Quality Competition Rules — Judging and Awards

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Preamble — the spirit of the competition

Olio Nuovo Days was born from the discovery of new oils, those of the harvest that has just ended, in all their freshness. The competition extends this spirit: it does not simply rank oils, it aims to make their aromatic diversity known, to bring producers, tasters and the gastronomy professions together, and to bring olive oil closer to gastronomy. Olio Nuovo Days combines the rigour of professional olive oil evaluation with the cultural and sensory perspective of gastronomy.

- **Discover.** Each edition judges the oils of the current harvest, in both hemispheres, when they are at their freshest.
- **Taste diversity.** Cultivars, terroirs, processes: each category highlights a different way of expressing the olive.
- **Meet the producers.** Behind every oil there is a producer and a know-how. The competition is first of all a place of encounter and recognition.
- **Bring olive oil closer to gastronomy.** The final brings together Chefs, sommeliers, taste specialists and, more generally, people who share the sensory experience: the oil is judged by those who put it on the table and know how to describe it.

Medals recognise quality and guide consumers; they are not an end in themselves. The rules that follow serve this spirit.

Principles

Olio Nuovo Days holds two editions of its international quality competition each year: the Northern Hemisphere and the Southern Hemisphere. Each edition judges the oils of the current harvest of its hemisphere.

- **Blind tasting.** On receipt, each sample is given an anonymous code known only to the organisation. Oils are judged under this code, from the first round to the final.
- **Direction of the judging.** Judging is led by a Panel Leader, who also holds the title of Jury President: Kostas Liris for the Northern Hemisphere, Marcelo Scofano for the Southern Hemisphere. The Competition President is a personality recognised by peers and by the public for the way they convey taste, through gastronomy, wine, perfumery, literature or another sensory discipline. The Competition President is appointed every year: they chair both finals of the mandate (see "Top 10 final") and settle a tie for first place.
- **Role of the organisation.** The organisation guarantees the anonymity of the samples, the logistics of the tastings and the application of these rules.
- **Scoring.** All scores are given out of 100, in whole points, with no decimals.
- **Final decisions.** The decisions of the jury and the ranking of the final are final and not subject to appeal.

EVOO category — selection round

Each oil entered in the EVOO category is tasted by a jury of industry professionals, led by the Panel Leader of the edition. This round awards the medals and selects the finalists.

1. Each oil receives a single final score out of 100, in whole points, with no decimals.
2. This score determines the medal according to the grid in the section "EVOO awards". An oil scoring 84 receives Silver; an oil scoring 85 receives Gold.

3. The 10 best-scored oils qualify for the final, provided they have obtained Supreme Gold (94 points and above). If fewer than 10 oils reach this threshold, the final is held with fewer than 10 finalists, and the Top 10 is therefore always Supreme Gold.
4. In the event of a tie for 10th place, the Jury President (the Panel Leader) selects the finalist.

Top 10 final

The 10 finalists are ranked in a final chaired by the Competition President. The final jury scores each oil out of 100; these scores establish the ranking from 1 to 10. The best-scored oil receives The Best Of Show.

- **Competition President.** A personality recognised by peers and by the public for the way they convey taste, through gastronomy, wine, perfumery, literature or another sensory discipline, renewed every year: Chef, sommelier, perfumer, author, or any other recognised personality. The mandate begins at the Southern Hemisphere edition in September, which gathers fewer than half the oils of the Northern edition: this allows the President to become familiar with the oils and the competition more easily. The President then exchanges with the team and brings outside knowledge to enrich discussions, until the Northern Hemisphere edition in early April. The President chairs both finals of the mandate, that of the Southern edition and that of the Northern edition.
- **Final jury.** In coordination with the organisation, the Competition President invites 10 personalities from their field or connected to taste. The final jury has 12 members: the Competition President, their 10 guests and the Panel Leader.
- **Panel Leader.** Twelfth member of the final jury, the Panel Leader scores the oils like the other jurors and ensures that the tasting method is respected.
- **Anonymity.** Finalists are tasted blind, under their anonymous code.
- **Ranking.** Each juror tastes and scores the 10 oils out of 100. The ranking from 1 to 10 follows the total of the 12 scores of the jury, which are whole points: there is no average and no decimal. In the event of a tie for first place, the Competition President decides.
- **Publication.** The complete ranking from 1 to 10 is published with the results.

