



2025 National Amateur

Wine

Competition

Chantilly, Virginia

November 4-5, 2025

Register by **October 15, 2025**



Featuring:
Coravin® Wine Preservation System

Introduction

We invite you to submit your homemade wines to the 2025 **American Wine Society (AWS)** Amateur Wine Competition. The AWS has conducted this prestigious Amateur and Commercial wine competition annually for over 45 years. Based on feedback from you, we continue to improve our competition.

We look forward to seeing your product in our competition. Also, please let me know what we can do to improve our 2026 competition.

Please review our rules for this year's competition. Registration will remain open until **October 15, 2025**. Wine must be received between September 1st and October 22nd.

Questions may be directed to Vince Williams, the **AWS** Amateur Wine Competition at AWC@AmericanWineSociety.org or 618-363-3015.

Eligibility

You must be an amateur winemaker.

Amateur winemakers make wine either alone or in collaboration with other amateur winemakers. As an amateur competition, no individual or any member of the group should be directly involved with commercial winemaking. Any person who wholly owns, manages, supervises, or receives any form of compensation for being involved with the operation of any Bonded Wine Celler may NOT enter the **AWS** Amateur Wine Competition. Any inquiries regarding amateur status may be directed to the Amateur Wine Competition Chair. Neither growing grapes commercially nor investing in commercial wineries does NOT automatically disqualify an individual.

NOTE: The Code of Federal Regulations, Title 27, Part 24, Section 75 (27 CFR 24.75) allows amateur winemaking and entrance into wine competitions.

Commercial Winemaking. Commercial wine-making is a business enterprise certified as a bonded winery, authorized by the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, for the production and sale of wine. Any wine that may be legally sold is not an Amateur Wine. Please consider registering for the **AWS** Commercial Wine Competition.

Commercial Winery. Facilities of a commercial winery may not be used during any stage of wine preparation or storage. Using a winery as the originating or receiving shipping location is allowed.

Ingredients. Wines may not be produced from synthetic products. Wines must be free of artificial coloring or artificial flavor enhancers. Natural sugars, wood, or the effects of specialty yeast and/or supplemental tannins are allowed.

Registration

Overview. Registration is mandatory by **October 15, 2025**. We use an online registration. If you would prefer to register using a manual process, please contact the Amateur Wine Competition chair (awc@americanwinesociety.org) for the registration form and instructions.

Categories. Wines are judged in the “Wine Classification” category designated by the winemaker, so care must be taken to choose the correct category. For example, a sparkling wine entered in a still wine category would be considered a fault. If in doubt, contact the Amateur Wine Competition Chair.

Deadline. Registration information is due: **October 15, 2025**.

Estate Grown. Estate grown must be produced on the winemaker’s property (owned or leased). Currently, we do not have a percentage designation for estate grown and the TTB definition doesn’t apply since we don’t require AVA labeling.

Fanciful Names. Wines may be submitted with fanciful names but are not required. If used, they should not be deceptive (e.g., “All Chard” when only a small percentage of chardonnay is present). Care should be taken to avoid using trademark names or terms.

Fees. Entry fees cover the expense of qualified judges, competition correspondence, award medals, and mailing the judges’ score sheets to each participant. One medal is presented or shipped to the winemaker per winning entry. Additional medals are available for purchase. Winemakers may choose not to apply for a medal but may still receive “Best of” awards and judges’ comments.

| | AWS Member | Non- Member |
|---------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Medal Option | \$25 | \$35 |
| Without Medal | \$20 | \$30 |

NOTE: The principal (first listed) team member of a wine-making team must be an **AWS** Member to get the member rate.

There is no additional fee for the label competition beyond entering the wine competition.

Fortified Wine. Fruit or non-grape wines which are fortified with a distillate must be entered in the appropriate Fortified category.

Fruit / Grape Blend. Blends that include grape wine and fruit wine must be entered in the Fruit category of “fruit/grape blend” and designate proportions.

