

CAMRA's Pub of the Year Competition Procedure

Overview

CAMRA's Pub of the Year is the annual competition to find the very best pub in the UK. We've been highlighting the best pubs in the country since 1988, and the competition helps to showcase quality pubs around the UK that are worth seeking out and visiting. It's all about finding the cream of the crop and the best place for you to enjoy a pint of real ale. Some may also have good quality real cider or perry for you to sample.

Each year, over 200 CAMRA branches select their Pub of the Year. These then go through to the regional competition to select the 17 top pubs in the country, which are then whittled down to four finalists – one of which will become the ultimate winner.

Competition Structure

There are four stages to the competition:

1. Branch Pub of the Year
2. Regional Pub of the Year (some regions also hold intermediate rounds)
3. Super-regional Judging (to award finalists for the National Pub of the Year)
4. Final Judging (to award a National Pub of the Year)

The competition is organised and co-ordinated by the Pub of the Year Coordinator on behalf of the Awards Committee.

Judging Procedure and Timetable

Branch Round

Branches can select their Pub of the Year based on a selection method that suits the branch's area and circumstances. However, branches are advised to have processes and procedures in place that are impartial, transparent, and well documented in order to withstand any challenges to their result. They are also encouraged to use the national guidelines when selecting their winner.

Regional Round

Each Regional Round is organised by the Regional Director (RD) or their nominee. As with the branch round, it is up to a region how they select their winner but the national guidance must be used and it is advisable to have processes and procedures in place which are transparent, explainable and defensible so that the result can be defended should it be challenged.

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Some regions also hold intermediate rounds during this period to cover particular areas of the region (eg. County or Area Pub of the Year). These are decided using a selection method which suits the area/region but, as with Branch Pub of the Year, they are advised to have processes and procedures in place that are impartial, transparent and well enough documented to withstand any challenges to their result and are encouraged to use the national guidelines.

Super Regional Round

The winners of each region are arranged by the organiser into four groups of four regional winners. Each RD is assigned a group of four pubs. These pubs can be judged either by the RD themselves or a representative, but all the judging must be done by the same person.

Final Round

The winners of each of the Super Regional rounds form the final four "Finalists". Ideally, the judges selected will cover a number of categories including:-

- A member of the National Executive
- A Regional Director
- A member under the age of 30

The judges will include both male and female members who are experienced pub campaigners with full knowledge and understanding of the selection criteria and how they should be applied. There will also be a mix of people who have judged the final stage regularly and some who have not.

Competition Timetable

Usually the timescale is:-

- Branch Pub of the Year – deadline of mid-March
- Regional Pub of the Year – deadline of end of July
- Super-regional Judging – deadline of end of September
- Final Judging – deadline of end of December

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Judging Form and Criteria

All judging, from the super-regional round onwards, must be undertaken using the competition's **guidelines** and **judging form** (see Appendices [1](#) & [2](#)) that clearly set out the criteria and the weighting factor applied to each category.

Branches and regions may consider it desirable to take these criteria into account when judging at the preliminary stages and are encouraged to do so.

The guidelines and judging form are issued in a branch mail out at the same time as the deadlines are announced, generally in September/October. The exact dates will vary from year to year.

Certificates, Announcements and Presentations

- Branch Pub of the Year - branch is responsible for arranging the presentation to their winner.

It is a branch decision when they announce their Pub of the Year but it should be noted that an embargo beyond the middle of March could conflict with arrangements in place for the regional judging.

- Regional Pub of the Year - the RD is responsible for ensuring that the certificate is ordered and arranging any presentations.

Regional Directors can announce/present the award to their regional winner at a time to suit the region but it should be noted that a national press release listing all 16 regional winners is normally sent out by Head Office staff just before the bank holiday at the end of August.

- Super Regional Round – these certificates are ordered by the National Pub of the Year Coordinator and sent directly to the appropriate RD.

The RD for the regions where these pubs are located make appropriate arrangements for the presentation of these certificates before the end of November.

- Final Round – the National Pub of the Year coordinator arranges for this certificate to be produced and liaises with the CAMRA Press Office and the relevant RD with regard to the arrangements for this presentation, which normally takes place in early January.

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Appendix 1 – Pub of the Year Judging Guidelines

Pubs don't have to be picture postcard, unspoilt gems to be a Pub of the Year. Pubs of all sizes and locations, such as those located on a housing estate, modern city centre bars, micropubs or back street locals, where everyone is made to feel welcome, can be considered for this award.

