines
- 2021, latest BJCP guidelines published

Style Guideline Organization

- Classic Styles
- Specialty Styles
- Extensible Styles: Specialty IPA, Historical Beer
- Local Styles
- Provisional Styles

Why Do Styles Change?

- Beers evolve and change
- New styles emerge
- Examples are discontinued or change
- We learn more about historical styles
- New research (ours or external), new references
- Observations from real-world use in competitions
- Changes in ingredient profiles

Evaluating Proposed Styles

- Are they real styles?
 - Commercially made? Distributed?
- Are they made by homebrewers?
 - Do they appear in competitions? In what quantity?
- Do sufficient examples exist?
 - Need to develop a sensory profile
- Is it sufficiently different from existing styles?
 - Maybe existing styles can be broadened
- Have we tasted them and validated the profile?

Why Styles Aren't in the Guidelines

- Too new, still changing, might be a fad
- Homebrewers aren't making it
- Insufficient examples (or research data)
- Haven't tried enough examples to create or validate a profile

“We do not create styles in the hopes that they will become popular. The state of the overall beer market in any given country is not our concern.”

Updating the Guidelines

- Generally about every five years
 - Try not to interfere with exams, competitions
 - Significant external dependencies (translations, apps, third-party use)
 - Allow for evaluation of real-world use
- Compromise
 - Flexible ingredient descriptions
 - Extensible categories
 - Published errata
 - Provisional styles
 - Style entry suggestions

Next: Mead and Cider

- Major Reorganization of Cider
 - More complete descriptions
 - Expand and rework categories
 - Separate Perry category
 - Added styles
- Minor Update of Mead
 - Reworked Historical
 - Added styles
- Goal is by the end of 2022

THANK YOU!

Gordon Strong | gordon@bjcp.org

Style Guidelines Input | style@bjcp.org



#HOMEBREWCON



Related Resources

Find hundreds of other member resources on [HomebrewersAssociation.org](https://homebrewersassociation.org)

- Beer Judge Certification Program: [2021 BJCP Beer Style Guidelines](#)
- BJCP Guidelines: [Errata](#)
- BJCP Guidelines: [Provisional Styles](#)
- BJCP Guidelines: [Style Entry Suggestions](#)
- Brew Your Own: [Style Profile Articles](#)
- Book: [Brewing Better Beer: Master Lessons for Advanced Homebrewers](#)
- Book: [Modern Homebrew Recipes: Exploring Styles and Contemporary Techniques](#)
- AHA Website Resource: [Hands-On Activities to Help You Master Beer Styles](#)