



*The **San Diego County Fair Craft Brew Competition** offers significant opportunities for brand recognition, enhanced reputation, and increased sales by showcasing award-winning selections at the Beer Experience bar during the 2026 San Diego County Fair. Participating breweries gain exposure to a broad audience, fostering valuable marketing opportunities and elevating their visibility in the competitive craft beer, cider, seltzer, and hard kombucha markets.*

Exhibition Timeline

Entry Deadline	Monday, February 23, 2026
Last Date to Receive Shipped Entries	Thursday, March 5, 2026
In-Person Entry Delivery	March 3-6, 2026
Judging	March 19 – 21, 2026
Awards	Wednesday, June 17, 2026, 7:00 p.m.

Eligibility

Open to any licensed brewery, brewpub, seltzer, or hard kombucha producer, meadery, or cidery (hereafter referred to collectively as breweries unless otherwise specified). Breweries in planning, homebrewers, and non-licensed breweries are ineligible to participate. All brews entered must be currently available for commercial sale to the public.

Contact Us

Tom Nickel, [Coordinator](#); Tyson Blake, [Assistant Coordinator](#)
[Entry Office](#), Agriculture, Education, & Arts Department
2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd, Del Mar, CA 92014
Office (858) 792-4207 - Mon-Fri 10:00am – 4:00pm



Entry Limit

There is a limit of one (1) entry per numbered class, per brewery in all Departments. Breweries with multiple locations may not enter the same brand twice if that product is produced in two locations.

Entry Fees

Entry fees are payable online, via credit card, and are not refundable.

One - Five	\$50 Per Entry
Six - Ten	\$45 Per Entry
Eleven - Fifteen	\$40 Per Entry
Sixteen - Twenty	\$35 Per Entry
Above Twenty	\$30 Per Entry

How to Enter

Distributors are responsible for gaining brewery permission for entry submittal. No entries will be judged unless registered during the online entry time.

We will be using the Beer Awards Platform for the registration and judging processes

1. All participants must register via the Beer Awards Platform (BAP): Click [HERE](#) to go to the Beer Awards Platform Competition Homepage.
2. Register as an exhibitor.
3. Input your entries under the proper department, division, and class along with other required information. See "Divisions," for a list of all divisions and classes. Limit descriptions to 120 characters.
4. Review your entry before completing registration to ensure that you have entered the correct division and class for each entry.
5. Click the check-out button and pay for all entries.
6. Your submission in the BAP system will also produce your necessary entry labels needed for submission.

Competition Objectives

The San Diego County Fair's Craft Brew Competition serves to:

- Uphold a judging system that is reliable, simple, fair, and accurate, while encouraging healthy competition among producers and driving continuous improvement in quality.
- Promote breweries producing top-quality beer, cider, kombucha, seltzer, and mead by featuring and selling award-winning selections at the Beer Experience bar during the 2026 San Diego County Fair.
- Winners of the San Diego County Fair Craft Beer Competition will be given the exclusive opportunity to serve as a featured **Brewery of the Day** during the 2026



San Diego County Fair. This exciting showcase includes prominent placement within the Farm 2U exhibit, a stage appearance to share your story and your brews with fairgoers through a guided tasting session, the chance to have your beer featured on tap during the Fair, and an invitation to participate in the 2026 Beer Fest Invitational at the San Diego County Fair.

Judging

All Divisions and Classes are based off of the [2026 San Diego County Fair Craft Brew Competition Guidelines.](#)

The San Diego County Fair Craft Brew Competition will be a blind judging, held in closed session, by a slate of judges made up of judged by brewers, industry veterans, BJCP certified judges, and individuals meeting the standards laid out in the Beer Judge Certification Program. Judges who own or are employed by a brewery that is also an entrant in the competition will be required to disclose the categories their brewery is competing in and will be strictly prohibited from judging these categories.

All entries must meet the TTB definition of Beer, Malt Beverages, or Ciders. For **all** divisions, entries must gain their alcohol through natural fermentation. Any product found to be made with distilled spirits of any kind will be immediately disqualified and no refund will be issued. Judges and/or coordinators may reassign an entry to a more appropriate division or class as needed. They may also combine divisions or classes to create an adequate judging pool.

