

AN INVITATION TO OLIVE PRODUCERS, MARKETERS, FOOD SERVICE AND COMPETITION JUDGES: TO REGISTER FOR PARTICIPATION IN TASTEBOOK™ ROUND 4

After three successful rounds of Tastebook™ the AOA Board has made a decision to implement a cost recovery charge for participation in Tastebook™ Round 4.

Registration will now occur on-line at OliveBiz – using the Eventbrite payment facility, with the following fee structure (there is no longer a ‘free’ list):

Domestic participants:

- AOA Members: \$25
- Non Members: \$30

International participants:

- All countries: \$50

Register here for Tastebook™ Round 4:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/tastebook-4-tickets-48319234130>

Note: Registration will remain open until 13 August.

Tastebook™ Round 4 samples and basic instructions will be posted to **registered participants** from the week commencing 6 August.

Detailed instructions and training materials will also be emailed to **registered participants**, with a link to the Tastebook™ Round 4 on-line Survey Monkey response form which will be ‘live’ from 6 August through to 3 September (4 weeks).

Note: Registered participants may share their tasting samples and experiences with family, friends and staff – simply submit a Survey Monkey return for each taster.

By way of an explanation for participants who have not previously been involved with Tastebook™, this is a sensory training initiative in appreciating, describing and understanding how to improve the quality of EVOO and table olives.

Tastebook™ includes tasting of olive oils and table olives (later on we plan to include flavoured olive oil and perhaps other olive products), assessing their characteristics, and providing feedback on the style, quality and uses of the sample products that aims to expose industry participants to regular sensory experiences and palate calibration for olive products, and to assist in gaining an understanding of how to achieve product excellence.

Tastebook™ aims to encourage a conversation on judging methodology and enables benchmarking of participant performance against senior judges. Participants are also encouraged to benchmark their own products against the samples provided.

Tastebook™ is a component of a broader professional development platform for competition judges that will include Masterclasses for EVOO and table olive judging as well as annual refresher courses, and an expansion of the National Young Judges Program.

As with previous Tastebook™ rounds, a report on the survey results will be prepared by sensory scientist Soumi Paul Mukhopadhyay of DPI Wagga Wagga, for publication in AOA's Olivegrower & Processor magazine, and in Friday Olive Extracts.

Tastebook 4 Discussion and tasting notes as well as previous reports and training materials from Tastebook™ Rounds 1, 2 and 3 are available for review on the AOA website under 'Members Lounge' at: <https://australianolives.com.au/tastebook/>

- **Tastebook Round 1:** December 2016, was a 'trial run' to sort out logistical issues, introduce the Tastebook™ team, and explore sensory analysis with Claudia Guillaume of Modern Olives, and an explanation of competition scoring and award criteria for both EVOO and table olives.
- **Tastebook Round 2:** June 2017, explored EVOO judging methodology and descriptors with AIOA Senior EVOO judge, and moderator for the Olives WA Tasting Panel Isabelle Okis.
- **Tastebook Round 3:** May 2018, explored EVOO judging methodology with Argentinian olive oil production and quality consultant, EVOO sensory panel member and international EVOO competition judge Pablo Canamasas; and with Australian table olive guru Professor Stan Kailis. This round was a dream come true for Tastebook convenor and AIOA head judge Shane Cummins – with all 5 samples being Gold Award winners at the inaugural 2017 Australian International Olive Awards (AIOA); the challenge in this round was to find the best words and phrases that describe the magic of the genie in the jars and bottles.
- **Tastebook Round 4:** August 2018, includes 3 olive oil and 2 table olive samples. This round is more about definitions of attributes with a focus on 'green oils', rather than on descriptions as in round 3. Not all samples will delight the palate!

Access Survey Monkey Tastebook™ Round 4 form here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CVVVM2C>

Tastebook™ team members:

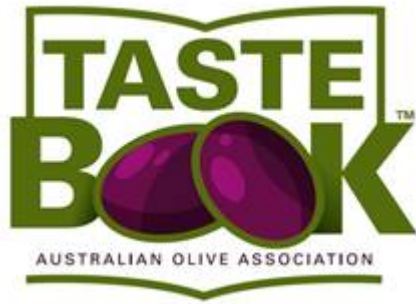
- AIOA head EVOO judge & Tastebook™ Convenor, Shane Cummins of Long Paddock Olive Rustlers, NSW;
- AIOA head TO judge, Dr Michelle Wirthensohn a Hort Innovation Australia Senior Research Fellow at the Plant Research Centre, University of Adelaide;
- AIOA Senior EVOO judge, and moderator for the Olives WA Tasting Panel Isabelle Okis of Yaribelle Braes, WA;
- Tastebook™ survey and reporting, Sensory Scientist Soumi Paul Mukhopadhyay from DPI Wagga Wagga, NSW; and
- AOA OliveCare® Code of Best Practice Administrator and Tastebook™ logistics Peter McFarlane, Adelaide SA.