Kit Wines. In all categories, wine kits and concentrate-based wines will compete with fresh fruit and juice-based wines.

NOTE: If the kit maker doesn’t provide a breakdown of the varieties within the kit, you may enter “Kit” for the variety.]

Label Competition. The label must be crafted by a winemaker (or team member) and attached to the bottle of judged wine using the same address and deadline. These will be judged by our certified judges or design professionals. Criteria in judging include creativity, information content, clarity, artistic appeal, and pizzazz.

Enter only one bottle label per winemaker.

A copy of the label needs to be emailed to the Amateur Wine Competition chair (awc@americanwinesociety.org) for inclusion in the award announcement and **AWS** publications.

The submitter is responsible for not violating any copyright or trademark protections.

Membership. Both **AWS** members and non-members may enter the competition. **AWS** members receive a discounted entry price.

Multiple Entries. A winemaker may enter multiple wines into the competition; there is no limit to the number of wines a person or team may enter. Two different individuals may not enter the same wine. A single fermentation made into different final products (based upon residual sugar or finishing treatment) may be entered as two separate wines.

NOTE: Only one registration per email address is allowed. If individual and team entries are going to be entered, separate email addresses are necessary.

Multiple Winemakers. If there is collaboration all persons involved must be named on the entry form and are considered as one entrant. Since this is an amateur competition, no team member should be directly involved with commercial winemaking.

Payment. Payment options:

- PayPal (with online registration)
- Check/money order (mailed to registration address)

- Credit card (called to **AWS** offices at 888-297-9070).

DO NOT INCLUDE PAYMENT WITH YOUR WINE SHIPMENT.

Re-entering Wine. Wines that received a GOLD or DOUBLE GOLD medal in a previous **AWS** Amateur Wine Competition are not eligible to be entered.

Single Variety. Wines entered as varietals should contain at least 75% of that designated varietal. Wines containing less than 75% of one varietal should be entered as blends. Winemakers must list all varietals and the percentage of each.

Varieties. Grape varieties are classified as *Vitis vinifera*, Hybrid, and Native. Native grapes are those of the following species: *Vitis labrusca*, *Vitis riparia*, *Muscadinia rotundifolia*, *Vitis rupestris*, or *Vitis aestivalis*.

Vintage. Vintage is typically the year in which the preponderance of the fruit (or similar) was harvested if known. Non-vintage can be selected for multiple years or unknown vintage. Kit wines with unknown harvest dates may choose to add the date fermentation began.

Bottles

Capsules. Capsules are permitted but not required.

Cider Bottling. To allow for initial scoring, Best of Category, and Best of Show judging, a minimum of 750ml is required in one or more bottles. Beer or still wine bottles may be used.

Closures. All glass bottles will be closed with an appropriate closure for the bottle.

- Cider may use crown cap, natural cork, or synthetic cork
- Fortified wine may use T-cork, natural cork, or synthetic cork
- Mead may use crown cap, natural cork, or synthetic cork
- Sparkling wines will use crown cap or cork with safety cage
- Still wines may use natural cork,

synthetic cork or screw cap (bottles with threads must use screw caps)

NOTE: Natural cork is preferred for still wines to allow for the use of Coravin®

Competition Label. To identify which bottle is which wine from your entry, affix the competition label received in your registration confirmation email. The entry number would correspond to the entry numbers on your confirmation sheet.

Winemaker labels may remain on the wine, even if they are not submitted for the label competition. Ensure that our competition label is affixed to the bottle so our staff can properly account for your entry.

Fortified Wine Bottling. To allow for initial scoring, Best of Category, and Best of Show judging, a minimum of 750ml is required

in one or more bottles. Fortified or still wine bottles may be used.

Mead Bottling. To allow for initial scoring, Best of Category, and Best of Show judging, a minimum of 750ml of mead is required in one or more bottles. Beer or still wine bottles may be used.

