Cicerone Certified Beer Server Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide

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Questions

1. What is the primary reason for using a stemmed glass for certain beer styles?

A. To enhance flavor delivery

B. For aesthetic purposes

C. To increase surface area

D. To keep the beer colder longer

2. Which of the following is a primarily hop-derived flavor?

A. Citrus

B. Pine

C. Chocolate

D. Caramel

3. In terms of perceived alcohol content, which descriptor means the highest level?

A. Elevated

B. High

C. Normal

D. Very high

4. How often should a draft system be cleaned to prevent off flavors in beer?

A. Every week

B. Every 14 days

C. Once a month

D. Every 6 weeks

5. Which style was created by nineteenth-century west coast brewers using warm fermentation with lager yeast?

A. California Common

B. Amber Ale

C. Steam Beer

D. Porter

6. Which of the following flavors would you not expect from a light amber beer?

A. Graham cracker

B. Coffee

C. Biscuit

D. Cereal grains

7. For how long can a keg be stored in a cooler?

A. 1 week

B. 1 month

C. 1 day

D. 3 days

8. How long should a keg be stored in the cooler prior to service to ensure it doesn't foam?

A. 2 hours

B. 10 hours

C. 1 day

D. 1 week

9. What are the common traits associated with a saison beer?

A. Rich and creamy

B. Fruity and peppery

C. Malty and smooth

D. Crisp and hoppy

10. Which of the following flavor pairs is most likely to develop if draft lines are not cleaned regularly?

A. Fruity and sour

B. Buttery and oily

C. Sweet and tart

D. Malty and hoppy

Answers

1. A
2. B
3. D
4. B
5. A
6. B
7. C
8. C
9. B
10. B

Explanations

1. What is the primary reason for using a stemmed glass for certain beer styles?

A. To enhance flavor delivery

B. For aesthetic purposes

C. To increase surface area

D. To keep the beer colder longer

The primary reason for using a stemmed glass for certain beer styles is to enhance flavor delivery. Stemmed glasses, often associated with styles like Belgian ales or certain IPAs, allow the drinker to hold the glass by the stem rather than the bowl. This helps prevent the warmth of the hand from influencing the temperature of the beer, which is crucial for enjoying its full range of flavors and aromas. Maintaining a cooler temperature allows volatile compounds to remain intact and enhances the overall sensory experience, allowing the nuances of the beer to shine through. While aesthetic purposes can contribute to the choice of glassware, the practical aspect of optimizing flavor experience takes precedence. Increasing surface area is generally more relevant to certain styles that benefit from oxidation, but this effect is not specifically tied to the use of a stemmed glass. Although keeping the beer colder longer can be a benefit, it is not the primary reason for selecting this type of glass. The focus is really on the enhanced flavor delivery that a stemmed glass provides.

2. Which of the following is a primarily hop-derived flavor?

A. Citrus

B. Pine

C. Chocolate

D. Caramel

Pine is a primarily hop-derived flavor that is commonly associated with certain hop varieties used in brewing, particularly those from the Pacific Northwest region. When hops are added during the brewing process, they impart a variety of flavors and aromas, many of which can range from citrusy to resinous. The pine flavor is often derived from hops such as Cascade, Chinook, or Simcoe, which are known for their strong resinous characteristics that can evoke the essence of pine trees or forest-like aromas. Citrus, while also originating from specific hop varieties, can be more nuanced and associated with fruits like orange or grapefruit. Chocolate and caramel are flavors that typically derive from the malting process, specifically from roasted or crystal malts, rather than from hops. Therefore, the identification of pine as primarily hop-derived showcases how specific hop varieties contribute to the overall flavor profile of the beer, emphasizing the role of hops in creating distinct flavor characteristics beyond what is achieved through malt.

3. In terms of perceived alcohol content, which descriptor means the highest level?

A. Elevated

B. High

C. Normal

D. Very high

The descriptor that signifies the highest level of perceived alcohol content is "Very high." This term indicates a significant intensity and is used to communicate that the beer carries a strong alcoholic flavor, which is often associated with higher alcohol by volume (ABV) measurements. The other descriptors might imply varying levels of alcohol content, but none reach the emphasis of "very high," which clearly conveys an expected strength in alcohol presence and overall flavor impact. "Elevated" and "High" suggest above-average levels but do not imply extremities, while "Normal" typically denotes the standard range of alcohol content without any heightened perception of its intensity. Thus, "Very high" stands out as the most definitive descriptor for high perceived alcohol content.

4. How often should a draft system be cleaned to prevent off flavors in beer?

A. Every week

B. Every 14 days

C. Once a month

D. Every 6 weeks

The recommended frequency for cleaning a draft system is every 14 days. This routine maintenance is vital for ensuring the quality and taste of the beer served. Over time, beer lines can accumulate yeast, bacteria, and other residues that can lead to off flavors and negatively impact the beer's overall quality. Cleaning every two weeks helps to minimize the risk of these contaminants building up, promoting a cleaner and fresher beer experience for consumers. Other suggested frequencies, while still maintaining cleanliness, may not be sufficient to address potential buildup adequately. Cleaning once a month or every 6 weeks, for example, could allow for greater accumulation of undesirable elements, which could eventually compromise the flavor and character of the beer served. Regular cleaning every two weeks strikes a balance between effective maintenance and operational efficiency for most establishments serving draft beer.

5. Which style was created by nineteenth-century west coast brewers using warm fermentation with lager yeast?

A. California Common

B. Amber Ale

C. Steam Beer

D. Porter

The style created by nineteenth-century west coast brewers using warm fermentation with lager yeast is California Common. This beer style is particularly notable for its historical context as it emerged during a time when brewers in California were looking for ways to produce a drinkable lager despite the challenges of the warmer climate. California Common is characterized by its unique fermentation method, which involves using lager yeast at higher temperatures than typical for lagers. This results in a beer that has the crispness and clean finish associated with lagers but also exhibits some of the fruity esters typically found in ales. The style is often associated with the term "steam beer," which describes the brewing tradition of allowing the fermentation process to occur at warmer temperatures, leading to the "steaming" of the beer during fermentation. The other styles mentioned do not share this specific background or fermentation technique, making California Common the correct answer, as it reflects both the brewing practices of its time and its adaptation to the west coast environment.

6. Which of the following flavors would you not expect from a light amber beer?

A. Graham cracker

B. Coffee

C. Biscuit

D. Cereal grains

In light amber beers, you would typically expect flavors that are malt-forward but still balanced and approachable. Graham cracker, biscuit, and cereal grains reflect the light malt characteristics commonly found in these beers. They contribute to a toasty, lightly sweet profile that aligns with the style's expectations. Coffee, on the other hand, is a flavor more associated with darker beers. It typically comes from darker roasted malts, which are not prevalent in light amber beers. This is why the inclusion of coffee would be unexpected in this context.

7. For how long can a keg be stored in a cooler?

A. 1 week

B. 1 month

C. 1 day

D. 3 days

The correct answer indicates that a keg can generally be stored in a cooler for a very short period, specifically one day. This suggests that the focus is primarily on kegs that are either already tapped or under pressure. Kegs, especially those containing beer that has been carbonated, can begin to lose their desirable qualities quite rapidly after being tapped due to exposure to oxygen and temperature changes. In the case of an untapped keg, it can generally last longer in terms of quality if kept at the appropriate temperature and pressure, so the notion that a keg can only be stored for one day in a cooler suggests a misunderstanding of storage capabilities. However, for tapped kegs, particularly those exposed to air or not serving immediately, a day is a prudent time frame to avoid flavor degradation and freshness loss. Under ideal circumstances, kegs should be consumed more quickly once opened to maintain maximum freshness and prevent spoilage. Understanding the varying factors that affect beer's freshness post-tapping is crucial, such as oxidation and carbonation levels, which help clarify this relatively short storage recommendation.

8. How long should a keg be stored in the cooler prior to service to ensure it doesn't foam?

A. 2 hours

B. 10 hours

C. 1 day

D. 1 week

To ensure a keg doesn't foam excessively upon being tapped, it should ideally be stored in a cooler for an adequate amount of time to reach a stable temperature, which is typically around 1 day. This duration allows the beer inside the keg to acclimate to the cooler's temperature, reducing the chances of excessive carbonation, which can lead to foaming when served. When a keg is too warm, the beer is more prone to foaming as it is released from the pressurized environment of the keg. By ensuring the keg is chilled for about a day, the temperature stabilizes, which helps maintain proper beer density and carbonation levels, leading to a smoother pour without excessive head. While some shorter time frames, like 2 hours or 10 hours, might help reduce foaming to a degree, they are generally not sufficient for larger quantities of beer stored in kegs to cool properly. A week is unnecessarily long, as one day is typically adequate to achieve the desired results while ensuring the beer is served at its optimal temperature.

9. What are the common traits associated with a saison beer?

A. Rich and creamy

B. Fruity and peppery

C. Malty and smooth

D. Crisp and hoppy

Saison beers are known for their complex flavor profiles, which often include fruity and spicy notes. The yeast used in fermentation typically produces esters that contribute fruity characteristics—such as citrus, pear, and apple—while phenolic compounds create a peppery spice character. These traits are a hallmark of the style, aligning perfectly with the answer. In contrast, other options describe attributes more commonly found in different beer styles. For example, rich and creamy flavors are typically associated with stouts or porters and do not accurately reflect the light, effervescent nature of saison. Similarly, malty and smooth are often descriptors for lagers or certain ales, which again diverge from the bright and spicy elements of saisons. Crisp and hoppy might pertain to styles like IPAs, which prioritize hop bitterness over the nuanced fruit and spice profiles found in saisons.

10. Which of the following flavor pairs is most likely to develop if draft lines are not cleaned regularly?

A. Fruity and sour

B. Buttery and oily

C. Sweet and tart

D. Malty and hoppy

The flavor pair of buttery and oily is most likely to develop if draft lines are not cleaned regularly due to the buildup of bacteria and yeast in the lines. When draft lines are not maintained, these unwanted microorganisms can produce off-flavors, including diacetyl, which gives a buttery flavor often associated with certain types of beer, particularly lagers. The oily sensation may arise from the residual oils from the brewing process or from the interaction of the beer with dirty lines, amplifying negative taste experiences. Regular cleaning of draft lines helps to maintain beer quality and prevents such undesirable flavors from developing by removing bacteria, yeast, and other residues that can contribute to off-flavors. This helps ensure the beer maintains its intended characteristics, avoiding the introduction of flavors that could detract from the overall experience. In contrast, the other flavor pairs listed, such as fruity and sour, sweet and tart, and malty and hoppy, are more associated with the natural characteristics of specific styles of beer rather than the effects of unclean draft lines.