Looking forward to receiving confirmation of your participation in Tastebook Round 4.

Also looking forward to continuing the journey with you at 'Tastebook™ Live' to be held at the AOA National Conference, Wagga Wagga NSW on Saturday October 20, 2018.

Happy Tastebooking!

Shane Cummins,
AOA Chief EVOO Judge and Tastebook Convenor
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TASTEBOOK™ Round 4 Definitions and Discussion Notes

Olive Oil Samples:

This round is more about definitions rather than our focus on descriptions in Tastebook™ 3.

Of the potential faults of olive oil (remembering that olive oil in order to be extra virgin by definition is 'free of fault') the three most common faults in Australia are FROSTED, MUDDY and RANCID, each of these have formal definitions.

Attribute Definitions:

At the same time there are formal definitions for the components of extra virgin olive oil being: FRUIT, BITTERNESS and PUNGENCY.

These definitions are from The International Olive Council profile sheet.

- **FRUITY** - Set of olfactory sensations characteristic of the oil which depends on the variety and comes from sound, fresh olives either ripe or unripe. It is perceived directly and / or through the back of the nose.
 - Also consists of the flavours of the oil perceived in the mouth.

- **BITTER** - Characteristic primary taste of oil obtained from green olives or olives turning colour. It is perceived in the circumvallate or the "V" region of the tongue.
 - Not to be confused with sour
 - coffee is bitter
 - lemon is sour

- **PUNGENCY** - Biting tactile sensation characteristic of oils produced at the start of the crop year, primarily from olives that are still unripe. It can be perceived throughout the whole of the mouth cavity, particularly in the throat.
 - not to be confused with bitter
 - bitter is a flavour
 - pungency is a physical warm sensation - chilli is pungent

Fault definitions:

- **FUSTY / MUDDY SEDIMENT** - Characteristic flavour of oil obtained from olives piled or stored in such conditions as to have undergone an advanced stage of anaerobic fermentation [fusty] or of oil which has been left in contact with the sediment that settles in underground tanks and vats and which has also undergone a process of anaerobic fermentation.
Muddy sediment - Blue cheese - Sour/off milk - Barn yard - Salami - Baby's vomit
Muddy oils - oil that has been left sitting on the sediment that forms at the bottom of the storage container (organic matter and water) or oil that has been tainted by being placed in an unclean storage container.

- **RANCID** - Flavour of oils which have undergone an intense process of oxidation.
Rancid descriptors: -stale nuts -off butter - play dough -linseed oil - putty
(remember that the enemies of oil are bad handling, poor processing, poor storage, heat, light, air and time)

- **FROSTBITTEN OLIVES / WET WOOD** - Characteristic flavour of oils extracted from olives that have been injured by frost while on the tree. Aromas –stewed fruit - fresh cut mushrooms - wet wood - vanillic acid - sweet aroma - muddled aroma (a few things happen; bitterness and pungency tend to disappear and the fruit flavours muddle, they are a long way from crisp and clear).

Olive Oil Sample Discussion:

Oils that have Fruit, Bitterness and Pungency:

- When these characteristics are intense the oils are described as **ROBUST**, usually from early season harvest.
- The oils that are described as **MEDIUM or MILD** are riper oils which show less intense characteristics and as we will see later the descriptors change.
- **DELICATE** oils are those that are usually picked late in the season, in an excellent sample the Fruit flavours can be sublime and at the same time there will be next to nothing in evidence of Bitterness or Pungency.

The question: - Is Extra Virgin Olive Oil [EVOO] still EVOO when there is no Bitterness or Pungency?
The answer is YES, because the critical controls are the presence of FRUIT characteristics and the absence of FAULTS.

In the Tastebook™ 4 kit we have 3 oils samples. They may or may not be faulted. If they are faulted WHICH ONES? and WHAT FAULTS?

