

Yarden Newsletter

NEW GOLAN HEIGHTS WINERY RELEASES FANTASTIC FALL FAVORITES

The Golan Heights Winery is proud to introduce the fifth vintage of its flagship wine, the 2003 Katzrin Red. Produced only in exceptional years, this gem, with a density and character that indicates long aging potential, has a limited production of 1,000 cases and a suggested retail price of \$100.00 per 750 ml bottle.

Also now available is the much heralded 2003 El Rom Cabernet Sauvignon, a stunning mélange of fresh cherry and berry notes layered with hints of

cassis, earth, cocoa and touches of potpourri. The wine, enjoyable now or in five to eight years, combines elegance of body with good concentration and a lingering finish. SRP: \$36.00.

Finally, the ever elegant 2000 Yarden Blanc de Blancs follows its award winning predecessors with its classic citrus and floral notes and hints of mixed stone fruits, layered with nuances of cream, toast and mineral. This is the perfect bubbly for year round festivities.



“2003 Yarden Katzrin underscores the qualities of the Golan Heights Winery as true wine country.”

GOLAN HEIGHTS WINERY PREMIERS 4X4 TASTING OF ITS YARDEN WINES

Four wines times four vintages, but no math skills were needed to appreciate the 16 Israeli wines showcased at a recent seminar and tasting led by Victor Schoenfeld, chief winemaker of the Golan Heights Winery, at New York's Porter House restaurant. Taking inspiration from the four-wheel drive atop which Victor combs the vineyards, the winery created a showcase for four of its most elegant wines – the award-winning Yarden Blanc de Blancs, Yarden Viognier, Yarden El-Rom Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, and Yarden Syrah. The event kicked off with a roar of 4x4s in action and a slideshow of Northern Israel's diverse Golan Heights vineyards, an undiscovered region for many US wine drinkers. Victor Schoenfeld, an American-born graduate of

UC Davis who cut his winemaking chops in California and France before heading to Israel, summed up the formula for Golan Heights Winery's success in three T's – **terroir**, **technology**, and a world-class winemaking team. Schoenfeld kicked off the tasting portion of the seminar with a special treat - manually disgorging bottles of the not-yet-released 2001 Yarden Blanc de Blancs, sparkling wine.



GALIL MOUNTAIN WINERY SHOWCASES ELEGANT WINES & AVANT-GARDE ARCHITECTURE



After a tumultuous 2006 harvest shadowed by political conflict, Israel's ultra-modern Galil Mountain Winery introduced its latest vintages with typical Mediterranean flair at Downtown Fig & Olive in New York City's chic Meatpacking district. Snow was falling outside, but the restaurant's ambiance fittingly reflected the

Following Gil's presentation, Micha, a UC Davis graduate, led a vertical tasting of Galil Mountain's award-winning Yiron and renowned Pinot Noir wines. The talents of the two brothers greatly contribute to Galil Mountain's success, and both were hosts of the event, sharing their unique insights and experiences with guests. Galil Mountain Winery is now regarded as the producer of Israel's "number one value wine" by critic Daniel Rogov.

exotic warmth of the Upper Galilee where the winery is located a mountainous, yet lush region of forested slopes, gorges, and running streams.

The winery, designed by Chief Winemaker Micha Vaadia's brother, Gil Vaadia, is renowned as the most innovative in Israel for its progressive, ecologically-responsible design based on the concept of "comprehensive" tourism.



“Galil Mountain Winery is now regarded as the producer of Israel's number one value wine by critic Daniel Rogov”

DANIEL ROGOV REVIEWS THE YARDEN EL ROM CABERNET SAUVIGNON

“This early evening I attended the unveiling of the Golan Heights Winery's 2003 El Rom Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon. A pleasant early evening, especially sitting across the table and being able to chat with Senior Winemaker Victor Schoenfeld.