Sparkling Wine Bottling. To allow for initial scoring, Best of Category, and Best of Show judging, a minimum of 750ml is required in one or more bottles. Sparkling wine bottles shall be used.

Still Wine Bottling. To allow for initial scoring, Best of Category, & Best of Show judging, a minimum of 750ml of wine is required in one or more bottles. Standard Burgundy, Bordeaux, or Schlegel-shaped bottles or bag-in-box may be used.

Shipping

Overview. No wines will be accepted at the competition site.

Dates. Wines must be received between **September 1 and October 22**. North Carolina requires an amateur competition to dispose of all amateur wines within 30 days of receipt.

Wines received between October 18 and the end of judging will be judged but may be flighted separately.

Mailing Label. In addition to the delivery and return address, it may be beneficial to include a label to help negotiate your shipper's requirements, such as:

ATTENTION

Food Samples for Evaluation

No Commercial Value – Non-Perishable

Conforms to IRS and FDA Restrictions

Not Taxable per 27CFR24.75

HANDLE AS GLASS

Notification of Receipt. Our volunteers periodically go to the reception point to check in wine, not daily. If you're concerned if the wine made it to the reception point, please ensure you have package tracking from your carrier.

Packaging. Commercial wine shipping containers should be used. Every reasonable effort will be made to contact entrants whose bottles have broken to make arrangements for sending replacement bottles.

Shipping Address. Ship to:

Effingham Manor

c/o AWS AWC

14325 Trotters Ridge Pl

Nokesville, VA 20181

NOTE: Include a copy of your online confirmation with each shipment.

Awards and Judges' Notes

Award Announcements. The Award Winners will be announced in mid-November. Winners will also be posted on the **AWS** website, americanwinesociety.org, by December 15 and published in the **AWS NEWS**.

Best of Category. The “Best of Category” winners will be clearly superior in their winemaker-designated category.

Best of Show. The “Best of Show” wine will have an overall enological excellence that surpasses all other wines in the competition. The “Best in Show” judging will be done following panel judging and “Best of Category” judging.

Medals. The average scores from the judging panels will decide the medal for a given wine:

- Double Gold (All Judges score in the Gold range)
- Gold (17.0-20.0)
- Silver (15.0-16.9)
- Bronze (13.0-14.9)
- No medal (Below 13.0)

Results. The Award Winners will be announced at the **AWS** Conference (Nov 6-8, 2025). Score sheets and appropriate medals will be sent out by the end of December 2025. We will also have the information posted to the AWS website (<https://americanwinesociety.org/amateur-wine-competition/>) by December 15th.

Best of Class awards should arrive by the end of January 2026 (based upon delivery from our awards and engraving company).

Wine Classifications

Wines containing less than 75% of one Varietal should be entered as blends.

White Vinifera

Table wines made from a Vinifera species of grape.

| | |
|-----|-------------------------------|
| 105 | Chardonnay – Unoaked |
| 110 | Chardonnay – Oaked |
| 115 | Albariño |
| 120 | Riesling (Dry) |
| 121 | Riesling (Semi-Dry) |
| 122 | Riesling (Semi-Sweet) |
| 123 | Riesling (Sweet) |
| 130 | Gewürztraminer |
| 140 | Sauvignon Blanc |
| 141 | Muscat |
| 145 | Petit Manseng |
| 150 | Pinot Grigio (Pinot Gris) |
| 160 | Viognier |
| 195 | Other Wine Vinifera Varietals |
| 199 | White Vinifera Blends |

Red Vinifera

Table wines made from a Vinifera species of grape.

| | |
|-----|------------------------------|
| 210 | Cabernet Sauvignon |
| 220 | Zinfandel |
| 230 | Merlot |
| 240 | Syrah/Shiraz |
| 245 | Barbera |
| 250 | Pinot Noir (Pinot Nero) |
| 255 | Nebbiolo |
| 260 | Cabernet Franc |
| 265 | Malbec |
| 270 | Sangiovese |
| 275 | Gamay |
| 280 | Petit Verdot |
| 285 | Tannat |
| 290 | Petite Sirah |
| 295 | Other Red Vinifera Varietals |
| 297 | Red Vinifera Rhône Blends |
| 298 | Red Vinifera Bordeaux Blends |
| 299 | Other Red Vinifera Blends |

