

THE Black Pearl AWARDS

OFFICIAL RULES & CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION 2026

Le Grand Bellevue

Untergstaadstrasse 17, 3780 Saanen, Switzerland

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Organizer: The Black Pearl Awards

Table of Contents

1. Object & Principles	Page 3
2. Eligibility	Page 3
3. Registration Conditions	Page 3
4. Documents Required for Registration	Page 3
5. Fundamental Requirements	Page 4
5.1. Regulatory Compliance	
5.2. Integrity of Samples	
6. Sample Submission	Page 4
7. Evaluation and Awards Framework	Page 4
7.1. The Main Caviar Category Awards	
7.2. Special Distinction Categories	
8. Tasting Principle	Page 6
9. Intellectual Property	Page 7
10. Privacy Policy	Page 7
11. Image Right	Page 8
12. Contact	Page 8

1. OBJECT & PRINCIPLES

The Black Pearl Awards 2026 is an international prestige competition dedicated to recognizing excellence in caviar production and product quality.

The competition prioritizes transparency, traceability, CITES compliance, and sustainable, ethical practices. In the event of any discrepancy between this document and any other communication (website or promotional material), this Official Regulation shall prevail.

2. ELIGIBILITY

The Black Pearl Awards 2026 are open exclusively to professional caviar producers meeting all of the following criteria:

- Valid CITES registration: participants must be officially registered with their national CITES authorities.
- Participation is open to producers, brands, and special selections, provided full origin traceability and CITES compliance in the country of production are ensured.

Automatic exclusions:

- Non-CITES products
- Flavoured or modified caviar
- Entries without transparent origin

3. REGISTRATION CONDITIONS

Registration Deadline: JANUARY 31st 2026

Steps to complete registration

- Complete the official online registration form
- Declare categories and number of entries (unlimited number of entries allowed)
- Settle the registration fees
- Receive written confirmation from the organisers → participation officially validated

Logistics, shipping coordination, customs formalities, and any related costs are managed by the participant.

Fees are non-refundable in case of voluntary withdrawal.

By completing registration and payment, participant **fully accept these Rules & Conditions.**

4. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR REGISTRATION

- Company and primary contact details
- Complete information allowing the organisers to reach you easily.
- Product information for each entry (unlimited number of entries allowed)
- Full specifications for every caviar submitted, including species, grain profile, salting method, and maturation notes.
- Logistics & shipping contact
- The person responsible for cold-chain compliance, customs declarations, and delivery coordination to Gstaad.
- Supporting documents:
- High-resolution logo, product spec sheets, and any relevant technical information.

5. FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

5.1. Regulatory Compliance

CITES REGISTRATION

5.2. Integrity of Samples

- Packaging: sealed, airtight, non-reconditioned containers supplied by the participant.
- Batch identification: exact species, harvest date, weight, participant code
- Minimum weight: 100 g per reference.

Participants are fully responsible for guaranteeing sample integrity until arrival in Switzerland.

6. SAMPLE SUBMISSION

Each participant may compete in one or several categories, with no limit on the number of entries.

Deadline for receipt in Gstaad: **Samples must be received between February 1st and March 5th, 2026**

Logistics, shipping coordination, customs formalities, and any related costs are managed by the participant.

Packages received after the deadline will be refused.
Organisers are not responsible for postal or customs delays.

Non-accepted submissions:

- Late deliveries
- Lost or damaged shipments
- Non-compliant packaging

Two Shipping methods

1. Own shipping – participants may send their samples directly to the hotel
Le Grand Bellevue
Untergstaadstrasse 17
3780 Gstaad, Switzerland
2. Logistic Handling – samples may be shipped through:
Courma Consulting
2 place du Grand-Mézel
1204 Genève

7. EVALUATION AND AWARDS FRAMEWORK

Unlike traditional luxury evaluation systems, which often consider brand image, perceived rarity, or symbolic value, the Black Pearl Awards assess the caviar itself — the grain as a product.

The intrinsic quality of a caviar is inseparable from:

- the integrity of its artisanal production,
- its environmental footprint,
- the transparency and traceability of its origin.

7.1. The Main Caviar category Awards – 100 - Point Scoring Grid

A. Caviar Category Awards

Core culinary competition – product-driven, blind tasting

These awards form the heart of the Black Pearl Awards and are evaluated through the official scoring grid.

The highest distinction, awarded to the most outstanding entries achieving top scores.

- **Beluga Excellence Award**
- **Ossetra Distinction Award**
- **Siberian Elegance Award**
- **Sevruga Refinement Award**
- **Hybrid Innovation Award**

The Caviar is assessed exclusively using the 100-point scoring grid below; this evaluation applies to the 5 Caviar species awards as mentioned on the website.

Appearance

Assessment of the caviar's visual precision: chromatic accuracy, natural luminosity, and uniformity of grain size and structure. Exceptional caviar presents a coherent, balanced appearance, reflecting rigorous selection and handling.

Grain & Texture

Evaluation of structural integrity and tactile response: firmness, elasticity, membrane cohesion, and clarity of rupture. Superior caviar delivers a clean pop, controlled release, and a refined, non-degrading mouthfeel.

Aroma

Assessment of aromatic cleanliness and typicity: freshness, marine expression, and qualitative finesse. High-quality caviar offers a discreet yet expressive olfactory profile, free from parasitic or distracting notes.

Flavour

Analysis of gustatory balance, species expression, depth, and aromatic layering. Outstanding caviar demonstrates purity of taste, harmonic salinity, and a clearly identifiable signature.

Aftertaste

Evaluation of persistence and sensory evolution: length, clarity, and elegance of the finish. The finest caviars leave a clean, prolonged, and coherent impression on the palate.

Processing Quality & Freshness

Assessment of maturation accuracy, salting precision, post-harvest handling, and overall sensory

CRITERIA	POINTS	FOCUS PRODUCTEUR D'AVENIR
Apparence	15	Color correctness & natural tone; Luster & brightness; Uniformity of egg size & shape
Grain & texture	25	Firmness & elasticity; Clean pop; Membrane integrity; Creaminess & mouthfeel; Absence of gumminess or mushiness
Aroma	10	Fresh, clean marine aroma; Complexity & elegance
Flavour	30	Balance (salt/fat); Purity & tipicity of species; Complexity & depth; Absence of off flavours
Aftertaste	10	Length & persistence; Clean, pleasant evolution
Processing Quality & Freshness	10	Optimal ripeness at harvest; Precision of salting & Handling; Overall freshness
TOTAL	100	

7.2. Special Distinction categories

Independent recognitions beyond sensory evaluation

Awarded separately from the tasting scores, these distinctions recognise excellence in broader dimensions of caviar production and vision.

Green Pearl Award

For sustainability, responsibility, and ethical commitment.

This evaluation is qualitative and documentary in nature and is based on the information provided by the participant, as well as the jury's assessment of overall coherence.

Craft & Integrity

Appreciation of the participant's expertise, tradition, and transparency. This criterion rewards authentic craftsmanship, discipline in production methods, and loyalty to the origin of the product.

Sustainability

Evaluation of the participant's commitment to CITES compliance, ecological responsibility, and ethical practices. Forward-thinking caviar production ensures sustainability, respect for the species, and environmental stewardship.

Innovation & Design Award

Rewarding creativity, innovation, and brand expression in packaging and presentation.

Aesthetic & Brand Identity

Evaluation of the product's luxury appeal through its expression of exclusivity and prestige, the consistency of its design in alignment with the brand's story and heritage, and its ability to distinguish itself with clarity while remaining elegant and refined.

Functionality & Preservation

Evaluation of the design's ability to protect the product and preserve freshness and quality, while ensuring ease of use through practical, intuitive handling and serving.

Innovation

Evaluation of the use of new materials, including eco-friendly and advanced solutions, and the originality of design concepts that demonstrate creativity, vision, and a forward-thinking approach.

Rising Star Award

For new producers who began caviar farming within the last 15 years.

This distinction recognises:

- Promising craftsmanship
- Quality trajectory
- Vision and development potential within the caviar industry
- Early market visibility

8. TASTING PRINCIPLE

Tasting is conducted strictly blind.

All samples are coded anonymously and presented to the jury with no indication of brand or origin. The jury evaluates each caviar using a standardised and independent scoring grid.

All jury decisions are final and cannot be appealed.

9. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Participants retain full intellectual property rights over all materials submitted to the Black Pearl Awards, including but not limited to logos, product names, photographs, descriptive texts, and technical documents.

By validating their registration, participants grant the organisers a non-exclusive, worldwide, royalty-free licence to reproduce, publish, display, and use these materials strictly within the context of the competition and its official communications, including:

- the official website,
- printed or digital participant catalogues,
- press releases and media relations,
- social media channels,
- internal and external promotional documents.

This licence is granted solely for purposes related to the Black Pearl Awards and does **not** constitute a transfer of ownership.

Participants retain full and exclusive ownership of their intellectual property at all times.

10. PRIVACY POLICY

The Black Pearl Awards (organised by Courma Consulting) act as data controller for personal and company data submitted in connection with the Awards.

Personal and company data submitted through the registration form are processed only to administer the Awards, including eligibility checks, jury evaluation, communications with participants, and essential event logistics. The legal bases are performance of a contract (participation in the Awards), compliance with legal obligations, and, where applicable, consent.

Data may be shared with carefully selected service providers (e.g. event platform, shipping and logistics, printing, IT support) and with public authorities where required by law. These parties act under contractual obligations to use the data only for the above purposes and to protect it appropriately.

Digital files uploaded (such as logos, specification sheets, CITES documents and other supporting materials) are stored securely with restricted access. Personal data are retained only for as long as necessary to manage the Awards and to meet legal or audit requirements, after which they are deleted or irreversibly anonymised.

Participants have the right, within the limits of applicable law, to request access to their personal data, rectification, deletion, restriction or objection to processing, and, where applicable, data portability. Requests can be sent to privacy contact email. Participants also have the right to lodge a complaint with a competent data-protection authority.

By registering, participants confirm that they have read this Privacy Policy and acknowledge that their data will be processed for the purposes described above in accordance with applicable Swiss data-protection law and, where relevant, the EU GDPR. Where processing is based on consent, this may be withdrawn at any time without affecting the lawfulness of processing carried out before withdrawal.

11. IMAGE RIGHT

By taking part in the Black Pearl Awards, participants grant the organisers a **non-exclusive, worldwide, royalty-free licence** to capture and use images, videos, and audio recordings from the event for promotional, editorial, documentation, and archival purposes, in any media format.

- This may include, for example, coverage of the event, jury sessions, tastings, backstage activities, and the awards ceremony, as well as future communications relating to the Awards or associated events.
- The organisers will not edit or use images in a manner that is misleading, defamatory, or prejudicial to the products, brands, or individuals depicted.
- Participants may request in writing that specific images featuring them or their products not be used in future promotional materials. The organisers will consider such requests in good faith, taking into account legal, contractual, and technical constraints.
- Any processing of personal data contained in images or recordings is carried out in accordance with the Black Pearl Awards Privacy Policy and applicable Swiss and EU data-protection laws.

Contact

info@theblackpearlawards.com | www.theblackpearlawards.com