Yarden, Cabernet Sauvignon, El Rom Vineyard, 2003: My earlier tasting note holds firmly: Dark ruby towards purple, full-bodied, with caressing tannins and a moderate oak influence. Opens with currants and minerals, goes to meaty, earthy and herbal aromas and flavors, and then to spices and a long and elegant fruity finish. Firmly structured with excellent grip and complexity. Best 2010-2020. Score 95. K (Re-tasted 12 Jun 2007)”



Holy Terroir

● *By Micah Halpern*

“Once upon a time the phrase ‘a good kosher wine’ was an oxymoron. Today quality kosher wines vie for coveted cellar space across America and around the world. Kosher has been revolutionized...and kosher wine is on the lists of some of the world’s top traif (non kosher) restaurants...The revolution began in the early 1980’s, when the first good kosher wines were uncorked, wines made from California grapes...Israel joined the competition with the Golan Heights Winery. They had three tiers of wine quality and price: Golan, Gamla, and their top shelf Yarden. It was in Israel that the greatest competition for quality kosher wine took place....Today, rabbis are supervising quality,

award-winning wines from around the world...Kosher wine has definitely come of age. Long live the revolution. L’chayim-To Life!”



Here’s to the Holy Land

● *By Jordan Mackay*

“Here’s something novel: I’m writing about the wines of Israel and its not even close to Passover, the time of year the media ever seems to cover Israeli wines. But save the plonk for Elijah; you can drink the good stuff...it can stand up to its counterparts from the northern side of the Mediterranean.

On a visit I made to Israel a few years ago, I was impressed with the wines of the Golan Heights and Galilee regions. Within a range of altitudes, the Golan Heights can grow a number of varieties, from Cabernet in the hotter, lower parts to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay at the higher, cool elevations. The current winemaker at Golan Heights Winery, Victor Schoenfeld, is a UC Davis trained Californian. His Yarden and Gamla brands are on a par with many similarly priced wines in California. One wine really stood out on that trip: Yarden’s brilliant, high-end Katzin. It’s a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc – rich and full, intensely

flavored, with gorgeous depth of fruit and a subtle earthiness.

Galil Mountain Winery, a prominent producer in the rocky, high-altitude hills of the Galilee region is also making wonderful wine. It’s not the most ambitious project, nor is it meant to be expensive, but there’s something tasteful and restrained about the viticulture and winemaking that helps create beautiful Cabernets, Sauvignon Blancs, and even a credible Pinot Noir. That’s a winery I will be keeping an eye on.”



Israel's Wine Roots Run Deep

● By Charles B. Rubinstein

“Victor Schoenfeld, the Chief Winemaker of the Golan Heights Winery was in New York City recently to present a seminar and a vertical tasting for the wine press of four years each of the Yarden Blanc de Blancs, Viognier, Syrah and El Rom Cabernet Sauvignon. The event was held at

Porterhouse Restaurant where Michael Lomanaco is the chef-owner. The wines served at the luncheon following the tasting were the 2003 Yarden Katzrin Chardonnay, 2003 Yarden Katzrin and 2004 Yarden Heightswine...The Golan Heights Winery is located in Katzrin, the largest town in the Galilee. It's a high tech operation

in the winery and in the vineyards. There are eleven weather stations operated by the winery in the Golan. That's more than there are in any other area in Israel. Grapes are sourced from collectives and cooperatives.

What I found surprising in our tasting was the high quality of the Blanc de Blancs. These wines are made in the Champagne method solely from Chardonnay, and aged for four years on the yeast. I had not tasted any previously. The Katzrin Chardonnay {tasted} at lunch is for those who are fond of a big Chardonnay. It was fermented in barrel and aged on the lees for 10 months. The Yarden Katzrin [also tasted at lunch] is a Bordeaux blend of 89% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc.”



ISREALI WINE DIRECT March 5, 2007

Micha Vaadia, Galil Mountain

● By Richard Schaeffer

It was nice to finally meet Anat Rushansky (CEO of Yarden Inc) at the Golan Heights winemaker dinner in Chicago...she and I have been speaking for a while about a project. Anat and UC Davis trained winemaker Micha Vaadia did a

presentation of Galil Mountain wines. The winery is located in the Upper Galilee (Micha's brother was actually the architect of the very modern, sleek new winery). The winery is a partnership between the Golan Heights and the kibbutz on whose property the winery sits- the Kibbutz Yiron. The brief talk was followed by a

tasting of nice, reasonably priced wines including a vertical tasting of Yiron from 2000 to 2003 (favorites for me by far was the 2001-complex and chewy, great thick fruit showing through)...Another wine we tasted is Micha's first wine after joining Galil Mountain – the Galil Mountain Rosé 2005, a blend of Sangiovese, Cabernet and Syrah, the color on this wine is over-the-top salmon-pink gorgeous, the nose is full of strawberries, and Micha told me he worked hard to keep the wine light and fun, 'letting it be what it is and not something else.' He really succeeded.”



Israeli Wines

● By Manos Angelakis

There are kosher wines now produced in Israel that are of world-class quality, worthy of the attention of all wine drinkers, regardless of religious affiliation, and in the past few months I have tasted a number of them.

Katzrin is the top-of-the-line series [from the Golan Heights Winery] that includes a Bordeaux-style blend released only in exceptional years. The Chardonnay has been released annually since 1995. The 2003 red blend was made of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc. Still very young, it has started to display a rich nose of black cherry, black currant, and black plum with slightly spice and herb overtones. The smoky-oak and chocolate finish is long and velvety. A very elegant wine that should come to its own in less than five more years in the cellar, but will give considerable pleasure for a long time to come.

The other Israeli winery I thought produced kosher wines good enough to be drunk by anyone was The Galil Mountain Winery located at Kibbutz Yiron in the Upper Galilee. They produce two lines: Yiron, the flagship cellar-worthy line, is a Bordeaux blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Syrah in the 2003 vintage, and Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot before that date. Depending on the vintage, the blend elements vary in proportion. Based on the 2002 and 2003 vintages tasted, these wines will benefit from a few cellar years to round out. These are meat-eater wines, medium to full-bodied, very dark inky purple in color with firm but nicely integrated tannins. Cedary oak aromas with overlays of spicy currant, plum, and black forest berries. Lightly herbal, tar and tobacco, rather long finish, ending with earthy overtones. Very interesting.



“The Galil Mountain Winery located at Kibbutz Yiron in the Upper Galilee...The winery is a partnership between the Golan Heights and the kibbutz on whose property the winery sits- the Kibbutz Yiron.”

Wine of the Week: Yarden Chardonnay Odem 2003 (Israel) \$19

● By Stacey Slinkard

With Passover celebrations just under a week away, it seemed appropriate to handpick a perfect kosher white wine for the Passover Seder. Yarden's 2003 Chardonnay from the Odem Organic Vineyard is an exceptional full-bodied white wine selection with plenty of oak, lots of butter and fresh flavors of pear, apple and a bit of melon followed by a seamless finish. This is a top white wine pick to accompany traditional Passover meals. The 2003 Yarden Chardonnay, from the Odem Organic Vineyard is a true treat.



THE MIAMI HERALD June 24, 2007

Kosher Vintages Aren't Always What You Think

● By Jane Wooldridge

Wine drinkers may still think of Israeli pours as the sweet kosher reds produced by companies like Manischewitz. But the nation's wine industry has matured and today Israel's top vintages get 90+ ratings from the *Wine Spectator* and win international awards – sometimes taking top honors.

Vines have been grown in Israel since ancient times and you can still visit the church in

Cana where Jesus is said to have turned water into wine. The industry got a boost in the early 1900s when Baron Edmond de Rothschild, who supported many new Jewish settlements, encouraged vine production. But the effort to

produce fine wines didn't begin until the 1970s, when several farming communities joined forces to create the Golan Heights Winery, which today produces under the labels Yarden, Gamla and Golan. Today about 200 wineries operate in Israel. Boutique wineries have exploded and in the past 10 years, the acreage under production has grown by 50%. About 60% of the table wines produced are dry reds, according to Rogov's 'Guide to Israeli Wines', by Daniel Rogov, Israel's wine bible.

[Among] Israel's top wineries, according to Rogov:

- #1 Golan Heights
(labels Katzrin, Yarden, Gamla and Golan)
- #6 Galil Mountain Winery

“...The nation's wine industry has matured and today Israel's top vintages get 90+ rating from *Wine Spectator* and win international awards...”