Judging Procedure

All entries will be chilled prior to judging and divided into their respective classes and tasted by one panel of judges. As needed, larger classes may be separated by sub-style at the discretion of the coordinators to help the products best compete against similar entries in the judging and scoring process. A brew's sub-style alignment will not change under any potential category breakdown.

Judges within the panel will evaluate each entry within the flight. The panel may discuss each flight to help evaluate the entries and develop more accurate evaluation. Classes exceeding the capacity of one panel to taste will be divided into multiple panels. In the first round of judging, each judge will be completing comment sheets that contain characteristics for Aroma, Flavor, Appearance, and Mouthfeel as well as brief descriptions for any present flaws and overall feedback. Each judge will choose their top selections to move on to the next round of panel judging. If additional panels are needed, comment cards for additional rounds beyond the first will not be provided to the brewer. The final panel will designate the Class Entries receiving Gold, Silver, Bronze,



Honorable Mention, or No Award. Top Gold Award winners will move on to the Best of Show competition.

In the event a beverage served is deemed unacceptable the judges may request a re-pour. In the event all remaining samples of an entry are flawed, the entry will receive a No Award designation. Panel judges may request to re-taste and re-evaluate any entries from an earlier flight within a class, so long as that class has not been closed.

Results & Awards

The Danish system of judging will be used, and awards will be made on a merit basis where entries are ranked against similar sub-category entries. Gold, Silver, and Bronze Rosettes will be awarded as merited in each class. Larger classes may also designate Honorable Mention.

Results will be posted on the San Diego County Fair's website during the second week of April. **Only Gold, Silver, Bronze, Best of Division, Best of Show, and Top 3 of Competition will be published.** Please do not call or email for competition results.

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Rosettes and awards must be picked up in person at the awards ceremony on Wednesday, June 17th at 7:00 p.m. If you cannot attend the awards, please contact the entry office to arrange pick up. Awards will not be mailed.

Standard Awards

Gold	Entries that exemplify the defining characteristics of their respective styles, showcasing exceptional balance and complexity in quality, aroma, flavor, finish, and overall craftsmanship.
Silver	Entries that demonstrate exceptional character, showcasing remarkable flavor, aroma, appearance, and overall balance, while closely adhering to the style guidelines and standing out for their outstanding qualities.
Bronze	Entries that exhibit outstanding characteristics in flavor, aroma, appearance, and overall balance, reflecting exceptional quality and craftsmanship.



Honorable Mention	Entries that are exceptional and noteworthy, distinguished by their outstanding quality and merit.
Best of Division	Chosen from all Gold Award winners in each division, with the top entries advancing to the Best of Show consideration.
Best of Show	Selected from all Best of Division winners in each category, with one award given to the top beer, mead/cider, seltzer, and kombucha.
Best of Show Beer	The winner of the overall Best in Show Beer will receive the San Diego Brewers Guild Trophy. The winning brewery is responsible for safeguarding the trophy, displaying it throughout the year, and returning it to the San Diego County Fairgrounds the following year.

Special Awards

Champion Brewery Award	Awarded to the brewery with the highest total points across all Beer Divisions.
Champion San Diego Brewery Award	Awarded to the San Diego brewery with the highest total points across all Beer Divisions.
Champion Meadery/Cidery Award	Awarded to the cidery/meadery with the highest total points across both the Mead and Cider Divisions.
Champion Kombucha/Seltzer Producer Award	Awarded to the brewery with the highest total points across both the Hard Kombucha and Seltzer Divisions.
Champion Non-Alcoholic Brew Award	Awarded to the brewery with the highest total points across all Non-Alcoholic Beer Divisions.

