

The Tastebook Round 1 Report

BACKGROUND:

The Tastebook sensory training trial begins the journey of exploring the potential of tastes, flavours and aromas in Australian Extra Virgin Olive Oil and Australian Processed Table Olives.

The Tastebook aims to stimulate an industry conversation on evoo and table olive quality, sensory assessment, product descriptors, and to move competition judging from reactive to pro-active.

In December 2016 there was a package sent in the mail from Shane Cummins and an explanatory email from Peter McFarlane. Further background information on The Tastebook can be found in the following articles published in the *Australian & New Zealand Olivegrower & Processor*:

Articles by Claudia Guillaume

- Sensory Analysis Part 1 In the, September 2016
- Sensory Analysis Part 2, December 2016

Articles by Richard Gawel

- Polyphenols in Extra Virgin Olive Oil, December 2016
- Acidity in Extra Virgin Olive Oil, September 2016

The Tastebook also links to the Australian Olive Association (AOA) competition judges and broader industry e-learning modules offered by River Murray Training (RMT) with support from AOA and Horticulture Innovation Australia (HIA). This programme links with Units of Competency from the National Training Framework (NTF). These competencies can be bundled with other units to achieve a formal qualification such as *FDF30111 Certificate III in Food Processing*, or *AHC40310 Certificate IV in Production Horticulture*.

The Tastebook sensory training program round 1, funded by the Australian Olive Association (AOA), is open to all AOA members, with the initial focus being on:

- EVOO or Table Olive judges or judge associates participating in national, state and regional competitions – including National Young Judges program participants.
- Exhibitors in the AOA EVOO or Table Olive Competitions.
- Signatories to the AOA Code of Practice.
- Industry participants who register with River Murray Training to access the AOA e-learning modules.

RESULTS:

In Round 1, some 160 samples were posted/delivered with 80 (50%) responses returned.

EVOO Sample A:

Summary: Harvested from a small mixed grove of dryland trees between Wagga and Junee. Mixed olives with Manzanilla and some late season Spanish Verdale, Kalamata and Hardy's Mammoth. Harvested with Air rakes, picked and processed in 12 hours. The total yield was 80 litres, 50% going to owners and 50% to The Long Paddock Olive Rustlers, 12.5% was bottled to Tastebook.

Scores: Of 51 scores the lowest was 10 and the highest 93. The median score is 61-70, which is around lower bronze award level. Not all respondents provided scores. Very late respondents were not included.

Scores Range									
0 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	61 - 70	71 - 80	81 - 90	91 - 100
1	2	0	7	4	9	12	10	5	1
<i>defected</i>					<i>no award</i>	<i>bronze</i>	<i>silver</i>	<i>gold</i>	

Refer to Appendix 1: A for sample of judge's comments

Discussion EVOO Sample A:

Mixed response, some saw this sample as faulted and described as rancid. I would question definition on 'Nut Taste' Amongst descriptors were 'almond' 'stale almond' 'fresh nuts'.

However, being in the big Post Office truck for a week and the letter box for a day or two in December heat, this would help the explanation as heat is a major cause of rancidity.

EVOO Sample B:

Summary: A large dryland grove with a mixture of Frantoia, Manzanilla, Wagga Verdale, Hardy's Mammoth and Paragon. This was a survival harvest, with just enough rain to fill the olives out in time for harvest. There were six picks across the season with effectively the same tastes on every occasion. Long Paddock Olive Rustlers with Brushwood Olives conducted the harvest with air rakes, picked and processed in 18 hours.

Scores: Of 49 scores the lowest was 0 and the highest 92. The median score is 71-80, which is around high bronze / lower silver award level. Not all respondents provided scores. Very late respondents were not included.

Scores Range									
0 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	61 - 70	71 - 80	81 - 90	91 - 100
1	0	2	2	1	11	9	14	8	1
<i>defected</i>					<i>no award</i>	<i>bronze</i>	<i>silver</i>	<i>gold</i>	

Refer to Appendix 1: B for sample of judge's comments

Discussion Sample B:

Mixed responses again for sample B. Aroma of tropical fruits ripened, followed through to palate with very mild bitterness and pungency, a delicate oil. Hay meadow grass. Exotic fruit flavours, passionfruit and guava. Great transfer of flavours to palate, balance. Grassy with a vanilla finish, peppery aftertaste. Suggestions for improvements ranged from harvesting earlier to using lower malaxing temperatures.

Notes on EVOO Scoring for Judging:

Scores below 50 suggest faulted oils and must be tasted by the Head Judge. If in agreement the oil is withdrawn. Oils scoring between 50 and 64 do not receive a medal and should be tasted by the Head Judge for verification. Oils scoring 65 to 75 attain Bronze medal standard; 76 to 85 attain Silver medal standard and 86 to 100 attain Gold medal standard. Gold medals are tasted by the Head Judge and then tasted by all judges in the Gold medal taste off.