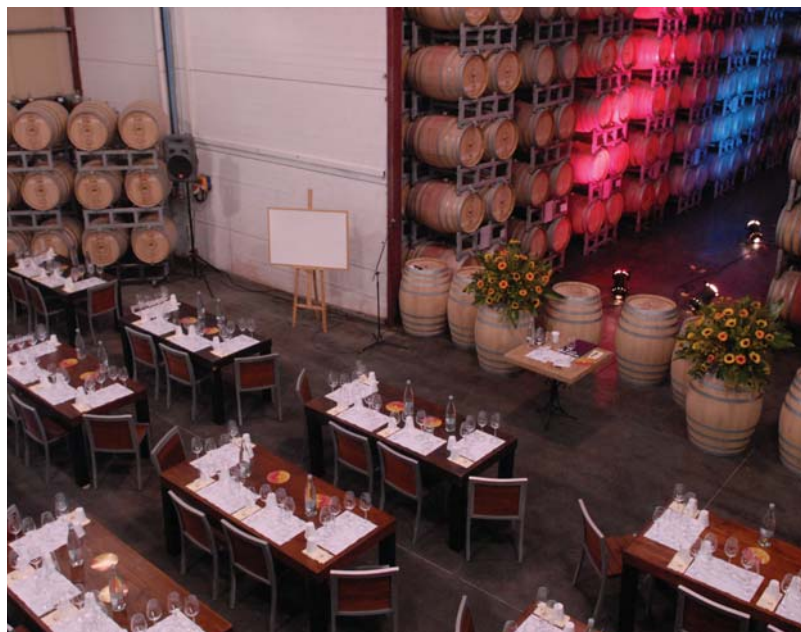
YARDEN VINTAGE 2007

PRESTIGIOUS CULINARY FESTIVAL IN WINE COUNTRY

5th International Wine & Gourmet Food Festival at Golan Heights Winery



Thousands of wine and gourmet food enthusiasts are set to attend the Yarden Vintage 2007, the international wine and gourmet festival at the Golan Heights Winery.



Entitled “Perfection is in the details” – those small details, or true secrets, that contribute to the excellence of the Golan Heights Winery brand – the festival brought together both enthusiasts and producers of initial tasting of 2003 Yarden Katzrin, the Golan Heights Winery’s flagship offering, introduced during a period of exceptional harvests. The festival also held several food workshops ran by many of Israel’s leading chefs and wine workshops offered by the winery’s winemakers.

Israeli chef Tzahi Bukshester was the chairman of the festival’s professional committee, joined by fellow chefs Haim Tibi, Haim Cohen and Erez Komrovsky.

The Mediterranean environment made its presence felt at the festival. Chefs in charge of unique kitchens in a number of Mediterranean countries presented the tastes of their region. The group included one of Greece’s most talented chefs, Ansatasios Tolis, Turkish chef and Ottoman food researcher Vedat BaSaran, and Italian chef and seafood expert Massimo Riccioli.

Golan Heights Winery CEO Shalom Blayer: “Yarden Vintage 2007 is a unique wine and gourmet festival that brings together lovers of fine wine and food, the people and offerings of the Golan Heights Winery, and elite chefs from Israel and abroad. Not every year do we succeed in creating such an event. This year we returned to a slightly different format, yet around the same theme: uncompromising quality in wine-making coupled with unrivaled creativity in cooking.

This festival’s concept was the introduction of terroir. Festival participants were invited to tour the vineyards, handle pre-harvest grape clusters, and witness our remarkable achievements. Indeed, the vineyard is where everything begins...”

“Yarden Vintage 2007 is a unique wine and gourmet festival that brings together lovers of fine wine and food, elite chefs from Israel and abroad, and the people and offerings of the Golan Heights Winery”

Wine Country

The festival featured the first tasting of 2003 Yarden Katzrin, one of a wide array of red wines available for tasting from among the choice harvest of that year: Yarden Pinot Noir, Yarden Merlot, Yarden Syrah, 2003 Yarden Cabernet Sauvignon, and 2003 Yarden Cabernet Sauvignon El Rom Vineyard.

Festival visitors participated in several wine-related activities including attending a workshop on the barrel's influence on Chardonnay wines, tasting white wine straight from the barrel, learning about grape sorting, and touring the vineyard in off-road vehicles.

In a first for the festival, a cooper specializing in French oak barrels from Radoux, a world-leading wine barrel cooperage based in Bordeaux, France, demonstrated the art of barrel making. The renowned cooper, Christian Daniez, has been master cooper at Radoux since 1983, having been honored as France's outstanding barrel maker. As master cooper, Christian is exclusively responsible for choosing the wood used in the barrel making and preserving the barrels in wine cellars. Christian established the school for wine barrel makers at Radoux, and is an international consultant in barrel making. For more information, visit www.tonnellerieradoux.com.

Food Workshops

The festival's culinary side took on a different character this year. The atelier-style workshops were more intimate, and a leading chef from Israel headed one of six simultaneous gatherings, each including just 14 participants. To increase the interest and challenge, terroir (Golan Heights growing region) was the focus of the workshops, which included topics such as olives and olive oil, sweet water fish, grapes and cooking with wine, and wild berries.