Please find below a checklist to give you some guidance on what to look for in a Pub of the Year. Also, please try to be discreet when judging to try to avoid alerting pub staff that a judging visit is taking place.

CATEGORY 1 – QUALITY AND CONDITION OF REAL ALE / CIDER / PERRY

- It is the **quality and condition** that are important, and NOT the number available.
- Aspects to consider include: is it stale, is it too warm or too cold, and does it taste right for the style. Personal tastes for particular styles must be ignored.

CATEGORY 2 – PROMOTION AND KNOWLEDGE OF REAL ALE

- Is there clear and obvious support and promotion of real ale (real cider / perry if applicable)? Examples include: meet the brewer (cider maker) events, beer festivals, and trips to breweries (cider producers) or other festivals.
- Staff should enthusiastically promote real ale (real cider / perry if applicable) and be able to answer simple queries in relation to these products.
- The provision of information on products, producers, suppliers, etc. is desirable.

CATEGORY 3 – CLEANLINESS AND STAFF HYGIENE

- Toilets should be hygienic and clean with hot water, soap, suitable hand drying facilities etc..
- The pub should be clean throughout, including bar tops, tables and glasses.
- Staff should observe good hygiene practices, eg correct handling of glasses, not eating behind the bar, clean hands and surfaces regularly etc..

CATEGORY 4 – COMMUNITY FOCUS

- There should be a sense of community that is inclusive and welcoming to all age groups and sectors of the community. Do regular customers interact well with strangers?
- There should be support for local activities, such as sports teams, local groups, and local celebrations. Is there a notice board that lists local events, activities, or information on the local area?

CATEGORY 5 – SERVICE AND WELCOME

- All should be welcome. No aspect of the pub should cause offense by anything that could be offensive to a consumer due to their discriminatory nature. This includes websites and other aspects of social media.
- Service should be welcoming, friendly, polite, and also prompt whenever possible. If it is busy, a friendly acknowledgement of your presence is desirable.

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CATEGORY 6 – STYLE, DÉCOR AND ATMOSPHERE

- There should be a comfortable, pleasant and safe environment throughout.
- The style should show respect for the building and the décor should enhance it. Furnishing should be in a good state of repair.
- Is there a friendly atmosphere?
- Considering the time and day of the week, is it busy enough to create a good atmosphere?

CATEGORY 7 – SYMPATHY WITH CAMRA'S AIMS (As listed in CAMRA's Policies)

- Prices and opening hours should be clearly displayed.
- You should get a full measure or a top up without asking. Are oversized glasses used?
- Are there attempts to stimulate interest in the sorts of issues we're concerned about?
- Real ale, cider or perry should not be sold using misleading dispense methods.
- It should be clear who has brewed 'house branded' real ale, cider or perry.
- There should not be any inappropriate noisy electronic amusement machines.
- Real ales should not be served through tight sparklers unless brewed to be dispensed in that way.
- If a number of real ales are available a range of styles and strengths should be offered and a local product, where available.

CATEGORY 8 – OVERALL IMPRESSION AND VALUE

- This category covers the undefined elements that are not considered elsewhere.
- Are other products/services that may enhance a visit available, such as quality soft drinks?
- Did you enjoy your visit? Did you spend more time than you had expected or wish you had been able to stay longer? Would you look forward to a return visit?
- Taking into account the style of establishment and its location, did you feel that you received reasonable value? CAMRA discounts should not influence this.

These judging guidelines are a compulsory requirement for the Pub of the Year Competition from the regional round onwards.

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Appendix 2– Pub of the Year Judging Form

CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR JUDGING FORM

(To be used in conjunction with CAMRA's Pub of the Year Guidelines)

Branch:

Region:

Entry Name:

Address:.....

.....Telephone:

10 Points per Category x Weighting Factor. Max = 120

Category	Mark:	Factor:	Sub-Total
Mark out of 10 and multiply these by 2:			
1. Quality and Condition of Product	(x2)
2. Promotion and Knowledge of Product	(x2)
3. Cleanliness and Staff Hygiene	(x2)
4. Community Focus	(x2)
Mark out of 10:			
5. Service and Welcome	(x1)
6. Style, Décor and Atmosphere	(x1)
7. Sympathy with CAMRA's Aims	(x1)
8. Overall Impression and Value	(x1)

Total Score =

Comments:

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Judge:

Date of visit:

