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## OVERVIEW

**Alcohol Professor is a site for both industry professionals and enthusiasts, so write for both kinds of readers.** We want to educate and inform readers and be a trusted source of original content. Our focus is on all things related to liquor, wine, cocktails, beer, cider, mead, etc. Our content mainly fits into 3 categories – **news**, **education**, and stories that focus on **brands** that are [winners of our affiliated international competitions](#) or are potential submitters to the competitions. We publish reviews of products and books, profiles of winemakers, brewers, distillers, bartenders, pairings, unique recipes, travel features, trend stories, and more. We are interested in stories that have not yet been told, and strive to cover things related to alcohol in a fresh way with an emphasis on education, and with respect for regionality, terroir, tradition, as well as innovation.

## OUR BUSINESS

It's important to understand that today our publisher does not make money from the websites but rather from [spirits, wine, and beer competitions in NYC, Berlin, Singapore, and Melbourne](#), [USI Olive Oil Competition](#), [USI Vinegar Competition](#) and the [USI Chocolate Competition](#). **The Alcohol Professor, Cheese Professor, and The Chocolate Professor websites are not yet fully monetized.** The publications need to support the competitions. The sites lend credibility to the competitions and we like it when our content highlights our competition winners whenever possible or speaks to potential competition submitters. Because we do not have a cheese

competition, it is fine to mention and report on cheese competitions. **DO NOT** reference other alcohol, chocolate or olive oil competitions—if you do it will be edited out.

***What differentiates our content is expertise.***

**Be approachable.** We are smart but don't want to be perceived as snobs.

**Be engaging.** Show some passion for the subject to pull readers in.

**Be informative.** We are here to help our readers learn.

**Be opinionated.** But be sure to back up your opinions with relevant information.

**Be concise.** Use short words and sentences. Avoid unnecessary modifiers.

**Be specific.** Avoid vague language. Cut the fluff.

**Be geographically neutral.** Our publication has no geographic borders. Write for everybody keeping in mind our audience of industry pros and enthusiasts. When possible, include sources from different regions.

*Our sister publications are Cheese Professor and Chocolate Professor. See the guidelines for [Cheese](#), [Chocolate](#), [Vinegar](#), or [Olive Oil](#) if you are interested in pitching.*

## PITCHES

Give us a “reason to believe” in your story idea and make sure your story is going to be compelling for an industry professional as well as for an enthusiast. Always make sure there is a reason for the story. If you haven't written for us before please include relevant clips and a short bio along with your pitch. If you are not a subject matter expert, please indicate who you plan to interview or what sources you will reference in your story (unless you are a subject matter expert, you will need to include quotes from 1-2 people minimum), what makes the story important, and why you are the person to write it. Also, **please always do a thorough search on the subject!** Find out what's already been written, the background, and how your pitch is pushing a story forward.

Example of a great pitch:

*Keeping with the ridiculously-rare theme, this pitch is for three new spirits (or any one of the three, your pick) from The Last Drop Distillers. If you're not familiar with the brand, they have a great backstory. A pair of spirits industry titans (they'd created Johnnie Walker Blue Label, Bailey's Irish Cream, and Chivas Regal 18, among many other seminal brands and expressions) came out of retirement to tramp around Scotland looking for rare and overlooked single casks of whisky, both blends and single malts. They launched in 2008 and only came out with new releases when they found something worth bottling; each release was no more than a few hundred bottles, sometimes less than a hundred. I haven't tasted everything they've put out, but I've tasted a good chunk of it, and their taste is impeccable.*

*The daughters of the founders are now running the show, and they're expanding their horizons. They've just released three new expressions: a bourbon (their second) from the Buffalo Trace distillery, distilled in 1980 and aged in wood for almost 20 years; a Jamaican pot still rum (their first — distillery not disclosed for legal reasons, apparently) distilled in 1976 and aged in both Jamaica and Liverpool (the vast majority of rums are aged in Liverpool and Amsterdam!) for 43 years, bottled at a mind-blowing cask strength of 67.3% ABV; and a Grande Champagne cognac distilled at a small family distillery (name not disclosed) in 1959. Only 21 bottles of the cognac are available — there are 183 of the rum and 240 of the bourbon. The price for each is in the thousands. I have tiny tiny samples which I haven't tried yet.*

We are looking for pitches from both writers and industry professionals. Please indicate who you plan to interview or what sources you will reference in your story, what makes the story important, and why you are the person to write it. Pitches go to the editor-in-chief, Amy Sherman [editor@alcoholprofessor.com](mailto:editor@alcoholprofessor.com) . If you have already written for us, you may use our [pitch form](#).

## STORIES

It may be obvious, but the best way to figure out what is a fit for us is to spend some time on the site. Please search the site before pitching to make sure we have not already written about what you are proposing.

Word count is flexible but a minimum of 500 words and up to 1800 words. We pay by assignment, not word count.

Story format: Stories should begin with an introduction, include a thesis sentence (what is the point of this story?) supporting points, and finally a conclusion. Only stories written by a subject matter expert are written in first person narrative.

Always support your assumptions or assertions with original quotes from experts or citations from books or research where appropriate unless you are truly a subject matter expert. We seek to promote and advance diversity, equity, and inclusion. One way we do this is by prioritizing diversity in experts and sources whenever possible. If you need help finding expert sources who are from underrepresented groups, please contact the editor. Note: a marketing director or company spokesperson is in most cases NOT an expert. All expert quotes must be original. DO NOT USE QUOTES FROM OTHER PUBLICATIONS.

## PHOTOS

Each story should be submitted with a minimum of 3 photos and a photo for each product, producer or brand featured if the story is a roundup. If someone is quoted extensively please include a headshot. We MUST have permission to use photos. Unfortunately at the current time, we do not have a budget for photos, however, we can include photo credits and links in the credits. If you have difficulty finding photos, search for free options on [Unsplash](#) [StockSnap](#) [Pixabay](#) or [Creative Commons](#). You may also search on [Instagram](#), request permission to use photos, and offer a link to an Instagram feed (or any site they request). You can also contact companies and request permission to use their photos. Again, we cannot use photos without permission, even if they have been shared on social media. If you are having difficulty getting photos, please contact the editor. Be sure to include credit information if required.. Please send ALL the photos at one time if possible. Specs: Photos should be at least 2000 pixels wide and 500kb. We prefer horizontal images but vertical is ok. Photos should be jpeg format and MUST be labeled. Do not embed the photos in the story but send them separately.

**Please include the names and emails of any sources for your stories. This is for fact-checking and future outreach.**

Submit copy via Pages or Word document or Google Docs, whichever you prefer, but please use spell check (or use the free version of [Grammarly](#)) to catch typos, spelling mistakes, and grammatical issues prior to submission.

## BIO

If you have not written for us before, please include a short bio of no more than 100 words that highlights your experience in regard to the industry and/or writing and includes links to social media and/or your website.

We will always let you know when your story runs. Please feel free to share your story on your social media platforms! We only ask that you please tag us appropriately (links and handles below) and use the hashtag: *#alcoholprofessor*

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/alcoholprofessor>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/TheAlcoholProf>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/alcoholprofessor>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/thealcoholprof/>

All quotes and sources must be original, we do not reprint quotes from other publications. If you find any inadvertent errors in published stories please contact the editor.

## TYPES OF STORIES

### FOR ALL STORIES:

Whenever possible include at least one or more [International Beverage Competition winner](#) and link back to the competition that they won. Our publication is not monetized and the only way we stay in business is to support the competitions.

**News stories** should be fresh, offering insight not found elsewhere preferably with quotes from experts. We also publish obituaries of industry professionals.

