

WSET Level 2 Systematic Approach to Tasting Spirits®

APPEARANCE

Clarity clear – hazy

Intensity water-white – pale – medium – deep – opaque

Colour colourless – lemon – gold – amber – brown
pink – red – orange – yellow – green – blue – purple – brown – black

Other observations e.g. louching

NOSE

Condition clean – unclean

Intensity neutral – light – medium – pronounced

Aroma characteristics e.g. raw material, processing, oak and maturation

PALATE

Sweetness dry – off-dry – medium – sweet

Texture e.g. rough, smooth, watery, mouthfilling, warming

Flavour intensity neutral – light – medium – pronounced

Flavour characteristics e.g. raw material, processing, oak and maturation

Finish *length* short – medium – long
nature neutral – simple – some complexity – very complex

CONCLUSIONS

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



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WSET Level 2 Spirit-Lexicon:

supporting the WSET Level 2 Systematic Approach to Tasting Spirits

AROMA AND FLAVOUR

Raw Materials

Corn	butterscotch, sweetcorn, popcorn, caramel, burnt sugar, toffee, menthol
Malted barley	husk, porridge, barley, malt, flour
Rye	rye bread, gingerbread, peppercorn, allspice
Grape	grape, fig, prune, raisin, sultana, citrus elderflower, orange blossom, rose, violet, perfume, lavender, lilac, dried flowers
Agave	agave, peppercorn, root vegetable, olive
Sugar cane	grass, caramel, burnt sugar, toffee, treacle, molasses
Fruits	apple, pear, apricot, peach, plum, cherry, marzipan strawberry, raspberry, blackcurrant, blackberry orange, lemon
Botanicals	juniper, citrus peel, root, earthy, cumin, peppercorn aniseed, fennel, liquorice cinnamon, cloves, ginger, nutmeg, cardamom coriander, basil, rosemary, thyme, sage, lemongrass, mint

Processing (raw material, fermentation, distillation)

Smoke	peat, medicinal, smoked fish, smoky, seaweed smoke, char, charred vegetables
Esters	banana, apple, pear, floral, pineapple, melon, mango, pear drops, nail varnish
Other	pungent solvent (prickling sensation on the nose), plastic, cheese, sweaty, burnt rubber

Oak and Maturation

Oak	vanilla, toast, coffee, cedar, char, spice, sherry, sawdust, coconut, nuts
Age/rancio	fruit cake, candied fruits, leather, tobacco, wet leaves, mushroom, forest floor, meaty, yeast extract, wood polish

TEXTURE/OTHER

Does the spirit feel:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• rough, harsh, sharp?• warming?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• mouthfilling, full?• watery, thin?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• smooth, silky?
Other	bitterness		