Given the experts have determined the presence of 'FRUIT' is the critical issue for the classification of EVOO. What do we do with and how do we rate and describe the presence or absence and or the intensities of BITTERNESS and PUNGENCY? CONFUSED, you are not alone.

The IOC has another two categories, **GREEN** and **RIPE**.

- Some of the words as we think about GREEN, which is generally where ROBUST sits, are: -
- good - very good - excellent - balance - harmony - intensity - short - lingering - intense - grass - green apple - green banana - pea shoots - tobacco leaf - tomato vine - tomato leaf - salad leaf - artichoke - pepper - chili - bitter herbs - almond - spice

- And some of the words as we think about RIPE are: -

pineapple - passionfruit - apple - pear - ripe tomato - ripe banana

So, these are oils that may have less intense bitterness and pungency and are described as medium or mild.

DELICATE oils have next to no bitterness or pungency and the fruit tastes can run through confectionary - floral - berries.

Balance and 'savour' seem to be the considerations here. (If you taste one of these oils at its best the delight of flavours and aromas just stay with you).

So, in each of these categories, ROBUST - MILD - DELICATE.

- Good examples get BRONZE medals
- Very good examples get a SILVER
- And excellent examples get GOLD.

VIRGIN is another category basically the oil has fruit but there is a fault / or faults there as well.

Off to Survey Monkey and proudly I have found examples of nearly all of these definitions in the 3 oils provided.

Table Olive Samples:

Attribute Definitions:

Acknowledgement: Prof. Stanley Kailis, Perth, Australia.

APPEARANCE: Observe the olive, is it consistent with cultivar, general condition, colour, blemishes, marks, pressure marks etc

TEXTURE: Hardness, Crunchiness, Flesh texture

Finger Test: Gently squeeze the olive between thumb and fore finger - grade soft, firm, hard. Soft olives may be due to poor quality fruit, over ripe black olives, microbiological activity.

Bite Test: Skin thickness – tough, resistant, fine; flesh characteristics – smooth, granular, lumpy, fibrous; ease of flesh removal

AROMA: Aromatic vs malodourous (unpleasant)

TASTE: Olive flavour, some bitterness with/without overtones eg floral; salt, vinegar, lemon, herbal, spicy, balance; abnormal - rancidity due to additives – poor quality olive oil or herbs and spices; addition of food acids to adjust pH (chemical taste); contaminated water or olives

Microbiological DEFECTS:

Defects attributable to abnormal proliferation of microorganisms are:

- **Olive softening and shrivelling:**
Naturally black ripe olives are generally softer than green ripe olives with turning colour olives intermediate. Further softening can occur during processing due to proliferation of bacteria, moulds and yeasts. This problem can be reduced by controlling initial pH.

Shriveled olives can result from processing at high salt levels or from excessive gas production where gas collects under the skin (gas pockets burst leaving a shriveled appearance). Acutely affected olives float towards the brine surface and are called “floaters”. Olives that are dried with salt and/or heat also have a shriveled appearance.

- **Malodourous fermentations:**

These are associated with specific bacteria

- **PUTRID** reminiscent of decomposing organic matter – faecal, urine – occurs early in fermentation due to contaminated olives, water and/or additives by Clostridium bacteria.
- **BUTYRIC fermentations** – occurs early during fermentation due to butyric forming bacteria giving rancid characteristics of old butter.
- **ZAPATERIA** malodour is due to generation of propionic acid during fermentation under the influence of bacteria – clostridia and propionic bacteria. Malodour is due to a mixture of propionic acid, other fermentation acids and cyclohexane carboxylic acid.
- **WINEY-VINEGARY** – Due to bacterial and yeast fermentation products such as food acids and alcohol (separate from vinegar added as a preservative)
- **NAIL POLISH REMOVER SOLVEN** – due to overproduction of alcohol that reacts with fermentation acids forming ethyl acetate
- **MOULDY** – due to moulds forming during fermentation
- **MUSTY** – mainly due to penicillin species together with specific fungi Aspergillus and Alternaria
- **ACID RELATED** – excess lemon (citric acid), addition of lactic acid to control pH

Discussion on Table Olive Samples:

Acknowledgement: Gamila MacRury of Gamila at Beechworth

Unlike EVOO, where most of the hard work is done in the grove and over a very short period of time in the processing facility, table olives require many months of management post-harvest before they are market ready.

These months can be a challenging time for a grower, with limited knowledge whether the effort and money invested to get to harvest will pay off. Many obstacles can present themselves during this time; hygiene issues are the biggest for natural fermentations, in grove issues can start to appear, as can poor management during harvest and processing.

