



AMATEUR WINE

Superintendent: Nicole Chesney (Nicole.Chesney@ncagr.gov)

Registration Opens: July 1st, 2026

Registration Closes: August 15th, 2026

Entries Must Be Received By: September 1st, 2026

Ship or Deliver wine entries to:

NCD&CS

Attn: Nicole Chesney N.C. Amateur Wine Competition

2 W. Edenton St.

Raleigh, NC 27601



Judging: Friday, September 25th at 11 AM - Dorton Arena - North Lobby

AMATEUR WINE RULES & REGULATIONS

- The General Rules and Regulations of the Fair will govern this department, except in cases of conflict, where the following Rules and Regulations will prevail. Please read all rules & regulations carefully before submitting your entries.
- Pre-Registration is required. Registration must be completed [online](#) through the NC State Fair website.
- Only amateur winemakers residing in NC are eligible to enter non-commercial wines in this competition.
- Exhibitors must be the producer of the wine.
- Exhibitors are allowed one entry per Class, with the exception of Divisions 104 and 105. These Divisions are allowed more than one entry per Class; however, each entry must be a different fruit or type of wine.
- Name of Winery/Producer, Name of Wine, Division, Class, Varietals and Percentage (%), and % Residual Sugar must be provided for each entry at the time of registration
- Entrants must submit one (1) 750 ml bottle or two (2) 375 ml bottles for each entry. Bottles must be corked or capped. Wines must be shipped/delivered to address above and be **received by** September 1st, 2026.
- Each bottle of wine **must include** its entry tag (which will be mailed to you) and be labeled with the Name of Winery/Producer, Name of Wine, Division, and Class, Varietals and Percentage (%), and % Residual Sugar prior to submission. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.
- Fruits/juices must be home prepared. Wines from concentrates or kits are ineligible.
- Wines may be recategorized by competition staff without notice.
- By submission of your wines, you are verifying the information entered is correct. Winning wines may be subject to verification by the NC Wine and Grape Council prior to the announcement of awards. Wines entered falsely will be disqualified.
- Entrants may visit [ncwine.org](#) or the NC State Fair Amateur Wine Competition page for competition results. Winners will be displayed at the NC State Fair.
- For questions contact Nicole Chesney via e-mail at – Nicole.Chesney@ncagr.gov

JUDGING

- Entries are blinded for judging. Judges are only informed of the content and residual sugar percentages. They do not see the bottle or any identifiable information.
- Entries are evaluated using the American Wine Society 20-point scale:

AMATEUR WINE JUDGING CRITERIA

POSSIBLE POINTS

Appearance	3
Aroma	6
Taste/Texture	6
Finish	3
Overall Impression	2

TOTAL: 20

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PREMIUMS

Double Gold - \$15 Gold - \$12 Silver - \$10 Bronze - \$8

Premiums and medals will be awarded to wines in each class for each rating.

DIVISION 101: VINIFERA/HYBRID

CLASS

- 01 - White Single Varietal - *Any White Vinifera/Hybrid single varietal*
- 02 - Rose Single Varietal - *Any White or Red Vinifera/Hybrid single varietal*
- 03 - Red Single Varietal - *Any Red Vinifera/Hybrid single varietal*
- 04 - White Blend - *Any blend of White Vinifera/Hybrid grapes*
- 05 - Rose Blend - *Any blend of White or Red Vinifera/Hybrid grapes made into Rose wine*
- 06 - Red Blend - *Any blend of Red Vinifera/Hybrid grapes*
- 07 - Fortified/Port Style - *Wines that have been fortified*
- 08 - Dessert - *Wines that have not been fortified*
- 09 - Sparkling - *Any method or grape color of sparkling wine made from Vinifera/Hybrids*