Example: [Inside the Uncle Nearest and Jack Daniels Partnership to Diversify the Spirits Industry](#)

Obituary: [Sasha Petrasky](#)

**Roundup stories** MUST include photos for each item being featured. We also want links to each company or brand.

Example: [7 Alcohol Subscriptions to Break Lockdown Monotony](#)

**Educational stories** need to strike the right balance of not being snobby but speaking to professionals as well as non-professionals. If you do not have a professional background in wine, beer, or spirits, your story will require quotes from at least 1-2 experts. If you are an expert, winemaker quotes are strongly encouraged. Example: [Calvados 101](#)

**Pairing stories** cover foods (or cigars) that pair with all kinds of alcoholic beverages. We do not want something as broad as “wine and cheese” but rather something like “sparkling wine and cheese.” If you are not a sommelier or cicerone, please make sure you have quotes from at least two experts. Example: [Pairing Bourbon and Cheese](#)

**Award winners** from our alcohol competitions are a top priority! We want profiles of the trends, people, and stories behind their winning products. See the winners associated with all the competitions [here](#).

Example: [Field Trip: Blinking Owl Distillery](#)

**Book reviews** will only be considered if they can be reviewed near the publication date, and are of significant importance. They should include a description of the book and who it is designed for, a discussion of similar books (if there are any), and quotes from the author, if applicable. Reviews need to be critical looks and should include both the strengths and weaknesses of the book. Please be sure to include an image of the book cover, a photo of the author(s), and a photo and drink recipe from the book (if one is available). Include links to the author's website if they have one and also to the Amazon listing for the book. Example: [Book Review: Colonial Spirits](#) **In 2025 book reviews are low priority.**

**Recipes** need to include very detailed information about the products included in the recipe and why they are featured. Tips and techniques are encouraged as are quotes from bartenders, recipe developers, or distillers. We prefer original recipes rather than those reprinted from other sources.

Example: [Old Bay Bloody](#)

**Pop culture** stories are welcome! We are open to stories about celebrities with a connection to beer, wine, spirits, etc. We are also interested in alcohol pairing with pop culture--such as superheroes, musical genres, artists, horoscopes, sports figures, you name it. These stories should also include recommendations from experts and still speak to a professional audience. Example: [Tricky Pairings for Halloween](#)

**Product reviews** focus primarily on cider, beer, wine, liqueur, and spirits (and sometimes other alcoholic beverages). They are assigned to industry experts, are very opinionated takes, and must cover the following: What is it? Where does it come from and how was it made? How much does it cost and is it worth it? (including a comparison to other similar products if they exist) What does it taste like? How would you recommend enjoying it? (could include pairing) Images from PR are fine, try to include at least one of the bottle or can and one in glass, if applicable. **In 2025 reviews are low priority.**

**Bar reviews** follow a template and include the name, location, background, detailed description, and top three most popular drinks, with quotes from an owner, manager, or bartender about what makes the bar unique and special. Please include photos of the interior and exterior and at least one cocktail. **In 2025 our focus is only on speakeasies or bars that have not received much coverage but are of high interest to drinkers.**

**Travel stories** should focus on the places that will be of interest to beer, wine, and spirits enthusiasts--think bars, distilleries, wineries, wine shops, and restaurants. These

stories should be of interest to all, not just those going to the destination. There should be an image for each place featured.

Please note, we will always send you the link when your story runs. If there is an issue with the date it runs (such as an embargo or release date) please let us know in advance. If you see any errors in the finished piece let us know as soon as possible. We have a social media team, but any shares on social media are much appreciated. Please do tag us @alcoholprofessor

## INVOICING

Please bill AFTER the story and accompanying images have been submitted and accepted, do not wait for publication. Please send invoices preferably in pdf format, to [info@alcoholprofessor.com](mailto:info@alcoholprofessor.com) and cc [editor@alcoholprofessor.com](mailto:editor@alcoholprofessor.com) before the end of the month. Be sure to include your name, phone number, address, story title(s), and fee. If you have multiple assignments, please invoice once per month.

Payment is by check unless you request otherwise. Your payment will come from the parent company, iAlcohol. If you need a template for invoices, please contact the editor.

## REPRINTING

If you wish to repost your story, please include the following statement and link: This story originally appeared on [AlcoholProfessor.com](http://AlcoholProfessor.com) and insert the following code on the duplicate page (however your CMS allows), substituting out the sample slug here for the URL of their article on the professor site:

```
<link rel="canonical"
href="https://www.alcoholprofessor.com/best-wine-cheese-pairings" />
```

## REVIEW SAMPLES

Please feel free to request samples of products or review copies of books if they are related to assignments. If you don't have an assignment, please check with the editor before requesting it.

# STYLE GUIDE

General types of liquor are lowercase

- bourbon
- gin

Specific brand names and protected designation of origin names are capitalized

- Four Roses Small Batch Select Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey
- Tanqueray 10

Varietals and varieties

We follow AP Style: Wine names for grapes, such as chardonnay, are not capitalized. Wines named for regions - Chianti - are capitalized, as are Bordeaux, Burgundy, Chablis, Champagne, Chianti, Madeira, and Marsala. Brand names of specific wines are capitalized, such as Duckhorn Merlot. Varietal refers to the wine, variety to the grape. “A grape variety is used to make a wine varietal.” If you are ever unsure, simply search for the wine at NYTimes.com since the NYTimes also adheres to AP Style.

Example:

[Jordan Winery](#) produces both chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon. They do not produce Chianti.

## *Abbreviations and acronyms*

If there's a chance your reader won't recognize an abbreviation or acronym, spell it out the first time you mention it. Then use the short version for all other references. If the abbreviation isn't clearly related to the full version, specify in parentheses.

## *Active voice*

Use active voice. Avoid passive voice.

In active voice, the subject of the sentence does the action. In passive voice, the subject of the sentence has the action done to it. Words like “was” and “by” may indicate that you're writing in a passive voice. Scan for these words and rework sentences where they appear.

- Yes: Thompson grows chardonnay.
- No: The grapes were grown by Thompson.



### *Cliches*

Do not use cliches. Also do not use the following terms:

- The next big thing, up and coming
- Decadent, drool, delicious
- Sinful, guilt-free, guilty pleasure
- Addictive, addicting, crack, or other terms that make light of addiction
- Ethnic or exotic as catchalls for anything non-Western
- Waitress and other unnecessarily gendered words

### *Capitalization*

We use a few different forms of capitalization. The title case capitalizes the first letter of every word except articles, prepositions, and conjunctions. Sentence case capitalizes the first letter of the first word.

When writing out an email address or website URL, use all lowercase.

- sarah@stonyhillvinstseyard.com
- https://www.stonyhillvineyard.com

### *Contractions*

They're great! They give your writing an informal, friendly tone.

### *Numbers*

Spell out a number when it begins a sentence. Otherwise, use the numeral. This includes ordinals.

- Ten employees work at the brewery full time another 5 come in seasonally.
- Meg's vermouth won 1st place at last year's Vermouths of the World competition.

Sometimes it feels weird to use the numeral. If it's an expression that typically uses spelled-out numbers, leave them that way.

- The first impression is powerful.
- Distilleries can apply for certification through a licensed third-party agency.

Numbers over 3 digits get commas:

- 999
- 1,000
- 150,000

Write out big numbers in full. Abbreviate them if there are space restraints, as in a tweet or a chart: 1k, 150k.

### *Dates*

Generally, spell out the day of the week and the month.

Saturday, January 24

- Saturday, January 24

### *Seasons*

Lowercase unless used in a title.

- The Summer Olympics
- Cocktails featured on the summer menu are light and fresh.

### *Decimals and fractions*

Spell out fractions.

- Yes: two-thirds
- No: 2/3

Use decimal points when a number can't be easily written out as a fraction, like 1.375 or 47.2.

### *Percentages*

Use the % symbol instead of spelling out "percent."

### *Ranges and spans*

Use a hyphen (-) to indicate a range or span of numbers.

- It takes 20-30 days.

### *Money*

When writing about US currency, use the dollar sign before the amount. Include a decimal and the number of cents if more than 0.

- \$20
- \$19.99

When writing about other currencies, follow the same symbol-amount format:

- ¥1
- €1

### *Telephone numbers*

Use dashes without spaces between numbers.

- 555-867-5309

### *Temperature*

Use the degree symbol and the capital F abbreviation for Fahrenheit.

- 98°F

### *Time*

Use numerals and am or pm, with a space in between. Don't use minutes for on-the-hour time.

- 7 am
- 7:30 pm

Use a hyphen between times to indicate a time period.