So how do you decide if your fruit is ready for market, if it should be submitted in the forthcoming awards season? If it isn't ready, what descriptors can you use to describe your fruit to keep your potential customers engaged? If you've identified problems, which aren't food safety related, are there steps you can take which will avoid you throwing out 100kg, 1 tonne etc?

Tastebook Round 4 will bring that challenge to you!

You will be presented with two GREEN olives from season 2017, both grown in North East Victoria at elevations ranging from 200-550m. Our growing season was pretty normal with about 30mm of rain most months from Jan – May, the olives came off unirrigated groves. On average our May nights were about 4C with days averaging mid-teens. First frost occurred 31/05, which was followed by 5 consecutive nights under -2.

Your job is to analysis the fruit in front of you, this will include identifying and commenting on standard elements of varietal, size, true to type, ripeness, processing method. You will make

judgements and find descriptors for Aroma, Texture, Appearance and Flavour, but then you need to comment on market readiness?

Should these be submitted to the AIOA, with submissions due by mid-September?

If they aren't ready, how much longer do you think they need? What words could you use to keep your customers on the hook?

Are you able to identify any climatic or grove specific effects in the olives, are these positive or negative, how would you describe them?

If they have faults that make them unsuitable for retail or food services sale, could something else be done with them? What words would you use to turn these negative elements into positives?

Or the hardest decision of all, should these table olives be released? Not all table olives will be gold medal worthy, and though we should aim for that goal, it's ok to not reach it, however we do our industry considerable damage in releasing table fruit that has significant faults, especially if the relevant story isn't attached to them.

So, I ask the hardest question, should these olives be fed to the pigs?

In Closing:

So is this it? No this continues and becomes the background briefing and basis for discussion and the workshops as the prelude to many of this year's OIL shows.

What in particular? ROBUST oils - judging criteria, considerations, expectations, descriptions. There will be a similar discussion and elaboration process for FLAVOURED oils.

Will I ever hear anything about this again? YES. WHY?

Because the next 12 months may prove very interesting re: Taste in the Australian olive industry.

Enjoy and if it all gets too much feel free to call me.

Also looking forward to continuing the journey with you at 'Tastebook™ Live' to be held at the AOA National Conference, Wagga Wagga NSW on Saturday October 20, 2018.

Shane Cummins,

AOA Chief EVOO Judge and Tastebook Convenor

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EVOO Descriptor Training 2018

Extra Virgin Olive Oil Assessment Sheet

Each description should include information from each of the sections below.

	Things to look for	Comments
Aroma	First impression (Clean or possible fault), Fresh or not fresh?	
	Intensity (Pronounced or low - lots of or little aroma, powerful, good/bad, hard to smell, closed)	
	What does it smell like? Green, tropical, tomato, dried herb? Need at least 3 descriptors.	
Flavour	Intensity (lots or little flavour, powerful, good/bad, hard to taste?)	
	Flavour transfer: Does the taste reflect the aroma?	
	What does it taste like? Note flavours. Need at least 1 extra descriptor if possible.	
	Quality (fresh, balanced, complex, interesting, lots going on, simple, boring). Note possible faults here.	
Mouthfeel	Mouthfeel (light, heavy, oily, astringent, pepper, bitterness, dry mouth), short or long aftertaste	
Final tasting comment:		

A description example:

	Things to look for	Comments (an example)
Aroma	First impression (Clean or possible fault), Fresh or not fresh?	<i>Clean, fresh.</i>
	Intensity (Pronounced or low - lots of or little aroma, powerful, good/bad, hard to smell, closed)	<i>Pronounced intensity.</i>
	What does it smell like? Green, tropical, tomato, dried herb? Need at least 3 descriptors.	<i>Ripe tomato flesh, passionfruit, green herb.</i>
Flavour	Intensity (lots or little flavour, powerful, good/bad, hard to taste?)	<i>Intense/strong flavours on palate</i>
	Flavour transfer: Does the taste reflect the aroma?	<i>Good flavour transfer.</i>
	What does it taste like? Note flavours. Need at least 1 extra descriptor if possible.	<i>Same as nose with mango notes.</i>
	Quality (fresh, balanced, complex, interesting, lots going on, simple, boring). Note possible faults here.	<i>Complex, many layers,</i>
Mouthfeel	Mouthfeel (light, heavy, oily, astringent, pepper, bitterness, dry mouth), short or long aftertaste	<i>Light mouthfeel. Mild pepper, touch of bitterness. Long flavourful length.</i>
Final tasting comment would read:		
<i>A fresh clean oil with pronounced fruit intensity. Strong aromas of ripe tomato flesh, passionfruit and green herb on the nose follow onto the palate with the addition of mango notes. A complex oil with a light mouthfeel, mild pepper and a touch of bitterness. Long flavourful length.</i>		