EVOO awards

Medals derive from the score of the selection round. Finalists, all Supreme Gold, additionally receive the Top 10 mention, reserved for EVOO, which designates the finalists, up to ten, whatever their number; the first oil of the final receives the title The Best Of Show, which replaces its Supreme Gold; the other finalists keep their Supreme Gold and their rank.

Award	Allocation	Number
The Best Of Show	Oil ranked first in the final	1 per edition
Top 10 mention	The 10 finalists, with their rank from 1 to 10, in addition to their Supreme Gold	10 at most
Supreme Gold	Score of 94 points and above	Unlimited
Gold	Score of 85 to 93 points	Unlimited
Silver	Score of 75 to 84 points	Unlimited
No medal	Score below 75 points	—

Best of by group. The Best of title is added to the medal of the best-scored oil of its group. There is no minimum number of oils per group. Each Best of title is published with the number of oils evaluated in its group (for example "Best of Chile, among 3 oils").

Group	Title awarded	Rule specific to the group
Country of origin	Best of [country]: Best of Italy, Best of Chile…	Country where the olive grove is located
Cultivar	Best of [cultivar]: Best of Picual, Best of Coratina…	Monovarietal oils only

Group	Title awarded	Rule specific to the group
Organic farming	Best of Organic	Valid organic certification, certification body declared at entry
Blend	Best of Blend	Oils from at least two cultivars
PDO / PGI	Best of PDO/PGI	Oils bearing a PDO or PGI stated on the label

- The oil must have obtained at least Supreme Gold. Best of is not a score band: it designates the best oil of the group.
- If several oils of the group are finalists, the ranking of the final designates the Best of.
- Best of is awarded on the basis of scores. In the event of a tie outside the final, the Panel Leader, Jury President, decides.
- Each Best of by group (country, cultivar, Organic, Blend, PDO/PGI) is awarded separately in each category: an oil competes only with the oils of its own category. An infused oil from Morocco scoring 98 therefore cannot become Best of Morocco ahead of Moroccan EVOOs.
- Oils of the Extra Virgin based product category do not compete for Best of cultivar, Blend or PDO/PGI. Among themselves only, they compete for Best of Organic and Best of [country].

Landmark, award for consistency. The Landmark award recognises an oil's consistency from one edition to the next.

- **Attribution.** An oil receives the Landmark award when it obtains at least Supreme Gold (94 points and above) in three consecutive editions of its hemisphere.
- **Same oil.** Same producer, same commercial name, same category. A monovarietal keeps the same cultivar; a blend may vary its proportions from one harvest to the next. In the event of a change of commercial name, the producer may ask at entry for continuity to be recognised; the organisation decides.
- **Categories.** Landmark exists only for the EVOO category. It is not awarded in VOO, Extra Virgin based product or the Phenolic Excellence Program.
- **Interruption.** An edition without entry, or a score below Supreme Gold, resets the counter to zero.
- **Proclamation.** The award is added to the medal of the third edition and announced with the results of that edition.
- **Duration.** The award is acquired permanently and carries its year (Landmark 2029). Three further consecutive editions at Supreme Gold earn a new award (Landmark 2029 · 2032).
- **Calculation.** The website identifies eligible oils from entries carried over from one edition to the next; the organisation validates before publication.
- **Badge.** A dated "Olio Nuovo Days Landmark" badge, distinct from the medals, reserved for the awarded oil.
- **Launch.** The count starts with the 2027 editions, with no retroactivity: the first Landmark awards will be made in 2029.

Use of awards. An award may appear only on bottles from the same lot as the awarded sample.

