Beer Parlor Games: Testing the Expert Powers of Beer Gurus

Robert T. Hodgson
Fieldbrook Winery

Many aficionados of beer have found themselves in a situation where a host serves several steins of a similar style of beer, revealing only that they were poured from a given set of producers. What is the likelihood that a taster can correctly identify the beers?

There is an obscure (to this author) mathematical algorithm for determining the probability that a taster can correctly match k (k ≤ n) out of the n beers by chance alone. For example, the probability that a taster could correctly identify three or more beers in a flight of 6 by chance alone is about 8%.