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2018 AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL OLIVE AWARDS

Judge Comments – Extra Virgin Olive Oil Competition

Judge: _____ Panel # _____ Date: _____

Exhibit number	Individual Points			Total Score	Other Judge's Scores (/100)				Agreed Score	Style	Medal
	Nose Aroma	Palate Flavour	Harmony Complexity								
	35	45	20	100					(100)	Delicate, Medium Robust	
Comments											

Exhibit number	Individual Points			Total Score	Other Judge's Scores (/100)				Agreed Score	Style	Medal
	Nose Aroma	Palate Flavour	Harmony Complexity								
	35	45	20	100					(100)	Delicate, Medium Robust	
Comments											

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	Nose Aroma	Palate Flavour	Harmony Complexity								
	35	45	20	100					(100)	Delicate, Medium Robust	
Comments											

Excellent = Gold 86-100 points No Medal 50-64 points
 Very Good = Silver 76-85 points Oils scoring less than 50 points will be referred to
 Good = Bronze 65-75 points the head judge for withdrawal.

Judge Signature: _____

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TO Descriptor Training 2018

Table Olive Assessment Sheet Template

Each description should include information from each of the sections below.

	Things to look for	Comments
Appearance	Blemish (does the olive appear blemished?)	
	Colour (is the olive colour appealing?)	
Aroma	First impression - appealing or unappealing aroma? Aromatic, floral? Intense or subdued?	
	Malodourous - abnormal fermentation – putrid, butyric, Zapateria (rotten leather) Winey-vinegary, nail polish solvent. Note: if present this will disqualify an exhibit from competition.	
Flavour	Evidence of off flavours – rancid, musty, cooked, soapy, metallic, earthy. Note: if present this will disqualify an exhibit from competition.	
	Does the exhibit have any specific olive flavours? What are the levels of bitterness (minor to overpowering)? Evidence of other flavours including varietal, preservation (vinegar, oil), added flavourings (citrus, garlic, chili, herbs)	
	Flavour balance, Flavour transference - does the aroma match the flavour? Length of flavour (short to lingering)	
	Saltiness, slight, just right, too salty Acidity - slight, just right, high	
Texture	Hardness - finger squeeze test – soft, firm, hard? Bite test – skin thickness – tough, resistant, fine	
	Chewing test - flesh texture– smooth, mushy, granular, lumpy, fibrous Crunchiness – low, moderate, high?	
	Ease of flesh removal? Flesh-to-pip ratio, lean, fleshy?	
Final tasting comment:		

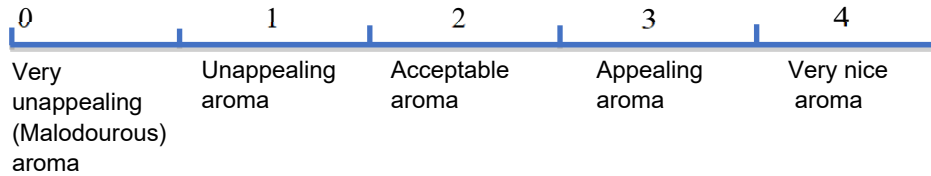
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Guide to the Table Olive Judging sheet

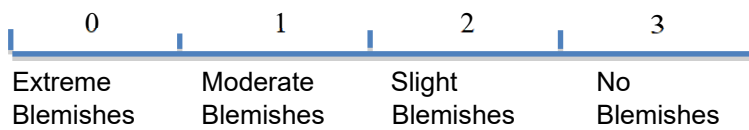
(Revised July 2018).