Tzahi Bukshester: “At Yarden Vintage 2007, it was important for us to present young, vibrant chefs, both those renowned and those less so. Yet all of them are talented and maintain Israeli culinary cultural values.”

The list of Israeli chefs that participated in the festival included luminaries such as Moshe Aviv of Messa restaurant; Meir Adoni of Catit restaurant; Rafi Aharonovich of Yeda Habesarim restaurant; Israel Aharoni and Ayelet Orr of OM restaurant; Idi of Idi seafood restaurant; Amir Ilan of Taco Bar Maya restaurant; Shaul Ben Aderet, Colin Gillon and Ronen Dovrat Bloch of Jolson & Lawrence restaurant; Itamar Davidov of Pitango/Tres Pesos restaurant; Davies, Noam Dekkers of Baracarola restaurant; Peter Hummel of Isrotel restaurant; Hadassah Wolf of Comme il Faut Café; Eran Zino and Daniel Zach of Carmela Benahala restaurant; Bishara Hinawi of Hinawi Grill; Haim Tibi, a member of the culi-



nary committee, from Muscat restaurant; Uri Yermias of Uri Buri restaurant; Haim Cohen, a member of the culinary committee, Eyal Lavie and Ayelet Latovich of Beta Caffè; Ahu Nabil of Rotterdam Hotel restaurant; Roi Sofer of Gabriel restaurant; Dokhol Safadi of Diana restaurant; Rina Pushkarna, Dror Piltz and Boaz Tzeiri of Scora restaurant; Ofir Kedem of the Dan Hotel in Eilat; Ezra Kedem of Arcadia restaurant; Erez Komorovsky, a member of the culinary committee, from Lehem Erez bakery; Yaron Kestenbaum of Food Art catering; Ilan and Tami Roberg of Roberg restaurant; Shabtai Shahaf and Avi Steinitz of Airport City Avenue restaurant, Mena Shtrum of Radio Rosco; and Amos Sion of Helena restaurant.



The festival's visiting chefs will represent the Mediterranean Sea kitchen:

Vedat BaSaran is a renowned personality in the culinary field in Turkey. His professional work focuses on Ottoman food culture, and he has been involved in many organizations and culinary institutions. BaSaran is also involved in promoting restaurants that present the original Turkish kitchen. His area of expertise is history of food. BaSaran is a requested lecturer at many Turkish universities as well as at international conventions, where he lectures on Ottoman food culture. BaSaran holds many awards and certificates of appreciation for his work in Turkey. He is owner of the Feriye restaurant on the banks of the Bosphorus River in Istanbul, which serves Ottoman-style food. For more information, visit www.feriye.com.

Massimo Riccioli is the chef and creative spirit of the La Rosetta restaurant in Rome. Riccioli is driven by cultural gastronomic curiosity, which he satisfies in myriad travels across the globe. In 1966, Riccioli's parents founded La Rosetta, the first restaurant in Rome that exclusively served fish and seafood. In 1982, Riccioli and his sisters took over the restaurant. Once he became involved in its operations, Riccioli continued to innovate and develop the restaurant's kitchen by creating innovative combinations of fish and wine, as well as new ways to prepare the dishes. As such, he has earned himself adoration as "the guru of fish and seafood cooking." For more information, visit www.larosetta.com.

Anastasios Tolis is one of the leading chefs in Greece and all of Europe. He is master chef for both the Palmier-Bistrot chain of restaurants and the Astir Palace Vouliagmeni. Tolis is one of Greece's most prominent culinary personalities, who frequently appears in Greek media, and is a consultant for several morning and cooking shows. Tolis is vice chairman of the Greek Chefs Organization, and is a member of the European and International Chefs Union. He lectures at the Greek cooking and hotel management school, has authored four books on the traditional kitchen, and has received many accolades from around the world.

GOLAN HEIGHTS WINERY WINS FOUR GOLD TROPHIES AT THE CITADELLES DU VIN INTERNATIONAL WINE COMPÉTITION IN BORDEAUX

The Golan Heights Winery rolled in awards at the recent *Citadelles du Vin* wine competition in Bordeaux, France – a thrilling confirmation that the winery’s focus on producing high quality wines is a success. The 2004 Yarden Chardonnay of Golan Heights Winery received two prizes – that of the *Prix Speciaux* – citing it as the Best Israeli Wine, and a *Citadelles Trophy* (the equivalent of a gold medal) in the Chardonnay category. *Citadelles Trophies* were also earned by the 2004 Yarden Odem Organic Vineyard Chardonnay and the 2005 Yarden Viognier.

