

2026 Texas State-Wide Non-Commercial Wine Show Rules

Hosted by the Austin County Fair

Sunday, October 11, 2026, 1:00 pm (Judging)

Austin County Fair Grounds (American Legion Hall, 988 E. Main, Bellville, TX)

Public Tasting and Winemakers Meet and Greet follows Judging (Approximately 3:30 pm until 6:00 pm)

The Wine Show is Produced and Coordinated by the Gulf Coast Winegrowers Association

SECTION I – GENERAL WINE SHOW RULES

1. An entrant may submit one or more entries in any of the ten wine categories. Qualified wines from 2026 and earlier vintages are eligible; but earlier vintages (before 2026) MAY NOT be “repeat” entries. **Buckle winners may not compete in the same category for a year after they win Grand or Reserve Champion.**
2. Only non-commercial (amateur) wine makers, residing in the State of Texas, may make and submit entries, composed of 75% or more Texas Grown Fruit. **Judges, commercial wineries, and commercial wine makers are ineligible.**
3. **Entry Fee is \$10.00 PER ENTRY.** The number of entries is unlimited. Entry Forms are available from Stacie Villarreal, stacie.villarreal@ag.tamu.edu, or at the Austin County AgriLife Extension Office located at 800 East Wendt St., Bellville, between 8:30 am - Noon and 1:00 - 4:00 pm. Cash and Checks (made out to ACFA) are accepted. Credit Cards are only accepted with early entries, through the Austin County Fair office by calling Kerri Spykes (979-865-5995).
4. Each wine entry MUST include two 750ML bottles. Remove any Foil, PVC, or any other type of shrink capsules prior to submission.
5. Label each bottle with Entrant’s name; Class #, Type of Wine; Name of Wine - Vintage; Name of grape, fruit, or berry; Style; and County grapes/fruit came from.
6. **ENTRY SUBMITAL LOCATIONS AND DEADLINES:**
EARLY ENTRIES will be accepted from September 21st to October 2nd between 8:30 am - Noon and 1:00 - 4:00 pm at the following location:
 - Texas A&M AgriLife Extension of Austin County, 800 East Wendt St., Bellville, TX 77418 (Attention: Stacie Villarreal, 979-865-2072, stacie.villarreal@ag.tamu.edu). Earlier submissions may be sent in with advanced notification.**DAY OF SHOW ENTRIES** will be received on the day of the Show, Sunday, October 11th between 10:00 am and 12:15 pm at the American Legion Hall, 988 E. Main St. (Austin County Fairgrounds near the HWY 529 Fair Entrance Gate).
NOTE: Fairground admission and parking is FREE on the day of the Wine Show (October 11th).
7. If it is determined that an entry is misclassified, Show Officials and/or Judges have the prerogative to place it in a more appropriate classification. Please follow wine classification descriptions. In an effort to help with this, members of the GCWA will have a pre-inspection of wines before they are entered into the show.
8. Judging will begin promptly at 1:00 pm. Once judging begins, no one is allowed in the judging area except personnel authorized by Wine Show Officials.
9. Competent and non-partial judges representing educators in the field of Enology and Viticulture, commercial wine makers and grape growers, industry-related media, and other interested parties will be provided. Judges will be randomly assigned to one of two panels. All judging will be scored by blind tastings. Each panel will judge as many as five entry classes.
10. Judges will use a 25-point/five category system (five points per category) to award gold, silver, and bronze medals in each of the entry classes judged. If there is a tie, both entries will be awarded the appropriate medal.
11. Winners will be awarded medals for all Entry Classifications unless there is only one entry in a class. In this case, the single entry will be judged, but must receive a minimum number of points to qualify for an award. Point values below (multiplied by the number of Judges scoring the class) will be used as a guideline for any award:
Range of points for: **GOLD (105 – 125)** **SILVER (90 – 104)** **BRONZE (75 – 89)**

12. AUSTIN COUNTY GRAND CHAMPION, OVERALL STATE GRAND CHAMPION, and OVERALL STATE RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION BELT BUCKLES:
 - a. All entries, regardless of which County in the State of Texas it was produced, and subject to receiving a qualified gold medal score, are eligible for the Overall State Grand Champion and Overall State Reserve Grand Champion belt buckle awards.
 - i. Highest scoring Gold Medal wines from each category will be judged by the other judging panel. The combined scores from the two panels will be used to award the Overall Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion Buckles.
 - b. Using the scoring system outlined above (Section 12a, i) the highest scored wine produced in Austin County will be awarded the Austin County Grand Champion Belt Buckle.
13. After judging is completed, both entrants and the public will be invited to the awards ceremony and a tasting of all submitted wines. Entrants may choose to bring additional bottles of their wine and stand by their entries to serve and discuss their wine.
14. All entries not picked up by the entrant or their designee at the conclusion of the tasting will result in the sample becoming the property of the Gulf Coast Winegrowers Committee to distribute at their discretion.

SECTION II – WINE CLASSES / CLASSIFICATIONS (meet the Go Texan standard of 75% or more Texas Grapes or Fruit)

1. **Red Wine – Dry:** Made from red wine grapes only
2. **Red Wine – Sweet:** Made from red wine grapes only
3. **White Wine – Dry:** Made from white wine grapes only
4. **White Wine – Sweet:** Made from white wine grapes only
5. **Blush / Rose’:** Made from red and/or white wine grapes
6. **Dessert/Port/Sherry:** Made from red or white wine grapes, may be liquor fortified
7. **Native:** Made from Mustang or Muscadine grapes
8. **Fruit / Berry:** Made from Fruit or Berries, no grapes should be this group
9. **Sparkling Wine:** Made from wine, fruit, or berry grapes
10. **Mead:** Wine made from Honey