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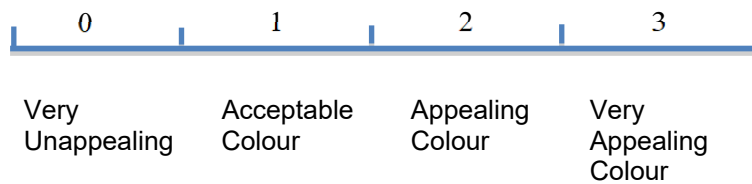
Aroma: Smell the olives and score according to the scale (0-4)



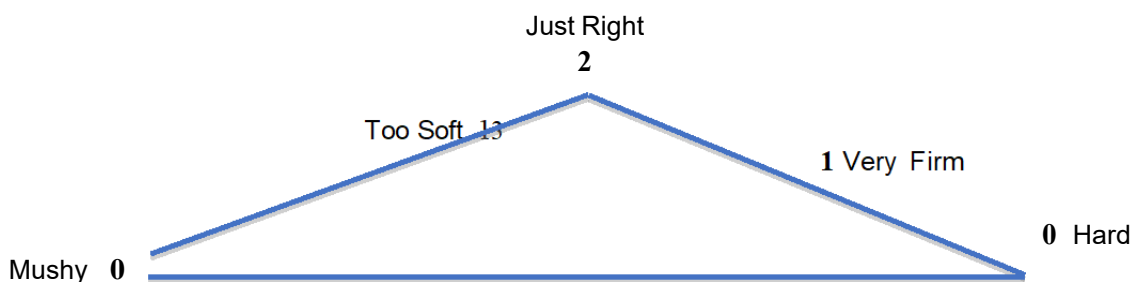
Blemishes: Look at the olives and score according to the scale (0-3)



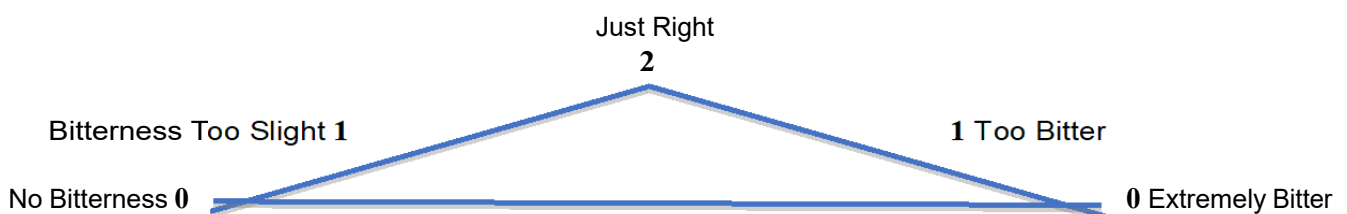
Colour: Look at the olives and score according to the scale (0-3)



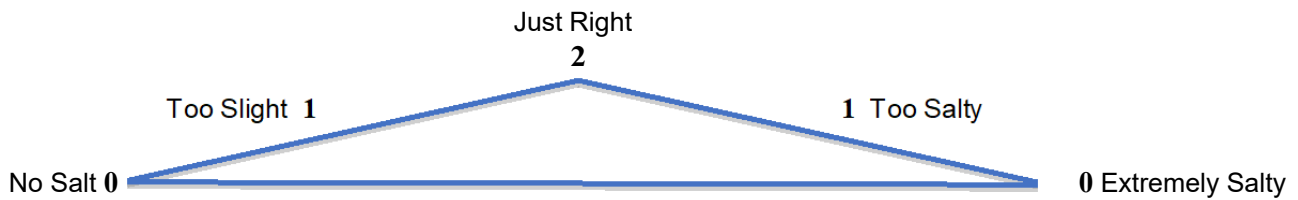
Texture: Taste the olives and score according to the scale (0-2)



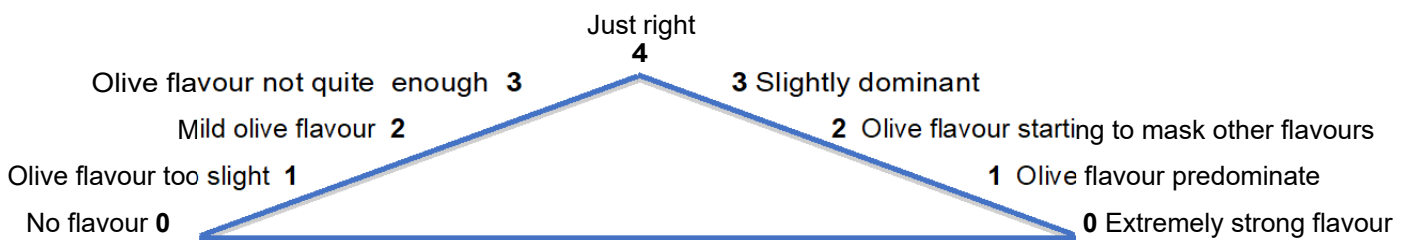
Bitterness: Taste the olives and score according to the scale (0-2)



