

How are Pubs of the Year selected?

Each of CAMRA's 211 Branches selects its own Pub of the Year (POTY). The selection method is not centrally prescribed and Branches choose one which suits their area. They are, though, advised to make sure their procedures and criteria are transparent and easy to explain. CAMRA has produced a guidance document for Branches on how best to go about selecting their POTY. The deadline for Branches to decide their POTY is mid-March.

What happens next?

CAMRA's Branches are grouped into 16 regions, each of which chooses its own POTY. In the larger regions, there may be an intermediate round covering particular parts of the region e.g. counties. Again the methodology used is decided locally, though many regions (and, indeed, Branches) use the national judging procedure (see later). Generally speaking, judges are selected from Branches in the region. This stage of the process concludes in early/mid-August.

And next?

The winners from each region are arranged by the National Organiser into four groups of four – this is known as the super-regional round. The make up of these super-regions will vary slightly from year to year depending on where the pubs concerned are located. The contenders are judged by a representative from the Region and all the judging must be done by the same person. The super-region winners are announced at the end of October.

What judging procedure is used?

At this stage, CAMRA's national judging procedure must be used. Pubs are judged against six criteria:

- quality of real ale/cider/perry
- style, décor, furnishing and cleanliness
- service, welcome and offering
- community focus and atmosphere
- alignment with CAMRA principles
- overall impression

All these carry equal weight except the first which has a two-times weighting factor. The judging form and accompanying guidelines can be found on the CAMRA website.

And finally?

The four finalists are now judged. This stage of the contest is run by the Chair of Pub Campaigns Committee, who selects five judges with the necessary skills and experience. At least one of the judges must be female and at least one aged under 40. Each year the panel comprises a mix of people who have judged the final before (to assist continuity) and some who haven't (to avoid staleness). There is a published protocol for judges to ensure confidentiality and fairness. Scoring again uses the national procedure with judges also expected to compile a written report expanding on their scores and providing other relevant information. The winner is announced in mid/late February.