The triumph continued as Golan Heights wines won further awards: the 2003 Yarden Cabernet Sauvignon and the 2003 Yarden Syrah received *Excellence Trophies* (the equivalent of a silver medal), and the 2002 Yarden Merlot won a *Prestige Trophy* (the equivalent of a bronze medal).

The *Citadelles du Vin* competition is one of the most prestigious and important international wine competitions. At this year’s competition, 1,471 wines from 32 countries worldwide were judged by 80 international wine experts.

Shalom Blayer, CEO of Golan Heights Winery, remarked “As a leading Israeli winery, which has quality inscribed on its banner, we are proud of our accomplishments, and are committed to continue investing in the production of quality wines. We are pleased to take part in this and other competitions that expose Israeli wines at their best.”

Israeli pride: The Golan Heights Winery Receives a Grand Gold Medal at VINITALY 2007

The Golan Heights Winery achieved a most impressive prize in the prestigious VINITALY

2007 competition, among the largest in the world, which was held at the end of March in Verona, Italy. Its Yarden Blanc de Blancs 1999 received the prestigious Grand Gold Medal (the Grand Gold Medal is ranked above the regular gold medal) in the sparkling wine category in the traditional fermentation process, among hundreds of wines.

The Golan Heights Winery is the only winery in Israel to have ever won a Grand Gold Medal. Actually, this is the third time the Golan Heights Winery won a Grand Gold Medal. In 2004 it won it for the first time and in 2006 it was the second time.

Shalom Blyer, CEO of the Golan Heights Winery, stated “We’re very proud to win the Grand Gold Medal in the VINITALY 2007, principally due to the fact that we’re talking about the most prestigious world competition in the wine field. The fact that the Golan Heights Winery is the only winery in Israel to have won it at all, and especially for a third time, is not a foregone conclusion and bears witness to our enormous investment in producing quality wines that continue to achieve international recognition.”

The international wine competitions VINITALY 2007 are considered the most important and the most rigorous in the world in the wine field. Every wine that wins a medal, especially the Grand Gold Medal, is tasted four times by four different sets of judges, comprised of winemakers and enologists from Italy and the world as well as journalists from all over the world. 3,500 wines participated in this competition from about 31 countries in 22 categories. In each category there are four medals awarded: The Grand Gold Medal, the Gold Medal, the Silver Medal and the Bronze Medal.

“As a leading Israeli winery, which has quality inscribed on its banner, we are proud of our accomplishments.”

Need a Kosher Wine for Your Party?

● By Andrew Zashin

“Wine is always the cause of anxiety. The good news is that selecting the right kosher wine will be no more or less difficult than choosing a wine that is not kosher. My friend Daniel Rogov, an internationally known wine critic and author of the series ‘Rogov’s Guide to Israeli Wines,’ agrees that today the kosher wine drinker enjoys a full wine experience.

“This wine of rosé is bottled sunshine! When I first saw it I was afraid it would be another too-sweet sorry excuse for a rosé. Instead, I was charmed by the real thing. It has a beautiful pink-orange color, a fresh aroma, and an authentic dry crispness. It is reminiscent of the great pink wines of Provence in Southern France. Rogov called it the best rosé ever made in Israel. It is a blend of Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. Pink wines are very chic now amongst those in the know. Give this one a try.”



Decanter Banter: Blessed Gems - Kosher Wines for Beyond the Seder

● By Jason Tesauro and Phineas Mollod

“With observant Jews eating unleavened bread for a spell, good wines abound to quench a dry throat or a curious palate. Peruse some of the blessed gems below, all of them party-tested and rabbi approved:

Galil Mountain (Israel), owned by Yarden (whose Cabernet Sauvignon regularly brings in slick reviews) vinifies an elegant, berry forward Merlot and a barrel fermented Chardonnay from Upper Galilee.”

Kosher Wines Come of Age

● By Jeffrey Lindenmuth

“Wineries in many countries are proving that the rigid requirements for making kosher wine in no way hinders the production of world-class wine and that there is much more to kosher wine than the sweet Manischewitz that most Americans used to associate with the category.