Table Olive Sample C:

Summary: Medium sized black Kalamata, cured in 10% salt. Packaged to approximately 6% salt. Hand-picked, pasteurised.

Scores: Of 48 scores the lowest was 15 and the highest 30. The median score is 21-25, which is at the silver award level. Not all respondents provided scores. Very late respondents were not included.

C Scores Range					
0 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 20	21 - 25	26 - 30	
0	2	11	22	12	
<i>defected</i>		<i>No awar d</i>	<i>br on ze</i>	<i>silver</i>	<i>gold</i>

Refer to Appendix 1: C for sample of judge's comments

Table Olive Sample D:

Table olive summary: Late picked ripe Manzanillo machine harvested. Brined at 10% salt packaged at estimated 5.5% salt. Less than 6% salt incurs and points penalty in show judging. Some softness is varietal ripeness.

Scores: Of 44 scores the lowest was 10 and the highest was 27.5. The median score is 16-20, which is around the lower bronze award level. Not all respondents provided scores. Very late respondents were not included.

D Scores Range					
0 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 20	21 - 25	26 - 30	
1	6	17	14	6	
<i>defected</i>		<i>No awar d</i>	<i>bro nze</i>	<i>silver</i>	<i>gold</i>

Refer to Appendix 1: D for sample of judge's comments

Discussion Sample C and D:

Sincere thanks to Gooramadda Olives and Wolundry Grove for choosing and donating challenging trial tasting olives.

Overall feedback on sample C regarded it as more balanced sample D. This is reflected in the scoring where more respondents scored in the three highest ranges for sample C. Many feedback comments for sample D found it too salty.

While not everyone provided suggestions for use or included recipes, there was a good range provided. Extreme variations in feedback can largely be attributed to variations in the samples themselves caused by packaging processes and exposure to heat in postage.

There were inherent problems when packaging the olives, such as too much air in the packaging providing potential to develop mould longer term. Initially many packages leaked and all had to be resealed. It is suspected that in some cases the brine may have been sizzled, which may account for the chemical taste some reported.

Another major problem reported was that there were not enough olives included for partners.

The samples were not sent away for formal testing. This would have created a formal reference particularly regarding the salt content. (Unfortunately the lab manager ate the samples!)

There are some recent innovations such as brand new testing equipment which is formally calibrated. There is also a new regime of constantly washing olives during handling for packaging and grading. Re-reading the Stan Kallis book "Producing Table Olives" may also assist.

Notes on Table Olive Scoring for Judging:

Scores below 15 suggest faulted table olives and must be tasted by the Head Judge. If in agreement the exhibit is withdrawn. Table olives scoring between 15 and 18 do not receive a medal and should be tasted by the Head Judge for verification. Table Olives scoring 19 to 21 attain Bronze medal standard; 22 to 24 attain Silver medal standard and 25 to 30 attain Gold medal standard. Gold medals are tasted by the Head Judge and then tasted by all judges in the Gold medal taste off.

Comments on The Tastebook Round 1:

This trial aimed to be a 'taster' for the industry sensory training course proposed to commence in 2017. So, what have we learned? Packaging and posting needs to be improved to minimise potential variations in samples. Provide written explanations within each package. Christmas Eve in the summer heat pose awkward time and conditions for everyone. It is also the worst time for the Post Office. Whilst the overall response to Round 1 was around 50%, there were apologies for late responses or inability to respond. Some unexpected results were that couples, families and at times groups were sitting down to the tasting. While not all respondents supplied suggestions or recipes there was a good range as seen in the sample results. Feedback on the trial exercise overall has been positive.

The Tastebook – Round 2 – March 2017:

The Tastebook sensory training program is currently free of charge, however given the costs incurred to source product, package and dispatch is around \$20 / participant per round, or \$80 per annum, continuation of the program is subject to securing ongoing funding, which may include a participant charge.

The Tastebook Round 2 will take place in March 2017 and is open to existing participants who responded in Round 1 or have subsequently requested in writing to remain in the program. Other eligible industry members are also invited to apply to participate: email Shane Cummins at wizardofolives@hotmail.com or Peter McFarlane at peter@mc.com.au to register.

