CAMRA's Pub of the Year Competition Procedure

Overview

CAMRA's National Pub of the Year is the annual competition to find the very best pub in the UK. We've been highlighting the best pubs in the country since 1988, and the competition helps to showcase quality pubs around the UK that are worth seeking out and visiting. It's all about finding the cream of the crop and the best place for you to enjoy a pint of real ale. Some may also have good quality real cider or perry for you to sample.

Each year, over 200 CAMRA branches select their Pub of the Year. These then go through to the regional competition to select the 16 top pubs in the country, which are then whittled down to four finalists – one of which will become the ultimate winner.

Competition Structure

There are four stages to the competition:

1. Branch Pub of the Year
2. Regional Pub of the Year (some regions also hold intermediate rounds)
3. Super-regional Judging (to award finalists for the National Pub of the Year)
4. Final Judging (to award a National Pub of the Year)

The competition is organised and co-ordinated by the Pub of the Year Coordinator on behalf of the Awards Committee.

Judging Procedure and Timetable

Branch Round

Branches can select their Pub of the Year based on a selection method that suits the branch's area and circumstances. However, branches are advised to have processes and procedures in place that are impartial, transparent, and well documented in order to withstand any challenges to their result. They are also encouraged to use the national guidelines when selecting their winner.

Regional Round

Each Regional Round is organised by the Regional Director (RD) or their nominee. As with the branch round, it is up to a region how they select their winner but the national guidance must be used and it is advisable to have processes and procedures in place which are transparent, explainable and defendable so that the result can be defended should it be challenged.

CAMRA's Pub of the Year Competition Procedure

Some regions also hold intermediate rounds during this period to cover particular areas of the region (eg. County or Area Pub of the Year). These are decided using a selection method which suits the area/region but, as with Branch Pub of the Year, they are advised to have processes and procedures in place that are impartial, transparent and well enough documented to withstand any challenges to their result and are encouraged to use the national guidelines.

Super Regional Round

The winners of each region are arranged by the organiser into four groups of four regional winners. Each RD is assigned a group of four pubs. These pubs can be judged either by the RD themselves or a representative, but all the judging must be done by the same person.

Final Round

The winners of each of the Super Regional rounds form the final four "Finalists". Ideally, the judges selected will cover a number of categories including:-

- A member of the National Executive
- A Regional Director
- A member under the age of 30

The judges will include both male and female members who are experienced pub campaigners with full knowledge and understanding of the selection criteria and how they should be applied. There will also be a mix of people who have judged the final stage regularly and some who have not.

Competition Timetable

Usually the timescale is:-

- Branch Pub of the Year – deadline of mid March
- Regional Pub of the Year – deadline of end of July
- Super-regional Judging – deadline of end of September
- Final Judging – deadline of end of October

CAMRA's Pub of the Year Competition Procedure

Judging Form and Criteria

All judging, from the super-regional round onwards, must be undertaken using the competition's **guidelines** and **judging form** (see Appendices 1 & 2) that clearly set out the criteria and the weighting factor applied to them. Branches and regions may consider it desirable to take these criteria into account when judging at the preliminary stages and are encouraged to do so.

The guidelines and judging form are issued in a branch mail out at the same time as the deadlines are announced, generally in September/October. The exact dates will vary from year to year.

Certificates

- Branch Pub of the Year - branch is responsible for arranging the presentation to their winner.
- Regional Pub of the Year - the RD is responsible for ensuring that the certificate is ordered and arranging any presentations.
- Super Regional Round – these certificates are ordered by the Pub of the Year Coordinator and sent directly to the appropriate RD. The RD for the regions where these pubs are located makes appropriate arrangements for the presentation of these certificates in late November/December.
- Final Round – the Pub of the Year coordinator arranges for this certificate to be produced and liaises with the CAMRA Press Office and the relevant RD with regard to the arrangements for this presentation.

CAMRA
Campaign for Real Ale

CAMRA's Pub of the Year Competition Procedure

Appendix 1 – Pub of the Year Judging Guidelines

Pubs don't have to be picture postcard, unspoilt gems to be a Pub of the Year. Pubs of all sizes and locations, such as those located on a housing estate, modern city centre bars, micropubs or back street locals, where everyone is made to feel welcome, can be considered for this award.

Please find below a checklist to give you some guidance on what to look for in a Pub of the Year.