Category on the medals. Every medal and distinction bears, written in full, the name of the oil's category and the vintage. The hemisphere never appears on it.

Category	Name written on the medal
EVOO	Extra Virgin Olive Oil
VOO	Huile d'olive vierge
Phenolic Excellence Program	Phenolic Excellence
Extra Virgin based product	Extra Virgin based product

VOO category — matured olives (Northern Hemisphere)

The VOO (Virgin Olive Oil) category brings together virgin olive oils made from olives that have undergone controlled fermentation before milling. It is a separate category: it exists only at the Northern Hemisphere edition and has its own jury.

It is aimed primarily at French oils: the French industry has modelled this maturation process and made it a recognised know-how. It is open to matured-olive oils from other countries.

- **Definition.** Matured-olive oils (black fruitiness) according to the recommendations of France Olive and the Centre technique de l'olivier: sound olives, matured in airtight containers under temperature monitoring, then milled.
- **Labelling.** The oil falls under the category "virgin olive oil" and bears the mention "old-fashioned taste" ("goût à l'ancienne") or "matured olives" ("olives maturées").
- **Judging criterion.** The typicity of matured-olive oil.
- **Panel Leader.** Alexandra Paris leads the judging of the category and also holds the title of Jury President.
- **Pre-selection.** A jury of professional tasters, constituted for this category only, tastes and scores each oil out of 100, in whole points.
- **Final.** The 10 best-scored oils of the pre-selection, with no medal requirement in 2027, are ranked in a final organised on the same format as the EVOO final, but chaired by a President specific to the VOO category, different from the EVOO one. It only serves to designate The Best Of Show VOO, with no Top 10 mention. The access threshold will be reviewed for the following editions, according to the number of participants. In the event of a tie for first place, the VOO final President decides.
- **Awards.** Same grid as EVOO: Silver from 75 to 84 points, Gold from 85 to 93, Supreme Gold from 94. The Best Of Show applies as for EVOO, based on the VOO final. The Top 10 mention is reserved for EVOO. VOO Best of awards are limited to Best of Organic and Best of PDO/PGI, reserved for oils with at least Supreme Gold: no Best of [country] (the category is built around the French sector), no Best of cultivar and no Best of Blend (a matured-olive oil is always a blend). Landmark is reserved for EVOO.

Extra Virgin based product category — infused, co-extracted and flavoured oils (Northern and Southern Hemispheres)

Infused, co-extracted and flavoured oils form a single category, Extra Virgin based product, present in the Northern and Southern editions. The producer states the process at entry.

Process	Definition
Infused	Ingredient left in the oil after extraction
Co-extracted	Olives and ingredient milled together
Flavoured	Essential oil, aroma or extract added to the oil

- **Judging.** Oils are tasted and scored out of 100 by the jury of professional tasters. There is no final: these scores are definitive and determine the awards.
- **Judging criterion.** The jury judges the final sensory quality of the oil and what it can bring to the consumer in use, in the kitchen and at the table. The process is declared at entry, for transparency.
- **Awards.** Same grid as EVOO: Silver from 75 to 84 points, Gold from 85 to 93, Supreme Gold from 94.
- **The Best Of Show Extra Virgin based product.** It designates the best oil of the category, infused, co-extracted or flavoured, organic or not, based on scores. In the event of a tie, the Panel Leader, Jury President, decides.
- **Best of by group.** Extra Virgin based product oils do not compete for Best of cultivar, Blend or PDO/PGI; among themselves only, they compete for Best of Organic and Best of [country].

The Best Of Show by category

General rule. The Best Of Show is the highest distinction awarded in each competition category. It replaces the medal or distinction for which the winning oil would otherwise qualify. The two awards are never cumulative. Each category may have only one Best Of Show per edition.

The Best Of Show applies by category: an oil competes only with the oils of its own category.