How to Prepare Your Entry for Delivery

Each entry shall consist of one of the following:

- Three (3) bottles or cans of 16 oz. or more (17.9 oz., 22 oz., 750 mL)
- Four (4) bottles or cans of 11 oz. or 12 oz.
- IPA entries- Must submit four (4) bottles or cans regardless of bottle size

Entry labels are required for all submissions, whether delivered or shipped. Appropriate labels can be found in your Beer Awards Platform entry materials. Print the necessary number of labels and ensure all information is accurate and matches the corresponding entry. Attach one label to each bottle or can, using a waterproof method to prevent damage (wide, clear packing tape is recommended). All samples must have a label securely taped to the entry before delivery or shipment to the Fairgrounds. If submitting bottle-conditioned entries, please include a clearly visible additional label indicating this.



Delivery

Submissions must meet Fair rules and judges' standards for quality and presentation. See "How to Prepare Your Entry," for specific requirements. Entries may be delivered or shipped to the Fairgrounds. All steps will be taken to keep deliveries chilled until judging. Submissions will not be returned after judging.

Delivery: A copy of the drop-off map will be emailed to entrants prior to the day of delivery. Dates, times, and entry points into the fair are subject to change, and any changes will be emailed to exhibitors.

Shipping: Shipped entries must arrive at the San Diego County Fair Ag & Ed office no later than the date specified in Entry Materials. The Fair is not responsible for lost or delayed shipments.

Ship to: San Diego County Fair
Ag & Ed Department • Craft Brew Competition
2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd.
Del Mar, CA 92014



Divisions and Classes

DEPARTMENT: BEER

Division 1: American Wheat Ale

- A Light American Wheat Ale, With Yeast
- B Light American Wheat Ale, Without Yeast
- C Dark American Wheat Ale, With Yeast
- D Dark American Wheat Ale, Without Yeast

Division 2: Fruit Beer

- A Any Fruit Beer

Division 3: Fruit Wheat or Vegetable Beer

- A Fruit Wheat Ale, With or Without Yeast
- B Field Beer
- C Pumpkin Beer

Division 4: Herb or Spice Beer

- A Any Herb or Spice Beer

Division 5: Chocolate/ Cocoa-Flavored Beer

- A Any Chocolate/ Cocoa-Flavored Beer

Division 6: Chili Beer

- A Any Chili Beer

Division 7: Coffee Beer

- A Any Coffee Flavor Beer

Division 8: Coffee Porter or Stout

- A Any Coffee Flavor Porter or Stout

Division 9: Specialty Beer

- A Specialty Beer
- B Specialty Honey Lager or Ale
- C Gluten-Free Beer
- D Other Strong Ale or Lager
- E Historical Beer

Division 10: Experimental Beer

- A Any Experimental Beer

Division 11: Session Beer

- A Session Ale or Lager (Specify Style)
- B Belgian-Style Table Beer

- C Belgian-Style Session Ale

Division 12: Session IPA

- A Any Session IPA

Division 13: Rye Beer

- A American Rye Ale or Lager, With or Without Yeast
- B German-Style Rye Ale, With or Without Yeast

Division 14: Hybrid Belgian-Style Ale

- A Pale American-Belgo-Style Ale
- B Dark American-Belgo-Style Ale
- C Other Belgian-Style Ale

Division 15: Brett/Other Sour Ale

- A Wood or Barrel-Aged Sour
- B American Sour
- C Brett Beer

Division 16: Wood/Barrel-Aged Beer

- A Wood or Barrel-Aged Pale to Amber Beer
- B Wood or Barrel-Aged Dark Beer

Division 17: Wood/Barrel-Aged Strong Beer

- A Any Wood or Barrel-Aged Strong Beer

Division 18: Wood or Barrel-Aged Strong Stout

- A Any Wood or Barrel-Aged Strong Stout

Division 19: Smoked Beer

- A Bamberg-Style Marzen Rauchbier
- B Bamberg-Style Helles Rauchbier
- C Bamberg-Style Bock Rauchbier
- D Smoked Porter
- E Smoked Beer
- F Bamberg-Style Weiss

Division 20: Pilsener

- A German-Style Pilsener
- B Bohemian-Style Pilsener
- C Italian-Style Pilsner

Division 21: International-Style Pilsener

- A** International-Style Pilsener

- C** German-Style Doppelbock

- D** German-Style Eisbock

Division 22: European Lager

- A** Muchner-Style Helles
B Dortmunder/ European-Style Export
C Kellerbier or Zwickelbier Unfiltered Style Lager

Division 30: American Cream Ale

- A** Any American Cream Ale or Lager

Division 23: Light Lager

- A** American-Style Light Lager
B Contemporary American-Style Light Lager
C Australasian-, Latin American-, or Tropical-Style Light Lager
D Mexican-Style Light Lager- NEW for 2026!

