

## Appearance

### Comment on clarity:

Clarity may be cloudy to crystal clear, with clearer meads preferred.

### If carbonated, comment on bubbles or head formation:

Size, persistence, quantity, rate, and mousse. Smaller bubbles are more desirable and indicative of higher quality than larger bubbles.

### Comment on color:

The color may vary widely depending on honey variety and any optional ingredients. If no honey variety is declared, almost any color is acceptable. If a honey variety is declared, the color should generally be suggestive of the honey used. Hue, saturation and purity of color should be considered. Stronger versions (standard and sack) may show signs of body (e.g., legs, meniscus) but higher carbonation levels can interfere with this perception.

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## Aroma

### Comment on the mead's aroma:

The aromatics may seem vinous, fruity, floral, or spicy. The bouquet (rich, complex aromatics arising from the combination of ingredients, fermentation and aging) should show a pleasant, clean fermentation character, with fresh aromatics being preferred over dirty, muddled, yeasty, or sulfury notes.

### Comment on the intensity of the honey aroma:

Stronger or sweeter meads may have a stronger honey aroma than drier or weaker versions. If honey varieties are declared, is the varietal character of the honey present?

### Comment on the presence of offensive odors:

Off odors include phenols (harsh or chemical) and oxidation (often a strong sherry-like or light molasses-like character. A subtle, sherry-like oxidation character can add complexity in some situations, but not if the oxidation ruins the character of the mead. Alcohol aromatics may be present, but hot, solventy or irritating overtones are a defect. The harmony and balance of the aroma and bouquet should be pleasant and enticing.

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## Flavor

### Comment on the mead's flavor aspects:

Yeast or fermentation characteristics may be none to noticeable, with estery, fresh and clean flavors being most desirable. Alcohol flavors should be smooth and well-aged, not harsh, hot, or solventy. Higher carbonation (if present) enhances the acidity and gives a "bite" to the finish. Very light oxidation may be present, depending on age, but an excessive molasses, sherry-like or papery character should be avoided.

### Comment on honey flavor and sweetness:

Stronger, sweeter meads will have a stronger honey flavor than drier, weaker versions. If honey varieties are declared, is the varietal character of the honey apparent? In no case should the residual sweetness be syrupy, cloying or seem like unfermented honey. If dry, is there any perceived sweetness?

### Comment on the aftertaste:

Mead generally lingers longer than other alcohols. How long does the flavor linger? Is the aftertaste pleasant?

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## Mouthfeel

### Comment on the mead's body:

The body can vary widely, although most are in the medium-light to medium-full range. Body generally increases with stronger and/or sweeter meads and generally decreases with lower gravity and/or drier meads. Sensations of body should not be accompanied by an overwhelmingly cloying sweetness (even in sweet meads). A very thin or watery body is likewise undesirable.

### Comment on the acidity and astringency:

Acidity and tannin help balance the overall honey, sweetness and alcohol presentation.

### Does the carbonation impact the mead's mouthfeel?

High carbonation will enhance the acidity and give bite to the finish.

### Is a warming alcohol presence perceived?

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