

POINTS	DESCRIPTION	GUIDELINES	SCORE	NOTES
10	COLOR BEFORE WATER	Color should be CLEAR, BRIGHT and NATURAL LOOKING. Clear (BLANCHE) and Green (VERTE) are the two classic colors, but other colors such as orange or red are also acceptable. VINTAGE ABSINTHES may have faded to an amber brown. A light haze should be penalized, as should be any excessive sediment or obvious plant material. Old vintage absinthes will usually have thrown a slight sediment. An unnatural ARTIFICIAL LOOKING COLOR – neon or fluorescent tones – is NOT acceptable, and should be heavily penalized.		
10	LOUCHE ACTION	A SLOW, BEAUTIFUL LOUCHE is desirable. An artificially fast or instantaneous louche may be penalized. If the glass is left to stand for a time the absinthe must stay louché – ie it must not partially or entirely re-clarify.		
10	COLOR AFTER WATER	After addition of up to 3 parts ice water (the exact amount at the taster's discretion) the absinthe should be PARTIALLY TRANSLUCENT OR ALMOST OPAQUE. Points should be deducted if the absinthe it is still fairly clear and transparent after the addition of water. The louché color should have COMPLEXITY and NUANCE.		
30	AROMA	The nose should be sampled both BEFORE and AFTER adding water. COMPLEXITY AND HERBAL INTEREST are important. Fresh green anise on the nose is good, excessive star anise is not. Points may be deducted for some non-herbal characteristics – eg obtrusive citrus or grassy notes – although floral notes are generally desirable. Any smells indicative of distillation problems (muddy swampy smells, wood alcohol smell) should be heavily penalized.		
10	MOUTH-FEEL	Note that this excludes taste, and refers only to the feel of the drink on the tongue. THE MOUTH-FEEL SHOULD BE FULL AND RICH.		
20	TASTE	The flavor should be CLEAN, CRISP AND REFRESHING. There should be NO TRACE OF PROBLEMS ARISING FROM IMPROPER DISTILLATION. There should be no excessive sweetness, NOR ANY EXCESSIVE BITTERNESS (sometimes indicative of the use of artemesia absinthium in the coloring step – or <i>Ordinaire's Blunder</i> as it's technically known!).		
10	OVERALL IMPRESSION	The drink should have a classic absinthe character: REFRESHING, SUBTLE, COMPLEX, HARMONIOUS.		
100	TOTAL			

GUIDELINES FOR USE OF THE FEE VERTE ABSINTHE TASTING SCORESHEET

1. The aim of this scoresheet is to provide a standardized framework for evaluating absinthes of different types and of different origins, so that the results may be meaningfully compared from a quality perspective.
2. Although most absintheurs regard only the two historically sanctified colours – BLANCHE and VERTE - as being legitimate, there are today an increasing number of absinthes made in different colours, including orange and red. For this reason, points are not awarded for a specific colour – for example the classic dead-leaf green or *feuille morte* – and the color evaluation should be done solely in terms of clarity, brightness and, most importantly, NATURALNESS. Any artificial-looking color should be marked down.
3. It's important to evaluate the aroma, both before and after adding water, but absinthe should never be tasted neat (because the high alcohol percentage of the undiluted liquid will immediately numb the tongue).
4. Whether to add sugar is always a matter of personal preference, but for scoring purposes, absinthe should be tasted unsugared. By all means though include in your tasting notes an additional description of any changes brought about by the addition of sugar.
5. It's usual to add slightly less water to lower strength absinthes, slightly more to those with higher alcohols. However, in the interests of standardization, no more than 3 parts of very cold water should be added. Within this limit, the exact amount of water added can be varied at the taster's discretion.
6. The method of production - traditional Swiss-style herbal distillation; individual herbal distillation followed by assembly; blending and addition of essential oils – is irrelevant for tasting purposes, and should not be allowed to sway your judgement. What matters is the sensory qualities exhibited by the absinthe in the glass, nothing else.
7. In the same way, the country of origin of the absinthe is not relevant for tasting and scoring purposes, and Spanish-style, Franco-Swiss style and Czech-style absinthes (or *absinths*, or *absentas*) should all be held to the same standards. A natural color is always better than an artificial color. A perfumed aroma is always better than a dull and uninteresting one. A refreshing and delicious taste is better than an unpleasant or medicinal taste. Noticeable sweetness or excessive bitterness are always bad. A complex and harmonious absinthe is always better than a one-dimensional or unbalanced one.