Pub of the Year (POTY) & Club of the Year (COTY) Selection Process

Introduction

The vast majority of CAMRA branches make a Pub of the Year (POTY) & Club of the Year (COTY) award. There are several strong campaigning and promotional reasons for doing so:

- pubs & clubs need all the publicity that they can get and award announcements stimulate interest not only in the winning pub/club in particular, but also in pubs generally;
- the media love competitions and, with the right press release and timing, can gain good publicity for the pub/club and the campaign;
- it rewards excellence and, hopefully, inspires other pubs & clubs to achieve similar high standards;
- it makes clear what we in CAMRA consider makes a great pub/club;
- in most cases, the branch POTY & COTY will feed into the national POTY & COTY awards.

Selection

In line with the Good Beer Selection process, at the end of November the Short List of pubs is drawn up by eliminating GBG nominations that do not meet the selection requirements of: -

1. No change in Ownership or licensee
2. Still serving real ale; and
3. Not breaking any national policy items.

Pubs where there has been a change of licensee are considered for inclusion on the Short List by deleting the Beer Quality Scores for previous licensees.
Any pub with a change of licensee after 1st August is not included.

Short List

The short list is broken up into 3 equal sections;

Band A – North, generally north east of Telford including Market Drayton & Newport
Band B – Central, generally Telford area
Band C – South, generally Bridgnorth and south east Shropshire

If a certain club has been nominated and included in the short list then it will appear in one of these sections. But any club can be voted for even though it does not appear on any list.

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VOTING

During December the branch POTY & COTY voting forms are distributed to all members.

Members can vote for up to 6 pubs, 2 from each of the bands A, B, C. They are not obliged to vote for pubs in all sections and may even limit their vote to 1 pub in any section.

As mentioned above there is no list of clubs, so we ask members to list up to three clubs within our branch area that have a good commitment to real ale and CAMRA's general policies and place them in 1/2/3 order on the form.

IMPORTANT: Voting for POTY & COTY is by email or postal voting only and the last date for voting is 31 January. There is no voting for POTY & COTY at the February Good Beer Guide selection evening

Members should only vote for pubs and clubs that they have visited in the last year

Counting Votes

This is carried out by the Pub Surveys Officer. The top 2 pubs from each section with the most votes become the six finalists. In the event of a pub having an equal number of votes then the placing is decided by the pubs average beer quality score. The results are declared at the February Good Beer Guide selection evening. The 6 pub finalists go forward to the next process of judging by independent non-branch members.
The club with the most votes is automatically declared as Branch Club of the Year. In the event of a club having an equal number of votes then the placing is decided by the clubs average beer quality score. The club then goes forward to the Regional section of the competition. The branch must offer one member to be part of the Regional judges for a branches' nominated club to be accepted in the regional section of the competition.

Final Judging – Pubs only

The Pub Surveys Officer invites members from other branches (preferably from adjacent branches) to visit and judge all of the 6 pubs. The forms and criteria used are set out in CAMRA guidelines. **(see Appendices 1 & 2)**

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Final Results

The forms are returned to the Pub Surveys officer and the results are discussed with the branch committee prior to the March branch meeting (usually the second Tuesday of the March)
The branch awards are:

Branch Pub of the Year is the Telford & East Shropshire CAMRA branch pub that receives the highest overall score by the judges. This pub goes forward to next round* of judging representing either Bridgnorth or Market Drayton or Telford Pub of the Year.

Market Drayton Branch Pub of the Year is the pub that receives the highest score by the judges in Band A. This pub goes forward to next round* of judging representing as Market Drayton Pub of the Year.
(It could also be **Branch Pub of the Year** – see above)

Telford Branch Pub of the Year is the pub that receives the highest score by the judges in Band B. This pub goes forward to next round* of judging representing as Telford Pub of the Year.
(It could also be **Branch Pub of the Year** – see above)

Bridgnorth Branch Pub of the Year is the pub that receives the highest score by the judges in Band C. This pub goes forward to next round* of judging representing as Bridgnorth Pub of the Year.
(It could also be **Branch Pub of the Year** – see above)

*Shropshire area branches (Shrewsbury & West Shropshire branch and Telford & East Shropshire branches); and
Marches area (Shropshire and Herefordshire & Worcestershire branches)

Branch Town Pub of the Year is the highest scoring second placed pub in either band A, B or C. This pub DOES NOT go forward to next round* of judging.

Rural Pub of the Year is the highest scoring rural pub in either band A, B or C. If it is decided that none of the pubs can be defined as "Rural" then the award is given to a pub decided by the branch committee. This pub DOES NOT go forward to next round* of judging.

If you have any queries regarding this guide then please contact Dave Haddon dhaddon@hotmail.com

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Appendix 1

CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR
JUDGING FORM – GUIDANCE NOTES

