

## Entering Competitions – Bottles

1. Read the Schedule - whilst there are similarities between the show schedules of all the shows you may enter, no two schedules will be the same. Also, changes may be made to the schedule each year, so don't assume that the rules for the show you entered last year will be the same this year.
2. Bottles – the bottles entered in all the shows are of the same type.
  - 2.1 For wine this means that the bottle is the sauternes style, 700-750 ml (25-27 fl oz) capacity, plain, with rounded but not sloping shoulders, and of clear, or very slightly tinted glass. It may be punted (i.e. with a concave base), which is useful for red wines. There must be no distinguishing or commercial marks. Any bottle manufacturer's marks on or near the base can be ignored. The bottle must be clean, inside and out. Make sure that there are no chips or deep scratches on the bottle, for safety reasons.
  - 2.2 Liqueurs are entered in clear 37.5ml bottles. Other rules as for wine bottles apply.
  - 2.3 Beers are entered in 1 pint (568ml), 500ml or 550ml capacity. The bottles should be brown or amber; light-weight, no-deposit bottles will be rejected on safety grounds. Barley wine is usually entered in bottles of 275 to 300ml capacity; always check the show schedule for this class, and this may sometimes apply to strong ales as well. The bottle must be clean inside and out, with no distinguishing or trade marks. Bottle manufacturers' marks at the base can be ignored, and those with 'please return' on the shoulders are usually accepted. Bottle shapes often vary, but are generally accepted. Make sure that there are no chips or deep scratches on the bottle, for safety reasons.
3. Closures
  - 3.1 Wine and Liqueurs – Corks should be new, or at least clean, and of the type specified in the schedule, which is usually white stoppered flanged cork. Cream stoppered corks may be accepted at some shows, but coloured ones are not. It should be a good fit to the bottle to prevent spillage and contamination and the flange should be in contact with the top of the bottle. The cork should not be damaged in any way, so that loose particles do not end up in the wine. It will be easier to insert and remove the cork if it is moistened (not soaked) immediately prior to use.
  - 3.2 Beer – Gold coloured crown caps are used for all shows. They can only be used once and must therefore be new without any markings.
4. Contents of bottles
  - 4.1 Wine, liqueurs (except for cream liqueurs) must be clear and bright, with the colour and style suited to the class entered. There should be no sediment nor suspended particles or 'floaters'.
  - 4.2 Beer – should conform to the style specified, be bright and clear, with a firm, thin sediment which does not lift when the bottle is opened.
5. Presentation – bottles should be filled so that when the cork is fully inserted, the gap between the bottom of the cork and the wine is between 6mm and 20mm (approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch) in depth. For beers, the bottles must be filled to leave a headspace of approximately 12mm to 25mm ( $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 inch) in depth.
6. Labels – these will always be provided by the show organiser. They will indicate the class number entered, sometimes the class description as well, and often the competitor's name and club name. Some clubs expect you fill this in yourself though. If you do have to do this, make sure that you write your name in the correct part of the label (usually the bottom half). Do not write anything on the top half of the label unless requested to do so, e.g. specifying the style of an aperitif class (oxidised, citrus) or whether a wine is dry or medium. Generally, the lower edge of the label should be approximately 25mm (1 inch) above the bottom of the bottle and mid-way between the seams of the bottle. This distance does vary between shows though! Once the class label has been affixed to the bottle, cover up your name and club name with the supplied cover-up label. These usually have a small amount of gum on the side edges of the label on one side for affixing to the bottle.
7. Finally – give the bottle a final polish to remove any finger marks that might be on the bottle when the label was affixed. Stand back and admire!