Division 32: English-Style Pale Ale

- A** Classic English-Style Pale Ale
B English-Style India Pale Ale
C English-Style Summer Ale
D English-Style Pale Mild

Division 24: American-Style Lager

- A** American-Style Lager
B Contemporary American-Style Lager
C American-Style Pilsner
D Contemporary American-Style Pilsner

Division 33: International-Style Pale Ale

- A** Australian-Style Pale Ale
B International-Style Pale Ale
C New Zealand-Style Pale Ale

Division 25: India Pale Lager or Cold India Pale Ale

- A** Any India Pale Lager or Cold IPA

Division 34: American-Style Pale Ale

- A** Any American-Style Pale Ale

Division 26: European-Style Amber Lager

- A** Vienna-Style Lager
B German-Style Marzen
C German-Style Oktoberfest

Division 35: American-Style Juicy or Hazy Pale Ale

- A** Any American-Style Juicy or Hazy Pale Ale

Division 27: American-Style Amber Lager

- A** American-Style Amber Lager
B California Common Beer
C American-Style Marzan/ Oktoberfest

Division 36: American-Style Strong Pale Ale

- A** Any American-Style Strong Pale Ale

Division 28: Dark Lager

- A** European-Style Dark/ Mucher Dunkel
B German-Style Schwarzbier
C American-Style Dark Lager
D Mexican-Style Dark Lager- NEW for 2026!

Division 37: American-Style Juicy or Hazy Strong Pale Ale

- A** Any American-Style Juicy or Hazy Strong Pale Ale

Division 29: German-Style Bock

- A** Traditional German-Style Bock
B German-Style Heller Bock/ Maibock

Division 38: American-Style India Pale Ale

- A** Any American-Style India Pale Ale

Division 39: American-Style Juicy or Hazy India Pale Ale

- A** Any American-Style Juicy or Hazy India Pale Ale

Division 40: West Coast-Style India Pale Ale



A Any West Coast-Style India Pale Ale

Division 41: American-Style Black Ale or Black IPA

A Any American-Style Black Ale or Black IPA

Division 42: Imperial India Pale Ale

A Any Imperial India Pale Ale

Division 43: American-Style Juicy or Hazy Imperial India Pale Ale

A Any American-Style Juicy or Hazy Imperial India Pale Ale

Division 44: American-Style Amber/ Red Ale

A Any American-Style Amber/ Red Ale

Division 45: Imperial Red Ale

A Any Imperial Red Ale

Division 46: Bitter

- A** Ordinary Bitter
- B** Special/ Best Bitter
- C** English-Style Extra Special Bitter
- D** American-Style Extra Special Bitter

Division 47: Scottish-Style Ale

- A** Scottish-Style Light Ale
- B** Scottish-Style Heavy Ale
- C** Scottish-Style Export

Division 48: Irish-Style Red Ale

A Any Irish-Style Red Ale

Division 49: English-Style Brown Ale

- A** English-Style Dark Mild
- B** English-Style Brown Ale

Division 50: American-Style Brown Ale

A Any American-Style Brown Ale

Division 51: German-Style Ale

- A** German-Style Kolsch
- B** German-Style Altbier

Division 52: German-Style Weiss Beer

- A** South German-Style Dunkel Weizen
- B** South German-Style Kristal Weizen
- C** South German-Style Dunkel Weizenbock
- D** Berlin-Style Weisse
- E** Specialty Berlin-Style Weisse
- F** Leipzig-Style Gose
- G** Contemporary Gose