White Hybrid

Table wines made from grapes crossed from more than one species.

| | |
|-----|------------------------------|
| 310 | Seyval |
| 320 | Vidal Blanc |
| 330 | Cayuga White |
| 340 | Traminette |
| 360 | Chardonel |
| 365 | Vignoles |
| 370 | La Crescent |
| 395 | Other White Hybrid Varietals |
| 399 | White Hybrid Blends |

Red Hybrid

Table wines made from grapes crossed from more than one species.

| | |
|-----|----------------------------|
| 410 | Chambourcin |
| 415 | Baco Noir |
| 420 | Chancellor |
| 430 | DeChaunac |
| 440 | Foch |
| 450 | Frontenac |
| 460 | Corot Noir |
| 465 | Marquette |
| 470 | Noiret |
| 495 | Other Red Hybrid Varietals |
| 499 | Red Hybrid Blends |

White Native

Table wines made from a North American species of grape.

| | |
|-----|------------------------------|
| 510 | Delaware |
| 520 | Diamond |
| 530 | Catawba |
| 535 | White Muscadines |
| 540 | Niagara |
| 545 | Other White Varietals |
| 549 | White Native Varietal Blends |

Red Native

Table wines made from a North American species of grape.

| | |
|-----|----------------------------|
| 550 | Concord |
| 560 | Cynthian/Norton |
| 570 | Red Muscadines |
| 595 | Other Red Native Varieties |
| 599 | Red Native Blends |

Mixed Blends

Table wines made from grapes, from different main categories. (Examples: Vinifera/Hybrid, Hybrid/Native, Vinifera/Native.)

| | |
|-----|--------------------|
| 610 | White Mixed Blends |
| 620 | Red Mixed Blends |

Rosé

Blush, pink or rose colored, grape table wines. Rosé Fruit Wines should be entered in the appropriate Fruit Category.

| | |
|-----|----------|
| 660 | Vinifera |
| 670 | Hybrid |
| 680 | Native |
| 690 | Blends |

Non-Grape

Table wines made from fruits, vegetables, flowers, and grasses. (Also see "Mead/Honey Wine".)

| | |
|-----|---|
| 710 | Apple or Pear Wine |
| 720 | Stone Fruits (ex: Peach, Plum, Apricot, Cherry, etc.) |
| 730 | Raspberry or Blackberry |
| 735 | Strawberry |
| 740 | Blueberry or Elderberry |
| 750 | Specialty (ex: Dandelion, Rhubarb, Citrus, Vegetable) |
| 760 | Cider/Perry (Apple/Pear) |
| 790 | Fruit infused |
| 795 | Other |
| 799 | Fruit Blends/Fruit-Grape Blends |

Non-Fortified Dessert Wines

| | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|
| 820 | Ice Wine |
| 830 | Late Harvest Wines |
| 827 | Other Non-Fortified Dessert Wines |

Fortified Dessert

Dessert Wines over 16% alcohol

| | |
|-----|-------------------------------|
| 830 | Port Style |
| 835 | Sherries |
| 896 | Other Fortified Dessert Wines |

Mead/Honey Wine

| | |
|-----|--|
| 900 | Traditional/Show Mead |
| 905 | Melomel (Brewed with Fruit) |
| 910 | Metheglin (Brewed with Spice) |
| 915 | Great Mead/Sack (Brewed with more honey) |
| 920 | Short Mead/Hydromel (Brewed with more water) |
| 945 | Other |

Sparkling

Wines made effervescent by Carbon Dioxide

| | |
|-----|--|
| 990 | Sparkling Grape and Non-Grape including blends |
|-----|--|