...The Golan Heights Winery, which is responsible for the Yarden, Golan and Galil Mountain brands, is among the most technologically progressive and innovative in the world. Although Israel may not come to mind immediately as idyllic wine country, in the way of Napa or Provence, Israel is more than just desert. “Many people still mistakenly think that all of Israel is arid and not therefore suitable for high quality wine production”, says Victor Schoenfeld, chief winemaker, Golan Heights Winery. Situated in the northern part of the country, the Golan Heights region receives 40 inches of rain annually, along with the occasional snowfall. And thanks to its high altitude, well-drained volcanic soils, and cool evening temperatures, produces excellent wine.

“The first time someone taste our wines, they are pleasantly surprised, sometimes even astounded at the quality. The second time they just enjoy it for what it is – high quality wine from an interesting appellation”. says Schoenfeld.”



Winemaking at the Heights

● By Robert Whitley

KATZRIN, Israel - You may wonder how a nice California boy with a degree in winemaking from UC-Davis ended up producing exceptional Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and sparkling wine in the Golan Heights, a stone's throw from the Sea of Galilee.

Victor Schoenfeld, born and raised in Rancho Palos Verdes, Ca., more or less always knew

what he wanted to be when he grew up. His lifelong interest in gastronomy took him to Davis, but before that Schoenfeld made a pilgrimage to Israel where he met the owners of the Golan Heights Winery, a contact that would prove fortuitous as he launched his wine-making career.

He made cameo appearances in minor roles at the Robert Mondavi Winery in the Napa Valley and Sonoma County's Preston Vineyards and Château St. Jean before working a harvest at the prestigious Jacquesson Champagne house prior to joining Golan Heights in 1991.

Though it may have appeared to the unenlightened that Schoenfeld

had been banished to a viticultural wasteland, the reality was quite different. Over his 16 years at Golan Heights Schoenfeld has tapped into the vast potential of an area - Golan Heights is a sub-appellation of the larger Galilee wine region –

that was largely undiscovered and under-utilized until he arrived and began to push the boundaries on quality.

Though Schoenfeld's technical skills and quiet determination are widely respected throughout the wine industry, he has reached out in recent years to the legendary California winemaker Zelma Long.

"You can get into trouble sometimes bringing in a consultant with expertise in only one area," said Schoenfeld. "But Zelma had such vast experience internationally that she was a perfect fit for our situation."

The fact that a winemaker of Long's stature would embrace a wine project in the Middle East was surely a sign to the rest of the world that there was something going on here. Château Musar in neighboring Lebanon had long been recognized for the quality of its Cabernet Sauvignon, but no winery in Israel had come close to similar acclaim.

Until now. Golan Heights Winery's 'Yarden' wines have captured a number of international prizes in recent years, successes that are far from a fluke. The volcanic 'tuffa' of the Golan Heights coupled with a moderate climate (contrary to the conventional wisdom) make the Golan Heights an ideal location for winegrowing.

With vineyards planted at elevations between 1,500 and 3,000 feet, the grapes benefit from daytime temperatures that fluctuate between the low 70s and high 80s fahrenheit, and nighttime temps that dip into the high 50s.

Cabernet Sauvignon is the star red grape variety at the moment, but in a wine region that only found its legs some 25 years ago, there continues to be exploration with other varieties. Merlot from the region is solid, but if any other



red grape is to challenge the preeminence of Cabernet it most likely will be Syrah.

There is some Pinot Noir planted, but Pinot here is still a work in progress. The two vintages I tasted from the Golan Heights Winery Yarden line were unimpressive.

The Yarden whites wines — primarily Chardonnay and Gewürztraminer — are nearly as successful as the Cabernet. Famed Italian winemaker Angelo Gaja was so impressed with the Gewürztraminer that he started selling it in Italy through his import company. The Organic Chardonnay won a gold medal this year at *Challenge International du Vin*, France's largest wine competition. And Yarden's 1999 Blanc de Blancs took a Grand Gold medal — it's second in three years in the 'Other Sparkling Wine with Fermentation in the Bottle' — at this year's prestigious Vinitaly Wine Competition.



During a recent visit I had an opportunity to taste a number of Yarden wines covering several vintages and have selected a few of my top picks for review. These wines are imported to the United States in small quantities and distributed through Southern Wine & Spirits.

