

World Beer Cup Beer & Cider Style Guideline Updates for 2026

New Style Additions:

- **Czech-Style Lager Categories:** Bohemian-Style Pilsner renamed to "Czech-Style Pale Lager", as well as addition of Czech-Style Amber & Dark Lager categories as subcategories in the International Amber & International Dark Lager categories, respectively.
- **Mexican-Style Lager Categories:** Addition of 2 new standalone categories (Mexican-Style Light Lager & Pale Lager) 2 new subcategories: Mexican-Style Amber & Dark Lagers (added as subcategories of the International Amber & Dark Lager categories, respectively)
- **Rice Lager:** New category addition
- **Tea Beer:** 2 new style categories added as subcategories of the Tea Beer category: Green Tea Beer (for beers featuring green/unfermented tea) & Other Tea Beer (for beers featuring fermented teas such as oolong, pu-erh, etc.)
- **West Coast-Style Pilsner:** new style addition

Style Reclassifications:

- **Aged Beer:** this subcategory, previously judged in the "Experimental Beer" category was recategorized to be judged as a subcategory of the newly renamed Strong Ale, Old Ale or Aged Beer category
- **American-Style Wheat Beer:** All subcategories collapsed into one standalone American Wheat Beer category, allowing for a full range of American-Wheat beer style examples.
- **American-Style Pale Ale:** Now 2 subcategories, American-Style pale Ale & American-Style ESB
- **Classic India Pale Ale category:** Now 2 subcategories, American-Style India Pale Ale & English-Style IPA
- **Dessert Beer:** Changed name from "Dessert or Pastry Stout" to "Dessert or Pastry Beer" to allow include wider variety of base styles (barleywine, imperial porter, etc.) rather than simply stouts. Language in the guidelines also reflects this update as well. This category was also broken out into 2 distinct awards categories, one for unaged versions and one for wood/barrel aged versions

- **French-Style Biere de Garde:** Now a standalone category
- **Fruited American-Style Sour Ale:** Now a standalone category
- **German-Style Leichtes Weizen:** German-Style Leichtes Weizen was recategorized as a subcategory of the Session Beer category
- **International Amber Lager:** New group of categories comprising of 4 subcategories: German-style Maerzen, Czech-Style Amber Lager, Mexican-Style Amber Lager, Franconian-Style Rotbier
- **International Dark Lager:** New group of categories comprising of 4 subcategories: European-Style Dark Lager, American-Style Dark Lager, Czech-Style Dark Lager, Mexican-Style Dark Lager
- **Pumpkin/Squash or Pumpkin Spice Beer Category:** Previous subcategories rolled into one to simplify things for both entrants and judges
- **American-Style Sour or Wood & Barrel Aged Sour Beer category:** rearranged to include American-Style Sour Ale and Wood & Barrel Aged sour ale subcategories
- **Weissbier category grouping:** South-German Style Hefeweizen, Kristal Weizen & Bernsteinfarbenes weizen are now grouped together in the South-German-Style Weissbier category
- **Wood & Barrel Aged Beer:** Previously a Pale to Amber & Dark subcategory, refined to one standalone category allowing for full expression within one category
- **Belgian-Style Category Updates:** Various style parameter updates and category grouping updates with extremely helpful input from our colleagues in the Belgian brewing industry. Some of the "Other Belgian Sour/Ale" categories have been removed due to very low entry counts and to allow more focus on the existing categories for brewers & judges.
- **Dortmunder/Export, English-Style ESB, Munich-Style Dunkel** | Slight update to character descriptions for each
- **International Pilsener:** IBU threshold lowered a bit to 15
- **Other Strong Beer:** Clarified that all IPAs should be categorized in IPA categories (ex. Imperial IPA that fall outside of standard guideline specs, such as the addition of fruit, spice or other ingredients, should be entered in Experimental IPA). Entrants should examine other categories to see if their entry fits elsewhere (Strong Porter, Strong Red, etc.) before entering beers here