

WSET Systematic Approach to Tasting Spirits® (Diploma)

CHECKLIST: EXAMPLES OF TASTING TERMS

APPEARANCE

Clarity/brightness	bright or dull, clear or hazy/cloudy (<i>faulty?</i>)	
Intensity	water-white – pale – medium – deep – opaque	
Colour	white golden brown coloured	colourless – green – lemon-green – lemon gold – amber – copper tawny – mahogany – brown pink – red – orange – yellow – green – blue – purple – brown – black (<i>natural/synthetic?</i>)
Other observations	e.g. legs/tears, louching	

NOSE

Condition	clean – faulty (<i>fault: feinty – woody – TCA – stale – other taint</i>)
Intensity	neutral – light – medium (-) – medium – medium (+) – pronounced
Maturation	unaged – rested – short ageing – matured – very aged (rancio)
Aroma characteristics	e.g. fruits, flowers, vegetables, grains, botanicals, herbs, oak, sweetness, other
Other observations	e.g. changes of character after adding water to the sample

PALATE

Sweetness	dry – off-dry – medium (-) – medium – medium (+) – sweet – luscious
Alcohol	comment on integration, effect on texture
Body	light – medium (-) – medium – medium (+) – full
Flavour intensity	neutral – light – medium (-) – medium – medium (+) – pronounced
Flavour characteristics	e.g. fruits, flowers, vegetables, grains, botanicals, herbs, oak, sweetness, other
Other observations	e.g. tannins, texture, balance
Length	short – medium (-) – medium – medium (+) – long
Finish	comment on: balance, complexity, cleanness

CONCLUSIONS

Quality	faulty – poor – acceptable – good – very good – outstanding
Reasons for quality	e.g. balance, length, concentration, complexity, typicality
Origins	(if applicable e.g. Cognac, Islay)
Raw materials	(e.g. grapes, other fruits, grains, agave, sugar cane, molasses)
Style	(e.g. VSOP, Reposado)
Price	(approximate retail price, including all taxes):

WSET Systematic Approach to Tasting® 2011 is reproduced by permission of the Wine & Spirit Education Trust.
To find out more about WSET, visit: www.wsetglobal.com



WSET Systematic Approach to Tasting Spirits® (Diploma)

AROMA AND FLAVOUR CHARACTERISTICS (SPIRITS AND LIQUEURS)

FRUITY/FLORAL (ESTERY) – fresh or cooked? natural or synthetic?	
Citrus Fruit	orange, tangerine, grapefruit, lemon, lime
Orchard Fruit	apple (green/ripe?) gooseberry, pear, apricot, peach, plum, red cherry, black cherry
Berry/Currant	grape, strawberry, raspberry, redcurrant, blackcurrant, blackberry
Tropical Fruit	banana, kiwi, lychee, mango, melon, passion fruit, pineapple
Dried Fruit	fig, prune, raisin, sultana, citrus peel, fruit cake
Flowers	rose, violet, perfume, lavender, lilac, dried flowers
VEGETAL/GRAINS	
Cereal	husk, porridge, barley, rye, linseed, malt, flour
Fresh vegetable	agave, bell pepper, mushroom, asparagus
Herbaceous	grass, hay, eucalyptus, blackcurrant leaf, wet leaves, conifer
Botanicals/herbs	juniper, coriander, basil, rosemary, thyme, sage, lemongrass, mint
Kernel	chocolate, coffee, hazelnut, almond, coconut, cashew
OAK/SWEETNESS/SPICE	
Oak	toast, coffee, cedar, char, spice, sherry, sawdust
Sweetness	corn, vanilla, butterscotch, menthol, caramel, burnt sugar, toffee, molasses
Sweet	anise, fennel, liquorice, cinnamon, cloves, ginger, nutmeg, cardamom, black/white pepper, cumin
OTHER	
Peat (phenolic)	peat, medicinal, smoked fish, earthy, smoky, seaweed
Animal	leather, meaty, gravy, yeast extract
Rancio	fruit cake, candied fruits, mushroom, forest floor, polish
Solvent	peardrop, turpentine, paint, varnish
Feinty	wax, leather, biscuits, tobacco, cheese, sweat, plastic
Sulphur	rubber, spent matches, boiled cabbage, drains

TEXTURE AND BALANCE

Component Balance	
Sweetness	unctuous, cloying, sticky
Alcohol	delicate, light, thin, soft, smooth, integrated, warm, generous, hot, heady, spirity, burning, harsh
Overall Harmony	unbalanced by alcohol, sugar, wood, other components shapeless, angular, clumsy, disjointed elegant, harmonious, mellow
Texture	
Tannins	Level: trace, noticeable, gentle, grippy, intrusive Effect: bitter, austere, dusty, woody, drying
Viscosity/Alcohol	thin, fluid, supple, creamy, mouthcoating, oily, rich, thick, heavy
Overall Impressions	
Cleanness	clean, well-defined, vivid, lively, refreshing, dirty, stale, dull, tired
Complexity	one-dimensional, simple some complexity from..., complex due to..., multilayered (list what contributes to complexity)