DIVISION 102: MUSCADINE - DRY/OFF DRY <3.0% RS

CLASS

- 01 - White - *Any single varietal or blend of White Muscadine grapes*
- 02 - Rose - *Any blend of White or Red Muscadine grapes made into Rose wine*
- 03 - Red - *Any single varietal or blend of Red Muscadine grapes*
- 04 - Sparkling - *Any single varietal or blend of Muscadine grapes made into sparkling wine*

DIVISION 103: MUSCADINE - SWEET >3.0% RS

CLASS

- 01 - White - *Any single varietal or blend of White Muscadine grapes*
- 02 - Rose - *Any blend of White or Red Muscadine grapes made into Rose wine*
- 03 - Red - *Any single varietal or blend of Red Muscadine grapes*
- 04 - Fortified/Port Style - *Any single varietal or blend of Muscadine grapes made into non-fortified dessert wine*
- 05 - Dessert - *Any single varietal or blend of Muscadine grapes made fortified*
- 06 - Sparkling - *Any single varietal or blend of Muscadine grapes made into sparkling wine*

DIVISION 104: FRUIT WINE

CLASS

- 01 - Fruit Wine - *Wines made with fruits other than grapes*

DIVISION 105: NON-TRADITIONAL WINE

CLASS

- 01 - Non-Traditional Wine - *Wines that do not fit into Divisions 101-104*

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DIVISION 106: CIDER

Note: Ciders with <2.0% RS will be judged as dry.

CLASS

- 01 - Modern - *Apple-forward and acid-driven. Typically made from dessert, culinary, or multipurpose apple varieties. Should emphasize freshness and varietal expression with little to no tannin.*
- 02 - High Tannin - *Made primarily from bittersweet and/or bittersharp apple varieties and exhibit significant tannin structure. Judged on balance, structure, and apple character in addition to freshness and acidity.*
- 03 - Fruited - *Include cider bases with added fruit or co-fermentation. Fruit character must be identifiable and harmonious with the cider base.*
- 04 - Natural/Pet-Nat - *Defined by fermentation method and production philosophy rather than sweetness or apple type. Spontaneous and/or mixed fermentation (native yeast, possible MLF). Minimal intervention. May be still or petillant. May be finished as Petillant naturel. Cloudiness, volatility, or rustic character are not faults if balanced. Apple-only or lightly fruited ciders are permitted.*
- 05 - Specialty - *Serves as a controlled catch-all for ciders that do not fit within the defined apple-only, fruited, or natural categories. Includes but is not limited to: Barrel-aged cider (any wood or prior fill), botanical, herb-infused, spiced cider, Perry or apple-pear blends, experimental techniques or unique blends not already categorized.*

DIVISION 107: MEAD

Note: Meads with <2.0% RS will be judged as dry.

CLASS

- 01 - Traditional - *Made exclusively from honey, water, and yeast. Nutrients, tannins, processing aids, stabilizers, acids, and sugars are allowed. No barrel influence. No added fruit, spices, herbs, or botanicals.*
- 02 - Melomel - *Made with fruit additions or fruit co-fermentation. Fruit character must be identifiable. Balancing the impact of acid and sweetness from fruit additions is critical to this category.*
- 03 - Metheglin - *Made with herbs, spices, flowers, or botanicals. Botanical character should compliment, not overwhelm, the honey base.*
- 04 - Fruit & Spice - *Incorporates both fruit and spice/botanical elements, where neither component alone defines the style. Any combination of fruit, spices, and herbs allowed, but all ingredients must be distinguishable by taste.*
- 05 - Barrel-Aged - *Process driven category defined by wood contact. All wood types allowed. Chips, staves, barrels, or any other type of wood contact to the point of imparting flavor is allowed.*

AMATEUR WINE SPECIAL AWARDS

All Best in Show winners will be awarded a ribbon.

-  **Best in Show - Vinifera/Hybrid** *Selected from Division 101*
-  **Best in Show - Muscadine** *Selected from Divisions 102-103*
-  **Best in Show - Cider** *Selected from Division 106*
-  **Best in Show - Mead** *Selected from Division 107*