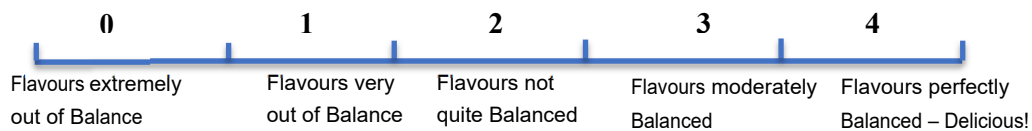
Saltiness: Taste the olives and score according to the scale (0-2)



Olive Flavour: Taste the olives and score according to the scale (0-4)



Flavour Balance: Taste the olives and score according to the scale (0-4)



Absence of Faults: Taste the olives and score according to the scale (0-5)



Thank you for participating in this tasting



AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL OLIVE AWARDS 2018

Judge Comments – Table Olive Products Competition

Judge: _____ Panel # _____ Class# _____ Date: _____

Exhibit Code / Number	Colour	Absence of skin blemishes	Aroma	Skin / Flesh Texture	Bitterness	Saltiness	Olive Flavour	Flavour Balance	Absence of faults	TOTAL SCORE	Comments
	4	3	3	2	2	2	4	5	5	30	

Excellent = Gold 25 - 30 points No Medal < 18 points
 Very Good = Silver 22 - 24 points Olives scoring less than 18 points will be
 Good = Bronze 19 - 21 points referred to the head judge for withdrawal.
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Judge Signature: _____

Instructions for Tastebook™ Round 4 Participants:

Please refer to the Tastebook 4 Notes in this kit - also available at:

<http://www.australianolives.com.au/article-detail/tastebook>

1. Preparation for sensory evaluation:

- No perfume, aftershave or lipstick.
- Don't taste oils and olives on an empty stomach. The salt content in the body is depleted, resulting in an inaccurate assessment of the oils and table olives.
- Don't taste after a hard day at the office or after shouting at the husband or kids. Grumpiness leads to a state of negativity, directing us to a conclusion that all the oils and table olives we are tasting are no good. Please keep an open mind. Remember that someone has nurtured this fruit from the tree to the mill, and it must be respected.
- Sit down in a comfortable chair, relax and have your glass of water and apple ready, plus a note pad and pen.

2. Read the Tastebook notes on olive oil

3. Follow this procedure for sensory evaluation of EVOO:

- Ensure the mouth has been rinsed using plain or mineral water, and cleansed with a slice of green apple.
- Pour the EVOO samples into a small glass tumbler – preferably coloured blue to disguise the colour of the oil which is not relevant to judging.
- Warm the oil if the room is not at an ambient temperature of 28 deg C.
- Hold the cup to the nose. Do not allow the nose to penetrate inside the tasting cup when sniffing. What do I smell? Green grass, herbs, tropical fruits, floral bouquet, etc. Make a note. Each individual judge is different, however, more than 30 seconds can influence the decision making.
- Sip the oil through the front teeth and roll around the palate, allowing the fruit flavours and bitterness to develop. Swallow some oil. Pungency should be felt at the back of the throat. Sometimes instantaneously, sometimes delayed.
- Finally, evaluate your thoughts on the taste. Was it fruity or sweet? Herbaceous? Was a fault detected? Rancid, winery, fusty, musty, generally unpalatable. Make a decision & note it down.

4. Print and complete the AOA 100 point EVOO score sheet for the 3 samples A, B, C.

5. Print and complete EVOO descriptor sheet for the 3 samples.

6. Complete Part 1 of Survey Monkey Tastebook Round 4 form here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CVVVM2C>

7. Read the Tastebook notes and charts on TO.

8. Procedure for sensory evaluation of table olives:

- Ensure the mouth has been rinsed in plain or mineral water, and cleansed with a slice of apple.
- Separate the olives from the brine – retain the olives & brine in separate glass tumblers.
- Assess the appearance, size, shape, colour and blemish
- Assess the Aroma of **both the olives and the brine** - aromatic vs malodourous
- Assess the flavor – olive, bitterness, salt and acid balance, any off flavours?
- Assess the texture of the flesh and skin – finger squeeze and bite test, crunchiness, ease of flesh removal