Shane Cummins

AOA Chief Judge

24/2/2017

The Tastebook Appendix 1:

Resp. Code	A Score	A Descriptors	A Harvest Suggestion	A Use Suggestion
62CA	no score	Very sharp, no fruity notes with peppery aftertaste.		Good served with dukkha
58TI	86	Fresh aroma of cut grass, spicy greens & fresh nuts. Well balanced bitterness and pungency.		I would showcase the “nuttness” of this oil by using it as a desert drizzle over premium vanilla ice cream with a sprinkle of sea salt, a few blueberries to provide sharpness and a mint leaf.
61MG	67	Green banana astringent flavours, dry straw and artichoke. Pungent heat that lingers.	Blend with a fruitier oil. Pick a little later.	Steak, rich pasta.
65HT	no score	Overpowering bitterness, no fruit, little pungency. Biodiesel.	Not worth blending. Harvest later for sweeter fruit.	
38BN	50	Dominant bitterness; oily mouth feel.		Unusable.
10E	50	Aroma of over-ripe vegetables. No flavour. Overly bitter – Lampante oil.	Not suitable for blending. Ensure fruit is processed in 48 hours.	
4KS	15	Rancid, spiky, bitter, disgusting.		Inedible.
63JW	40	Promising aroma and initial tastes spoiled by a penetrating metallic bitterness. Moderate pepper.	Would not blend this oil.	
9OE	70	Aromas of tropical fruit spices and grass flavour spices. Bitter herbs. Late pungency.		Not lively enough for dressing. Use for grilling.
18SE	88	Aroma: honeydew melon, floral Flavour: mild/slow peppery finish; green beans & almond.		Pan fry fish Roasted vegetables
55MA	65	Aroma of banana, grass. Tastes a bit bland, some pepperiness.		
6DW	81	Mild aroma, soft texture, reasonable bitterness. Nutty flavours.	Add some depth, maybe some Koroneiki	Drizzle over a pear and walnut salad.
12CE	81	Grassy oregano aroma, nutty/almond; pungent, medium bitterness. Reasonable balance.		Dressing salad.
8WE	93	Aroma is grassy, green apple, olive, herbal. Taste is peppery, throat catching, slight bitterness.		

Code	B Score	B Descriptors	B Harvest / Suggestion	B Use Suggestion
10E	70	Hay, meadow, grass	A little tired, pick earlier.	Cake-making; stir fry.
2OR	86	Exotic fruit aromas, passionfruit & guava, great transfer of flavours to palate, balanced.	Picked on the right day.	
3ME	68	Some grass, mild nose, clean mouth feel. Delicate flavour, low bitterness & pungency.		Deserts, cakes.
4KS	65	Fresh aroma, slightly soapy. Waxy feel, touch of mint, pleasant aftertaste. Needs more fruit for balance.	Add a fruitier variety to give more balance.	Mushroom ragout – sauté mushrooms garlic, onions or leak in the oil, add some passata and herbs.
5SY	78	Uplifting, sorrel, herbaceous flavour, broccoli stem, avocado. Complex, good balance.	Relate EVOO assessment back to quality of harvest assessment	
6DW	74	Poor aroma with a very rich tropical fruit & guava flavour. Lacks pungency and bitterness.	Harvest earlier; mix with sample A	Will go well in a flourless orange cake.
14EE	75	Picual, no bitterness. Bit of pepper.		Dressing for fresh garden salad with lemon juice.
8WE	92	Aroma: sweet confectionary, grassy, apple. Taste: sweet throat-catching tropical.		
54BL	35	Thick sticky old oil. Cucumber, slight rose notes, almond, but rising pepper notes.	Aroma of ether	Faulty – would not use.
55MA	30	Weak aroma. Faulty, winey, greasy.	Query fruit quality. Process more quickly.	Wouldn't use.
18SE	67	Aroma sweet tropical ripe fruits. Strong nose. Initially flavour mild, over-ripe fruit, hazelnut. Lack of flavour.	Mix with stronger oil; more flavour, peppery. Harvest sooner.	Roasted vegetables.
12CE	75	Strong spice aroma, rocket, chilli, herb. Strong bitterness, medium pungency. Slightly unbalanced.	Mix with a softer oil, grassy not bitter.	Mayonnaise
73CT	20	Pale yellow, robust aftertaste, but initial chemical-like smell & aftertaste.		
63JW	87	Lovely fruity sweet oil with no bitterness and building wild pepper.	Hard to improve oil – I would be proud to have grown this oil.	
17SN	89	Tropical fruit character on the nose that transferred well. The persistent bitterness made for a “grippy” mouth feel, whilst the herbal minty tones endowed the pungency with a lot of length. I found the balance leaned more towards bitter over pungency.	It could perhaps be softened with a delicate oil blended in to enhance bitterness and pungency harmony.	This vibrant oil would be lovely in a vinaigrette to dress a crunchy fennel and tangy orange salad, whisked in with orange and lemon, sea salt and cracked pepper before drizzling on shaved fennel, orange segments and sliced pink radishes