1.
INTRODUCTION
1.1
These notes are intended to assist people judging pubs for the POTY competition by explaining what the various criteria shown on the Judging Form actually mean.
1.2
Judging something like a pub can never be an exact science but hopefully these notes will help make clearer what you should be looking for. There is also a brief summary of relevant CAMRA policies; one of POTY's main purposes is to support and promote those policies.
2.
GUIDANCE NOTES
2.1
Quality of Beer etc. This obviously has to be the most important single factor in judging a pub for a CAMRA award; if it doesn't sell excellent quality beer etc., then we should not want to be associated with it. Please note that the pub doesn't need to sell a wide range of beers to score highly. Meaning that a pub with 12 handpulls is just as equal as a pub with just one. A pub selling a couple of ales in tip-top condition is infinitely preferable to one selling seven or eight of variable quality. Also the fact that a pub is a tied house mustn't be held against it in any way.
2.2
Atmosphere/Style/Décor - This is partly about the "feel" of the interior – is it a nice place to be? It's also about the extent to which the most has been made of the actual building. Is the décor appropriate to the type of pub it is? Does the style show respect for the building? Factors like imagination, taste and restraint all come into play. Pubs certainly don't have to be picture-postcard, unspoilt rural gems to score highly here. Estate pubs, modern city centre bars, back street boozers – all can be excellent in their own terms. It's the clichéd approach, the lack of imagination, the identikit and the formulaic that we want to get away from.
2.3
Service and Welcome Pretty self-evident this one - Is the service prompt, efficient and friendly? Do you get full measure or at least a top up without having to ask? Does the person serving you seem to regard you as a human being rather than just a source of revenue?
2.4
Community Focus - Slight change from clientele mix this one but just as relevant. It is possible to have a community pub in the city and town centres just as much as out in the urban areas. Notice boards feature highly listing local events etc. sports teams linked with the pub, a sense of pub belonging to the people and the local community. This then leads nicely into clientele mix as in previous years.

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When you go in do you feel comfortable, do the people there also feel comfortable and has a pleasant feel about the place. If a pub, intentionally or unintentionally, operates in such a way as to exclude some sectors of the community then that counts against it for this competition. That's not to say that pubs which target a particular type of clientele cannot be excellent in their own right – but a CAMRA Pub of the Year does need to be inclusive, not exclusive. So look out for whether the pub attracts a good cross section of people and age groups. Appears to be the hub or a vital part of the community and is there anything about the pub which might cause discomfort (physical or otherwise) to certain groups which harms its' ability to function properly.

2.5)

Sympathy with CAMRA - Aims Relevant CAMRA policies on pubs are summarised in the next section and a POTY candidate would be expected to conform to those policies. On a more general note, does the pub espouse and promote our values? Is cask beer given a positive push here? Is information offered about the ales sold? Does the pub try to stimulate interest in the sorts of issues we're concerned about?

2.6

Good Value - This is about value for money, but in the widest sense of the term i.e. not just how cheap the ale is. The questions to ask revolve around – having made the effort to come here, having devoted some of my valuable time to the journey, having spent my hard-earned dosh, how good a pub experience have I had? In other words it's a bit of a catch-all and also acknowledges that it's not always easy to pin point exactly why a pub seems so good, but somehow it all comes together and the whole thing works.

2.7

Comments - You don't have to complete this section but if there are any points or issues to which you want to draw attention this is the place to do it. In particular if you have marked a pub low on one or more criteria, it would be helpful if you could explain why. You might also wish to jot down "mitigating factors" e.g. you visited the pub on a quiet lunchtime and therefore didn't see it at its liveliest.

3.

RELEVANT CAMRA POLICIES

3.1

For a comprehensive schedule of CAMRA policies, refer to the regularly-issued Internal and External Policy Documents. If a POTY candidate offends national policy to the extent that it would not be eligible for inclusion in the Good Beer Guide, then it must automatically be excluded from the competition. Positive support of CAMRA policy will clearly count in its favour.

3.2

Pubs should be considered as important centres of community life and places for informal social drinking.

3.3

We oppose entry restrictions on grounds of dress, shape, size, gender, sexuality, colour, ethnic origin or religion.

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3.4
Where practicable access should be possible for people with disabilities who should be treated with care and consideration.
3.5
We are concerned at the damaging effect of unnecessarily noisy electronic amusement machines.
3.6
Price lists should be prominently displayed, as should opening hours.
3.7
We support the introduction of full-pint legislation (and would therefore expect POTY candidates to give full measure).
3.8
Beers should not be served through a tight sparkler if not brewed to be dispensed in that way.
3.9
We deplore pubs advertising beers as "house brands" when they aren't produced by or exclusively for that pub.
3.10
We oppose the selling of non-traditional beer or cider using hand-pumps (real or fake).
3.11
We will expose pubs guilty of over-pricing.
3.12
We will promote both mild and real draught cider and perry.
4.
CONCLUSIONS
4.1
Judging a pub, especially if you can only make one visit, isn't an easy task or an exact science. Ideally you'd want to go there on several occasions at different times of the week but this isn't always possible. If you can choose a time when the pub could be expected to be reasonably busy, this is always best.
4.2
Try to spread your scores. Don't be afraid of marking low if you feel the pub hasn't performed in a particular area. There's a natural temptation to "crowd" scores at the top end which results in all the pubs you judge receiving very similar totals. Very rare is it likely that two pubs are the same, you need a keen eye and be observant to most detail as you can but don't over simplify.
4.3
If there is a chance to talk to the licensee try to grab it – though don't of course say what you're doing!
4.4
Finally pub-judging is usually great fun, especially when you find yourself in a belting pub you haven't been to before. ENJOY!

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Appendix 2

CAMRA
PUB OF THE YEAR
JUDGING FORM

Branch: ……...

Region: ……...

Entry Name: ……..
Address: ……
……..Telephone: ……..

10 Points per Criteria x Weighting Factor. Max = 150

Category Mark: Factor: Sub-Total		
Quality of Beer/Cider/Perry	…… (x4)	…….
Atmosphere/Style/Décor	…… (x2)	…….
Service/Welcome	…… (x2)	…….
Community Focus	…… (x3)	……..
Sympathy with CAMRA Aims	…… (x2)	……..
Good Value	…… (x2)	……..
	Total Score =	**……..**

Comments: …….. …
……
……
……
……

Judge: …… Date: ……...

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