

The Governor's Cup Competition Methodology

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Objective:

To create an accurate, consistent judging process that will determine the highest quality wines being produced in Virginia.

The ultimate goal will be to identify the 12 most outstanding wines in Virginia. The top wine from this final stage will be awarded the Governor's Cup.

Judges:

The Governor's Cup judges would consist of industry professionals from all levels of the industry: retail, restaurant, hotel, wholesale & distribution, press, and education.

Ideally the judges would hold certifications such as: Advanced Level Sommelier, Master Sommelier, Certified Wine Educator, International Sommelier Guild Diploma, Wine and Spirit Education Trust (WSET) Advanced Level 3, or WSET Diploma Level 4, and Master of Wine.

Industry experience would also be an important consideration in inviting trade professionals to participate, particularly those responsible for making the buying decisions at the retail and restaurant levels. No one working for or owning a Virginia winery or vineyard will be allowed to judge.

Most of the judges selected will be from Virginia, Washington, DC, and Maryland. The primary consideration, however, is that the judges possess the skills to accurately assess wines under blind tasting conditions.

The Process:

Registration and submission of the wines: all the wines would be submitted in early January. All wines must be received during this time period. Any wines received after the deadline will be ineligible.

Stage I: The Preliminary Round – Mid-January

Wines will be tasted to determine approximately 120 wines to go on to the Final Round. This round will be conducted over 2 days. There would be a morning and an afternoon session. No panel would taste more than 50 wines in a day.

For the preliminary round, there will be 10 panels. Each panel would consist of 3 judges. Each judge would taste, assess, and score the wines in each flight. The panel chair would be responsible for collecting and submitting the scores and notes to the Competition Director. The scores and tasting sheets for each wine would be submitted without discussion. The three scores from each panel would be recorded and averaged.

All the wines would be tasted “single blind”. The judges would know the grape or category being tasted, but not the vintage, price or producer. The wines will be presented to judges in coded glasses. No bottles or labels will be visible to judges at any time during the competition. Staff members and volunteers will be instructed to avoid discussing wineries or brand names, whether they are part of the competition or not.

If the judges are faced with an obviously flawed bottle of wine, an additional bottle will be opened and tasted.

Wines with more than 0.3% residual sugar (r.s.) must have the percent listed on the entry form. Wines entered in categories defined by r.s. must list the percent on the entry form. Alcohol, residual sugar, and pH will be requested on entry forms.

Each wine in the preliminary round will be tasted and assessed by two different panels and the scores will be averaged. It is possible for a wine to receive a medal, yet not to advance to the final round. During the Preliminary Round, each wine will be assessed by 6 judges.

Stage II: The Final Round– Late January

Wines would be tasted to determine the top 12 wines in the state. Three panels, each consisting of 5 judges, will assess the wines over 3 days. The scores from the 15 judges would be averaged. By the end, each panel would have assessed all the wines qualifying for the Final Round.

Each wine in the Final round will receive a final average score. The 12 wines with the highest average score will be identified as the “Governor’s Cup Case” (12 wines). The wine with the highest overall score will be the Governor’s Cup Winner.

In the event that there is a tie between two wines vying for the “Governor’s Cup Case”, their scores will be averaged with scores from the Preliminary Round

Scoring:

The scoring would be done using the 100 point scale. The 100 point scale as defined by the Wine Spectator:

95-100	A Classic Wine – Among The Best Wines In The World
90-94	Outstanding – Superior Character And Style
85-89	Very Good – A Wine With Special Qualities
80-84	Good – A Well Made Wine Of Good Quality
75-79	Average – A Drinkable Wine That May Have Minor Flaws
50-74	Not Recommended (NR)
49 & Under	No Score (NS)

Gold	Great – Outstanding
Silver	Very Good
Bronze	Good

Tasting Notes:

To ensure consistency, the tasting note would be recorded on a pre-formatted form. This form would include the numeric score, and, in some cases, comments by the judge.

Each tasting note will include an assessment of the appearance (clear or dull, color, intensity, and other visual observations), aroma (descriptors as to clean or faulty aromatics, fruit, floral, vegetal, spice, oak, chemical, animal, and intensity), flavor (dry, off dry, etc. RS, character of the alcohol, acidity, body, tannin, oak, fruit, floral, vegetal, spice, oak, chemical, animal, and intensity), a mention of overall quality, and commercial suitability.

The average score and tasting note for each wine will be sent to the winery upon completion of the Final Round. These results will be confidential, and used at the discretion of the winery. The identity of the judges responsible for writing the notes and scoring the wines will also remain confidential.