Division 53: South German-Style Hefeweizen

A Any South German-Style Hefeweizen

Division 54: Belgian-Style Wit or White Ale

A Any Belgian-Style Wit or White Ale

Division 55: Saison

- A** Classic Saison
- B** Specialty Saison

Division 56: French & Belgian-Style Pale Ale

- A** Belgian-Style Speciale Belge
- B** Belgian-Style Blonde Ale
- C** French-Style Biere de Garde

Division 57: Belgian-Style Sour Ale

- A** Belgian-Style Flanders/ Oud Bruin or Red Ale
- B** Belgian-Style Gueuze Lambic
- C** Belgian-Style Fruit Lambic
- D** Belgian-Style Lambic
- E** Contemporary Belgian-Style Spontaneously Fermented Ale

Division 58: Belgian-Style Dark Ale

- A** Belgian-Style Dubbel- NEW for 2026!
- B** Belgian-Style Quadrupel
- C** Belgian-Style Dark Strong Ale

Division 59: Belgian-Style Pale Strong Ale

- A** Belgian-Style Strong Blonde Ale
- B** Belgian-Style Tripel

Division 60: Porter

- A** Brown Porter
- B** Robust Porter



- C Baltic-Style Porter
- D American-Style Imperial Porter

Division 61: Specialty Stout

- A Classic Irish-Style Dry Stout
- B Sweet or Cream Stout
- C Oatmeal Stout

Division 62: Bold Stout

- A Foreign (Export)-Style Stout
- B American-Style Stout

Division 63: Dessert Stout

- A Any Dessert Stout

Division 64: Imperial Stout

- A English-Style Imperial Stout

- B American-Style Imperial Stout

Division 65: British-Style Strong Ale

- A Old Ale
- B Strong Ale
- C Peated Scotch Ale
- D Unpeated Scotch Ale

Division 66: Barley Wine

- A English-Style Barley Wine
- B American-Style Barley Wine
- C American-Style Wheat Wine

Division 67: New Zealand India Pale Ale

- A New Zealand India Pale Ale

DEPARTMENT: MEAD

Division 68: Traditional

- A Dry
- B Semi-Sweet
- C Sweet

Division 69: Fruit

- A Cyser (Apple Melomel)
- B Pyment (Grape Melomel)
- C Berry
- D Stone Fruit
- E Other Fruit Melomel

Division 70: Spiced and Specialty

- A Fruit and Spice
- B Spice, Herb, or Vegetable
- C Braggot
- D Historical, Experimental, or Other

DEPARTMENT: CIDER

Division 71: Standard Cider and Perry

- A New World Cider
- B English Cider
- C French Cider
- D New World Perry
- E Traditional Perry

Division 72: New England and Fruit Cider

- A New England Cider, must specify if cider was barrel-fermented or aged

- B Cider with Other Fruit, must specify type of fruit

Division 73: Specialty Cider and Perry

- A Apple wine, must specify carbonation level and sweetness
- B Ice Cider
- C Cider with Herbs/ Spices
- D Other Specialty Cider/Perry, must specify major ingredients



DEPARTMENT: SELTZER

Division 74: Citrus-Flavored Seltzer

A Citrus-Flavored

Division 75: Tropical Fruit-Flavored Seltzer

A Tropical Fruit-Flavored

Division 76: Berry Fruit-Flavored Seltzer

A Berry Fruit-Flavored

Division 77: Herb, Spice, or Vegetable Seltzer

A Herb, Spice, or Vegetable

Division 78: Strong or Specialty Seltzer

A Strong or Specialty

DEPARTMENT: KOMBUCHA

Division 79: Citrus-Flavored Kombucha

A Citrus-Flavored

Division 80: Tropical Fruit-Flavored Kombucha

A Tropical Fruit-Flavored

Division 81: Berry Fruit-Flavored Kombucha

A Berry Fruit-Flavored

Division 82: Herb, Spice, or Vegetable Kombucha

A Herb, Spice, or Vegetable

Division 83: Specialty or Cocktail Kombucha

A Strong or Specialty

DEPARTMENT: NON-ALCOHOLIC BEER

Division 84: Non-Alcoholic Beer

A Non-Alcoholic Beer