9. Print and complete the AOA 30 point TO score sheet for the 2 samples D & E.

10. Print and complete Trudie's TO descriptor sheet for the 2 samples.

11. Complete Part 2 of Survey Monkey Tastebook Round 4 form.

Spoiler Alert: Do not turn to the next page until after you have completed your own assessment of the 5 samples, and completed the on-line survey



Tastebook™ Round 4 Tasting Notes:

Samples	Identification	Tasting Notes
Olive oil (3 samples)		
Sample A	Frost defect	Defected
Sample B	Oleozito – a ‘green’ Boutillon	‘Green’ EVOO
Sample C	Muddy defect	Defected
Table olives (2 samples)		
Sample D	Gamila – Coratina – GB – with oak tannin – 17/5/2017	‘Green’ olives
Sample E	Gamila - Sevillanos – Bowmans – 1/06/2017 – frost damaged	‘Green’ olives

Table 1: EVOO and TO samples- Tastebook Round 4:

Olive Oil Samples

Sample A: Frosted oil provided by Modern Olives

A sudden or gradual temperature change in the fruit that impacts both on FFA and PV. The PV tends to increase more sharply than the FFA, although both parameters are affected equally. Also, a clear defect on the nose appears usually associated with wet hay notes or stewed fruit aroma. A typical characteristic of this problem is the “sweetness” notes in the palate, due to the fact that the frost wipes away most of the polyphenols responsible for the bitterness and pungency of the oils.

Sample B: Oleozito – single varietal single grove. An old colonial variety called Boutillon, which I believe is part of the Frantoio family. It was harvested 50% to 70% ripe

Taste: rich creamy aromas with peach leaf nuances.

Transfers well to the palate with a clear viscous mouth and balanced bitterness and pepper.

There is Jerusalem artichoke underneath the creamy, egg white, butternut, lettuce, with a rich front palate.

Sample C: Muddy sediment oil provided by DPI Wagga Wagga

Was originally an INTERNATIONAL OLIVE COUNCIL sample, classified VIRGIN with a fruit intensity of 1.5, a fault MUDDY intensity of 1.8, and fault rancid intensity of 1.2.

Shane Cummins has blended this with a really good oil fruit intensity about 5.5.

The oil starts off really good and leaves a bad taste in your mouth.

Table Olive Samples

Sample D: Gamilla - Coratina – GB – with oak tannin – 17/5/2017, unpasteurised

Coratina typically a premium oil variety from Italy. Grown at 540m elevation on a north facing slope. Used in my table grove as a cross-pollinator.

Picked just on the turn. Very varied in size due to immature trees, no fruit load management and natural irrigation only.

Olive texture is quite crisp, with a coarse flesh mouth feel.

Bitterness level is too high to be market ready. Fruit is only 13 months post harvest, in previous years they need at least 18 months to be market ready.

Coratina generally don't have a problem with texture, unlike black manzanillos, however, these olives have tannin added to the brine in an attempt to bind to the proteins in the olive flesh and stop them being broken down by the lacto ferment. The aim of this experiment was to see if it is possible to 'control' olive texture by management of tannins. The conclusion from this experiment is the tannin emphasises the bitterness, hence I don't know if the extra months will reduce the bitterness to market ready level, also eating several of these olives in a row will build up the tannins on one's tongue.

From a food/drink matching perspective, these olives can't be matched with a tannic red wine, a malty beer works better. I do think the tannin had a positive effect on the olive texture and will continue this experiment for different varieties of olives and different quantities of tannins.

Olive taste is mostly green with herby herbaceousness, slight pepper bite at the back of palate, which is hard to decipher if it is pepper from the natural phenols or if it's from the extra bitterness from the tannins.

Sample E: Gamilla - Sevillanos – Bowmans – 1/06/2017 – frost damaged, unpasteurised

Olives grown at approximately 200m elevation in a valley on flat ground, olives were frosted for a couple of days before being picked.

Appearance: many wrinkled olives, this is likely due to low irrigation and early frost damage

Skin is thick, mostly likely due to water availability.

Taste: very pickled vine leaf taste, slight oregano and earth herbs. Slight spritz when biting into the olive, may be due to skin thickness reducing transpiration through the skin.

Flesh texture is good, olive comes off pit surprisingly well, the frost might have affected this. Frost hasn't caused flesh damage which has then introduced off flavours during the ferment.

Overall these olives are unsuited to antipasto, mostly due to their appearance and the elevated level of tang, however these olives could work quite well in a paste or dip concept, or could work as a counterpoint for a rich stew or braise.