- 7 am–10:30 pm

Abbreviate decades when referring to those within the past 100 years.

- the 00s
- the 90s

When referring to decades more than 100 years ago, be more specific:

- the 1900s
- the 1890s

### *Coronavirus*

- COVID-19

## PUNCTUATING

### *Apostrophes*

The apostrophe's most common use is making a word possessive. If the word already ends in an s and it's singular, you also add an 's. If the word ends in an s and is plural, just add an apostrophe.

- The beer thief drank Sam's beer.
- The beer thief drank Chris's beer.
- The beer thief drank the managers' beers.

### *Colons*

Use a colon (rather than an ellipsis, em dash, or comma) to offset a list.

- Erin uses 3 kinds of bitters: Fee's, Peychaud's, and Angostura.

### *Commas*

When writing a list, use the serial comma (also known as the Oxford comma).

- Yes: Martha worked at Maker's Mark, Buffalo Trace, and Jack Daniels.
- No: Martha worked at Maker's Mark, Buffalo Trace, and Jack Daniels.

Otherwise, use common sense. If you're unsure, read the sentence out loud. Where you find yourself taking a breath, use a comma.

### *Dashes and hyphens*

Use a hyphen (-) without spaces on either side to link words into a single phrase, or to indicate a span or range.

- first-time user
- Monday-Friday

Ellipses, in brackets, can be used to show that you're omitting words in a quote.

- "When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, [...] a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."

### *Periods*

Periods go inside quotation marks. They go outside parentheses when the parenthetical is part of a larger sentence, and inside parentheses when the parenthetical stands alone.

- Christy said, "I drank the cider."
- I drank wine (and I ate the cheese, too).

Leave a single space between sentences.

### *Question marks*

Question marks go inside quotation marks if they're part of the quote. Like periods, they go outside parentheses when the parenthetical is part of a larger sentence, and inside parentheses when the parenthetical stands alone.

### *Exclamation points*

Use exclamation points sparingly, and never more than one at a time. They're like high-fives: A well-timed one is great, but too many can be annoying.

Exclamation points go inside quotation marks. Like periods and question marks, they go outside parentheses when the parenthetical is part of a larger sentence, and inside parentheses when the parenthetical stands alone.

### *Semicolons*

Go easy on semicolons. They usually support long, complicated sentences that could easily be simplified. Try an em dash (—) instead, or simply start a new sentence.

### *Ampersands*

Don't use ampersands unless one is part of a company or brand name.

- Ben and Dan
- Ben & Jerry's

### *Pronouns*

If your subject's gender is unknown or irrelevant, use "they," "them," and "their" as a singular pronoun. Use "he/him/his" and "she/her/her" pronouns as appropriate. Don't use "one" as a pronoun.

### *Names and titles*

The first time you mention a person in writing, refer to them by their first and last names. On all other mentions, refer to them by their last name.

Capitalize individual job titles when referencing to a specific role. Don't capitalize when referring to the role in general terms.

- Marcel was named Marketing Manager at the winery today.
- All the managers drank port.

Don't refer to anyone as a "ninja," "rockstar," or "wizard" unless they literally are one.

### *Schools*

The first time you mention a school, college, or university in a piece of writing, refer to it by its full official name. On all other mentions, use its more common abbreviation.

- Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia Tech
- Georgia State University, GSU

### *States, cities, and countries*

Spell out all city and state names. Don't abbreviate city names.

Per AP Style, all cities should be accompanied by their state, with the exception of: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Honolulu, Houston, Indianapolis, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New Orleans, New York, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Washington.

On first mention, write out: United States. On subsequent mentions, US is fine. The same rule applies to any other country or federation with a common abbreviation (European Union, EU; United Kingdom, UK).

### *URLs and websites*

Capitalize the names of websites and web publications. Don't italicize.

Avoid spelling out URLs, but when you need to, leave off the <http://www>. Always put the url next to the text. Example: The Alcohol Professor <https://www.alcoholprofessor.com>

### *Books, magazines, movies*

Italicize book, magazine and movie titles and link to the author or publisher page rather than Amazon product listing.