Resp. Code	C Score	C Descriptors	C Harvest Suggestion	C Use Suggestion
10E	28	Good brine colour, fruit firm. No blemishes, flavour delicious.		Starter or salads, just on its own.
17SN	27	Almond shaped fruit, deep purple colour without blemishes. Fresh aroma, no negative odours. Shiny, snappy skin easily pierced. Firm flesh with smoky, rich, blackstrap molasses notes. Low acidity, medium softness. No bitterness. Clean mouth feel. Fruit flavours carried over to the pit. Pit came away easily from the flesh.		After grilling – salt and olive oil seasoned cos lettuce. Top with mixture of hard boiled eggs, capers and olives and another drizzle of olive oil. Sample A oil with its lifted aroma and savoury punchy palate would be very complimentary.
48LY	no score	Medium black size, uniform colouring and some bruising. Vinegary aroma with semi-soft bite and slightly chewy skin. Rich olive flavour, more salty than vinegary, but quite well balanced overall. No bitterness detected.		Greek salad containing ripe tomatoes, fetta cheese and cucumber.
73CT	23	Watery, tasteless. Aroma good though.		Tapenade. Great colour.
70SE	25	They are a nice consistent colour and good flavour, a hint of dates. Sizing is not consistent but does not seem to affect the quality. Nice pip to flesh ratio.		Bruschetta with cheese, olives. Toasted sour dough bread, drizzled with EVOO and rubbed with garlic.
69KE	15	Very briny + chemical flavours and aroma.		
16EC	22	Firm texture, Kalamata style flavours. Consistent sizing, minimal blemishes. Long finish yet unbalanced towards high saltiness.		Spaghetti with meatballs, cherry tomatoes and olives. Great colour and texture and flavour. Unfortunately, too salty.
65HT	no score	Good texture. Good mouthfeel; comes off the stone; Balance of saltiness and olive flavours; good aftertaste.		Dip made of salted cashews, olives, capers and crème cheese – all pulverised in a Thermomix
61MG	26	Deep rich olive flavour. Good pip separation.		
40EP	24	Firm tasty, rich, moreish. Several layers, big start, lovely aftertaste.		
57MA	no score	Tasty, strong olive flavour. Strong aftertaste. Small round and black.		Tasted great and made me wanting to go back for more.
8WE	25	Aroma: brine, woody, nutty fruits. Taste: skin slightly tough, texture crisp. Good salt, bitter balance, buttery.		
66BH	22	Soft dull flavours, lacks salt.		
62CA	26	Classic Kalamata. Pleasing to palate.		Enjoyed, perfect.

Resp. Code	D Score	D Descriptors	D Harvest Suggestion	D Use Suggestion
5SY	24	Colour dull/ some variability. Flesh meaty, firm, good fruit and balance.		Olives, tomato & buffalo mozzarella with EVOO.
18SE	27.5	Fleshy, juicy, flavoursome, clean seed.		Antipasto, pasta; warm olives with herbs
12CE	26	Manzanilla, colour good, semi-firm. Fleshy, salty with buttery aftertaste.		Warm: olive oil and anchovies
37TN	20	Consistent size, colour OK. Some early chemical aromas & tastes. Soft texture, good pip release.		
62CA	17	Too strong; vinegar notes. Texture unpleasant.		
10AN	22	Good flavour, not too soapy.		Salad – about right.
4KS	19	Salty soft texture, a little too bitter.		May be better as a green olive tapenade.
8WE	21	Aroma: woody, vinegary. Taste: very salty, texture soft, skin fibrous, earthy.	Too salty, texture is mushy. Cultivar may have an influence.	
40EP	20	Fleshy, meaty. Too much salt. Texture a bit soft.	Change brine recipe – too salty	
48LY	18	Medium round black, uneven colouring. No blemishes in appearance. Savoury aroma, with soft bite. Slightly chewy skin and soft flesh. Very salty overpowering olive flavour. Overall out of balance. No bitterness detected.		Mexican style salsa with ripe tomatoes, avocado, olives, spring onion, fresh coriander, minced garlic, a little cumin powder, lime juice, tabasco sauce and vinaigrette dressing.
17SN	27	Plump round fruit, purple colour without any blemishes. Fresh aroma, no negative odours. Easy crispy bite through skin. Supple meaty, flesh with mild, earthy flavours. Low acidity, medium saltiness, no bitterness, clear mouth feel. Fruit flavours carried over to pit. Pit came away easily from the flesh.		These briny earthy olives would marry nicely tossed into the lively fennel and orange salad of sample B. Scrumptious.
58TI	no score	Creamy fleshy texture with a pleasant level of saltiness.		I would beer batter these olives. They have a lovely texture and are a nice size to batter and fry.
10E	24	Good brine colour, fruit little soft but pleasant flavour.		Salad pasta dish. Again there was not enough for my husband.
54BL	19	Slight chemical nose on the brine. Perhaps these olives have been cured in caustic.	I would check the brine solution and package in fresh brine.	Zucchini slice with olives: olives increase the complexities of flavours and features with the addition of parmesan cheese.