



Beer Appreciation and Appraisal

Most of us like a cold beer whatever our favourite brand is but have we ever tasted a beer and appreciated the different flavours?

When tasting beer, judgment should be based on appearance, "nose" (the bouquet and aroma), taste, finish and aftertaste; thus the overall taste sensation in beer combines many often subtle flavours.

Appearance

It should be attractive with colour and colour density appropriate to type and style.

In most cases the beer should be clear unless brewed to a high malt content or served with retained yeast in the beer.

Cloudiness or haze can indicate lactic acid bacteria infection, served to cold, exposed to too much light or breakdown (oxidation) due to age.

Nose – aroma and bouquet

The aroma should be characteristic of the type and style of the beer.

A pilsener beer should have a subtle hop aroma and English ale has an aroma that is predominantly malt.

The bouquet results from the by-products of fermentation.

Any nose that is like damp paper indicates oxidation due to age of the beer – it is stale.

A skunky nose indicates damage by

exposure to natural or artificial light as in a supermarket.

Taste

It should be present all the way through, from start to finish and the beer should have sufficient body.

The degree of sweetness, amount of alcohol and yeast present plus hop bitterness will be good or bad according to your personal taste.

Malt is the heart of the beer flavour and usually its distinctive taste will determine the taster's overall evaluation of the beer.

Aftertaste

This is the finish or consideration of how well it ends and what taste is left in the mouth.

A beer finishes poorly if there is little or no aftertaste and badly if the aftertaste is sour or bitter.

Ideally, as you swallow, the palate sensation should be of malt, with some faint sweetness from the hops.

The ideal brew has a balance throughout with a pleasant taste remaining in the mouth; after all it may be your only recollection of the entire experience.

BALANCE

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Lawyers Have No Balls?

The flurry of activity in your Law Society offices ground to a stunned halt as members of the profession voted (very loudly) with their feet *not* to have a Ball on the Speaker's Terrace, with a marvellous band, breathtaking views, interesting food, fine wine etc, etc.

The Ball organising committee (who had spent a good deal of time anguishing over every last little detail with the aim of giving you a night you'd never forget) were able to glean from the unassembled masses that there are many reasons why lawyers don't have balls.

For your edification here are some of them: they (balls not lawyers) cost too much; they (lawyers, not balls) didn't have enough time to agonise over whether or not to attend; the non-drinkers (has to be lawyers) didn't want to subsidise the drinkers; their (lawyers') significant others couldn't stand the company of lawyers, even given the Speaker's Terrace, marvellous band, breathtaking views, interesting food, fine wine etc, etc; they (lawyers again) didn't have an appropriate frock; they (both) didn't know what an alter-ego was and so on.

So "The Mask" Ball was cancelled and the ball organising committee send out their gratitude to the plucky 16 who purchased tickets.

Just in case you were beginning to feel a little bit sorry for those who put blood, sweat, tears and sleepless nights into creating such a very special non-event for you – don't. We in Chin Towers, having been dealt the unkindest blow of all – indifference – picked our bruised egos up off the floor, hurled a few expressions like "churlish ingrates" around the office and vowed to arrange the Opening of the Legal Year lunch at MacDonald's with Humphrey B Bear as the speaker.

The Executive Officer took the first leave he'd had in ten years, the Office Administrator arranged the raunchier bits of the Bridal Fair just to keep her hand in, the Receptionist Extraordinaire booked herself into hospital for a knee operation and your humble scribe packed the kids off to Sydney, mortgaged the dog and flew off to Seven Spirit Bay for a consoling weekend.

So there.