CATEGORY 1 – QUALITY AND CONDITION OF REAL ALE / CIDER / PERRY

- It is the quality and condition that are important, and NOT the number available.
- Aspects to consider include: is it stale, is it too warm or too cold, and does it taste right for the style. Personal tastes for particular styles must be ignored.

CATEGORY 2 – PROMOTION AND KNOWLEDGE OF REAL ALE

- Is there clear and obvious support and promotion of real ale (real cider / perry if applicable)? Examples include: meet the brewer (cider maker) events, beer festivals, and trips to breweries (cider producers) or other festivals.
- Staff should enthusiastically promote real ale (real cider / perry if applicable) and be able to answer simple queries in relation to these products.
- The provision of information on products, producers, suppliers, etc. is desirable.

CATEGORY 3 – CLEANLINESS AND STAFF HYGIENE

- Toilets should be hygienic and clean with hot water, soap, suitable hand drying facilities etc..
- The pub should be clean throughout, including bar tops, tables and glasses.
- Staff should observe good hygiene practices, eg. correct handling of glasses, not eating behind the bar, cleaning hands and surfaces regularly etc..

CATEGORY 4 – COMMUNITY FOCUS AND ATMOSPHERE

- There should be a sense of community that is inclusive and welcoming to all age groups and sectors of the community. Do regular customers interact well with strangers?
- There should be support for local activities, such as sports teams, local groups, and local celebrations. Is there a notice board that lists local events, activities, or information on the local area?
- Is there a friendly atmosphere?
- Considering the time and day of the week, is it busy enough to create a good atmosphere?
- Further information can be found on https://camra.org.uk/campaign_resources/what-is-a-community-pub/.

CAMRA's Pub of the Year Competition Procedure

CATEGORY 5 – SERVICE, WELCOME AND OFFERING

- All should be welcome, and no offence caused to any section of society. This includes websites and other aspects of social media.
- Service should be welcoming, friendly, polite, and also prompt whenever possible. If it is busy, a friendly acknowledgement of your presence is desirable.
- If a number of real ales are available a range of styles and strengths should be offered and a local product, where available.
- Are other products/services that may enhance a visit available, such as quality soft drinks?

CATEGORY 6 – STYLE, DÉCOR AND, FURNISHING

- There should be a comfortable, pleasant and safe environment throughout.
- The style should show respect for the building and the décor should enhance it. Furnishing should be in a good state of repair.

CATEGORY 7 – SYMPATHY WITH CAMRA'S AIMS

- Prices and opening hours should be clearly displayed.
- You should get a full measure or a top up without asking. Are oversized glasses used?
- Are there attempts to stimulate interest in the sorts of issues we're concerned about?
- Real ale, cider or perry should not be sold using misleading dispense methods.
- It should be clear who has brewed 'house branded' real ale, cider or perry.
- There should not be any inappropriate noisy electronic amusement machines.
- Real ales should not be served through tight sparklers unless brewed to be dispensed in that way.

CATEGORY 8 – OVERALL IMPRESSION AND VALUE

- This category covers the undefined elements that are not considered elsewhere.
- Did you enjoy your visit? Did you spend more time than you had expected or wish you had been able to stay longer? Would you look forward to a return visit?
- Taking into account the style of establishment and its location, did you feel that you received reasonable value for money? CAMRA discounts should not influence this.

These judging guidelines are a compulsory requirement for the Pub of the Year Competition from the regional round onwards.

Appendix 2– Pub of the Year Judging Form

CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR JUDGING FORM

(To be used in conjunction with CAMRA's Pub of the Year Guidelines)

Branch: ……...

Region: ……...

Entry Name: ……..

Address:……..…

……..Telephone: ……..

10 Points per Criteria x Weighting Factor. Max = 120

Category	**Mark:**	**Factor:**	**Sub-Total**
Mark out of 10 and multiply these by 2:			
1. Quality and Condition of Product	……	(x2)	……
2. Promotion and Knowledge of Product	……	(x2)	……
3. Cleanliness and Staff Hygiene	……	(x2)	……
4. Community Focus and Atmosphere	……	(x2)	……
Mark out of 10:			
5. Service, Welcome and Offering	……	(x1)	……
6. Style, Décor and Furnishing	……	(x1)	……
7. Sympathy with CAMRA's Aims	……	(x1)	……
8. Overall Impression and Value	……	(x1)	……

Total Score = ……..

Comments:

……..……

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Judge: …… Date of visit: ……....