

# 2025 Craft Chocolat Challenge

## Guidelines for Judges

### Overview

Each chocolate bar will have its own scoring form. You will need to add your “Judge Number” (which will be given to you) to each entry’s judging form. Entrants will not know your number but will see everything on the forms you submit. If you want to make it known who you are, you may do so on your own or via another outlet.

On each entry form there will be the name of the bar, an ingredients list, information about the size and retail price of the bar, etc. You will also have the packaging the bar comes in. These are all important details for the Feedback section of the judging. We want you to give whatever feedback you can.

### Scoring TASTE

The contest scoring tabulation will only take in account your taste rating of the chocolate. The feedback you provide WILL NOT factor into determining the winner of the contest. Take into account the chocolate maker’s desires for that bar. Please refer to any descriptions on the entry form that came from the chocolate maker. Some bars could be made intentionally gritty, soft, etc. Elements to consider in your scoring of the bar.

- How is the Texture of the bar? Is it smooth or gritty? Sticky?
- How is the Smell? Enticing? Smell of chocolate? Unpleasant?
- How is the Flavor? Does it have depth? Is it balanced? Unappealing or just plain bad
- How is the Sweetness? Too sweet? Too much bitterness coming through? Perfect?
- How is the Temper? Does it snap? Is it soft? Melt too fast? Of no concern to you?
- How is the Aftertaste? Does it leave any? Doesn’t go away? Leave you wanting more?

Scores range from 1-5, with 5 being perfect (no fractions). Please use the following sentences to help guide you to your overall tasting score:

1. = “Not only would I never buy this, if someone gifted this to me, I wouldn’t eat it and I wouldn’t regift it to anyone whose opinions mattered to me.”
2. = “I wouldn’t buy it and have no interest in eating more of it.”
3. = “If ordinary was a chocolate, this would be it.”
4. = “I’m intrigued and will definitely come back for more, but I will also give a friend a bite.”
5. = “Among the best I’ve ever tasted! I am not sharing with anyone! All mine!”

It is very important to remember that you are scoring each bar individually. DO NOT compare one bar to other bars in the contest.

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If you think all bars you tasted are worth a 5 then that's your opinion, don't think less of a bar because you feel you need to have one be better than the other. Or don't think better of a bar because you need one to stand out. This isn't helpful to the process. Don't rush your scoring, you have plenty of chocolate to taste it again later if you are feeling chocolate fatigue.

### **Offering FEEDBACK**

- First and foremost, be honest.
- We would like you to offer extensive feedback to the chocolate makers so anything that comes to mind, stands out, or was lacking please write it down. You are encouraged to compare the bars. Is there something one company is doing better than another? You can make suggestions by finding something on packaging that stood out to you.
- Don't worry about being harsh and if something deserves massive praise then share it. This information is only shared with the chocolate maker. We will not publish any information other than the winners and that information is compiled from many judges. This allows you to be you and that is what we want.
- Is the chocolate bar mold generic or do you prefer the classic look? Does a custom mold really stand out? Is the mold tricky to break pieces off to eat?
- Is the packaging appealing to the eye? Does it stand out? Does it tell you everything you want to know? It is easy to comprehend or too complex? Is it consistent or deceiving? Do you prefer the plastic, paper, or foil wrapper?
- Do you feel the bar is cost prohibitive?

### **Rating INNOVATION**

There is a separate form to nominate entries for the Innovation Award. You are encouraged to nominate up to three entries overall. While you are encouraged to think about what "innovation" means to you as you are performing the judging and providing feedback on each entry, you may wish to wait until the main judging is complete to make your recommendation for the bars you consider are deserving of recognition for being innovative. There are no formal guidelines for what innovation means – each judge is free to interpret this however they want, and there is no requirement that a bar nominated for being innovative must also receive a high taste rating. In addition, please provide one or two sentences for each recommendation on what about the bar you think is innovative and deserves to be recognized.