EVALUATION OF AGING PROCESS ON THE SENSOTY CHARACTERISTICS OF HONEY SPIRIT

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Beverages aging process in wood barrels promotes the extraction of compounds, such as lignin derivatives, which are responsible for sensory changes that increase the beverage acceptability. Therefore, in this study it was performed a sensory evaluation of honey spirit, aged in a 200 L oak barrel, in order to evaluate the influence of aging time on the acceptability of this spirit. Samples collected at different times of aging, were submitted to a sensory evaluation by a representative group of alcoholic beverages consumers. For this purpose, the effective test was done using an unstructured hedonic scale of 9 points, considering as attributes: appearance, flavor, body and overall impression. The data were evaluated through an Internal Preference Mapping (MDPREF), analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Tukey test. The results showed that 180 days of aging was not enough to significantly change the attributes of appearance, body and overall impression of the honey spirit. However, the scores regarding the aroma and flavor attributes were significantly higher than those related to the samples of the initial time. By means of MDPREF analysis, the results showed that the sample related to 180 days of aging was preferred by most of consumers (data shown in graphics) in relation to the samples collected at 90, 120 and 150 days. Regarding to the analysis of the samples collected at initial time and after 30 and 60 days of aging the results showed an intermediate level of acceptance. Therefore, it can be concluded that aging process of honey spirit in oak barrel contribute significantly to improve the beverage quality and acceptance.