Category	Allocation
EVOO	First oil of the Top 10 final
VOO	First oil of the VOO final
Phenolic Excellence Program	Best programme score of the category, no final
Extra Virgin based product	Best score of the category (infused, co-extracted and flavoured combined), no final

Phenolic Excellence Program category (Northern and Southern Hemispheres)

The Phenolic Excellence Program is a category in its own right, present in the Northern and Southern editions. It recognises extra virgin olive oils whose high content of phenolic compounds comes with the most balanced tasting possible. All the distinctions of the programme carry the prefix "Phenolic" and replace the Silver, Gold and Supreme Gold medals. On the medals, the category is written "Phenolic Excellence".

Positioning. The Phenolic Excellence Program (under the motto "When science meets taste") is neither a category of functional supplements nor a contest of numbers: it recognises oils that turn phenolic intensity into the most structured and harmonious taste possible. Each oil undergoes certified analytical verification and a blind tasting, so that chemistry confirms quality while the palate validates it.

- **Jury.** Oils are tasted blind by the EVOO jury. Christophe Lavelle, PhD, researcher at CNRS (Sorbonne Université and Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris), is President and scientific adviser of the competition for this category; Kostas Liris is Panel Leader. There is no final, no Top 10 mention and no Best of by group.
- **Admission.** At least 250 mg/kg of hydroxytyrosol and derivatives, the threshold of the health claim in Regulation (EU) No 432/2012 (5 mg per 20 g of oil).
- **Analysis.** A single method is required, the one validated by the International Olive Council (IOC): COI/T.20/Doc. No 29, method 2 (SPE-HPLC-DAD), by an ISO/IEC 17025 accredited laboratory, on a sample of the entered lot. No correction is applied according to the method, and the organisation does not carry out counter-analyses. No other method is accepted.
- **Scoring.** The programme score, out of 100, adds content and taste. Content: 0.05 point per mg/kg of hydroxytyrosol and derivatives, capped at 1,500 mg/kg, i.e. up to 75 points (table below). Taste: 25% of the score out of 100 given blind by the jurors, i.e. up to 25 points. Jurors assess the quality of the oil for this category. Bitterness and pungency are recognised as positive sensory attributes of virgin olive oil. Their intensity shall not, in itself, constitute a reason for penalisation, provided the oil meets the requirements of the extra virgin category. The programme score is rounded to the whole point.

Hydroxytyrosol and derivatives	Content points (out of 75)
250 mg/kg (admission threshold)	12.5 points
500 mg/kg	25 points
800 mg/kg	40 points
1,000 mg/kg	50 points
1,200 mg/kg	60 points
1,500 mg/kg and above (cap)	75 points

Scale: 75 points for content (0.05 point per mg/kg, cap 1,500 mg/kg), 25 points for taste.

- **Safeguards.** Taste filter: the oil must be an extra virgin olive oil according to the IOC (median of defects equal to 0 and median of fruity above 0) and obtain at least 70/100 in tasting to receive an award. The programme score does not exceed 100. Jurors do not know the content when tasting, and they score the intensity of fruitiness, bitterness and pungency.
- **Programme awards.**

Award	Allocation
Phenolic Verified	Programme score of 30 points and above: content verified by analysis, in an oil that meets the admission criteria (analytical verification, no health claim)
Phenolic Acclaim	Programme score of 55 points and above
Phenolic Summit	Programme score of 75 points and above

- **The Best Of Show.** The best programme score of the category (content and taste) receives The Best Of Show. Each oil receives a single distinction, that of its level, with no accumulation. In the event of a perfect tie, Christophe Lavelle, PhD, President of the competition for this category, decides. The Silver, Gold and Supreme Gold medals do not apply to this category.

Our Commitment

Beyond medals and distinctions, Olio Nuovo Days is dedicated to recognising the expertise, dedication and craftsmanship of olive oil producers around the world.

Through independent professional evaluation and a dialogue with the world of gastronomy, the competition seeks to give exceptional olive oils the recognition they deserve — celebrating their diversity, their origins and the people behind them.

Because every great olive oil has a story worth telling.