

# WSET® Systematic Approach to Spirit Tasting (Diploma)

## CHECKLIST: EXAMPLES OF TASTING TERMS

### APPEARANCE

**Clarity** bright – clear – dull – hazy – cloudy (*faulty?*)

**Intensity** water-white – pale – medium (-) – medium – medium (+) – deep – opaque

**Colour**

white	colourless – green – lemon-green – lemon
golden	gold – amber – copper
brown	tawny – mahogany – brown
coloured	pink – red – orange – yellow – green – blue – purple – brown – black ( <i>natural/synthetic?</i> )

**Other observations** (*eg legs/tears, louching*)

### NOSE

**Condition** clean – faulty (*fault: feinty – woody – TCA – stale – other taint*)

**Intensity** neutral – light – medium (-) – medium – medium (+) – pronounced

**Maturation** unaged – rested – short ageing – matured – very aged (*rancio*)

**Aroma characteristics** fruit/floral – vegetable/grain – botanical/herbal – oak – sweetness – other

**Other observations** (*eg changes of character after adding water to the sample*)

### PALATE

**Sweetness** dry – off-dry – medium (-) – medium – medium (+) – sweet – luscious

**Alcohol** soft – smooth – integrated – warming – harsh

**Body** light – medium (-) – medium – medium (+) – full

**Flavour intensity** neutral – light – medium (-) – medium – medium (+) – pronounced

**Flavour characteristics** fruit/floral – vegetable/grain – botanical/herbal – oak – sweetness – other

**Other observations** (*eg tannins, texture, balance, effect of adding water*)

**Length** short – medium (-) – medium – medium (+) – long

**Finish** balance – complexity – cleanness

### CONCLUSIONS

**Quality** faulty – poor – acceptable – good – very good – outstanding

**Reasons for quality** eg balance, length, concentration, complexity, typicity

**Origins** (if applicable eg Cognac, Islay)

**Raw materials** (eg grapes, other fruits, grains, agave, sugar cane, molasses)

**Style** (eg VSOP, Reposado)

**Price** (approximate retail price):

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## AROMA AND FLAVOUR CHARACTERISTICS (SPIRITS AND LIQUEURS)

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

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