TASTING NOTES

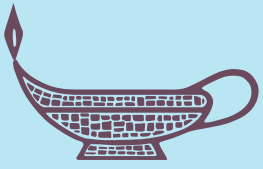
Yarden 2000 Blanc de Blancs, Galilee (Israel, \$20): This 100 percent Chardonnay (harvested from the northern Golan, Israel's coolest winegrowing area) fits into the 'brut' category, but it is drier than most, perhaps reflecting the elegant style Schoenfeld fell in love with at Jacquesson. The nose is floral and delicate, and on the palate it shows complexity and minerality, with a light overtone of citrus fruits. 91

Yarden 2006 Gewürztraminer, Galilee (Israel, \$12): A classic nose of rose petal and spice, this Gewurz is made in the voluptuous, slightly off-dry style of Alsace, which gives it more body and weight on the palate than most other New World (in wine terms) Gewürztraminers. Delicious aromas of litchi, citrus and honey on the palate deliver impressive complexity. 88

Yarden 2002 Syrah, Galilee (Israel, \$28): Although this was considered an 'off' vintage in the Golan, the Syrah came out remarkably well. It attacks the senses with an inviting nose of black pepper and blueberry, and shows layers of red and black fruits on the palate, finishing with a sensuous floral note. This Syrah is the personification of elegance and sophistication in an Israeli Syrah. 91

Yarden 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon, Galilee (Israel, \$28): The fruit on this basic Yarden Cab is fresh and youthful and, if anything, I've underrated it a bit. It shows excellent depth, nuances of black fruits and a persistence of flavor on the finish that is impressive. Tannins are nicely integrated, so even though this wine could improve with a few years in the cellar, it can be drunk easily and with great pleasure right now. 89

Yarden 2003 El Rom Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Galilee (Israel, \$36): Easily one of the finest Cabernets I've tasted this year, the '03 El Rom from Yarden offers depth, impressive palate weight, complex aromas of black fruit, dried herbs and vanillin, and exquisite balance. 93



Yarden inc.

Savor the Mediterranean

NEW MARKET POSITIONING OF YARDEN INC.,

THE US SUBSIDIARY OF GOLAN HEIGHTS WINERY, ISRAEL

During the past year, Yarden Inc., which represents Golan Heights Winery and Galil Mountain Winery in the US, has undergone a repositioning process and developed a marketing message with which it is approaching various markets. The new message is “Savor the Mediterranean.”

The general idea is to connect the Mediterranean region with the Israeli wines of Yarden Inc. Strengthening this connection represents an innovative and creative way to bypass the stigma associated with kosher wines. The creation of a new niche of "Mediterranean" wines can generate new shelf space among wines from the rest of the world rather than among kosher wines. The "Mediterranean" niche also can serve other countries such as Greece, Lebanon, and even Spain, which do not have their own country shelves, as do wines from France, Australia, Italy and other countries.



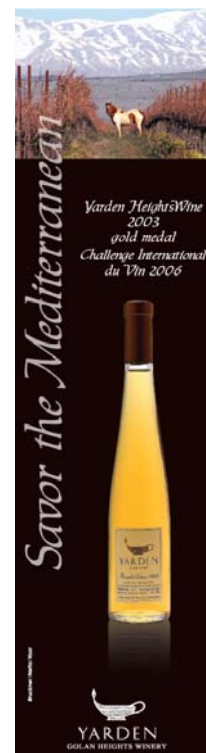
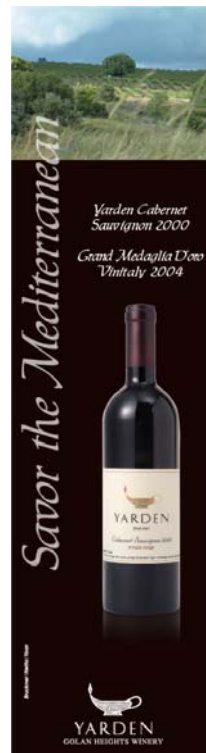
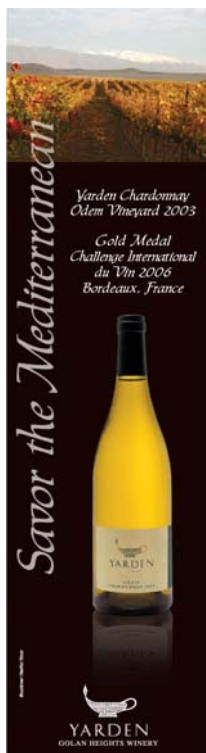
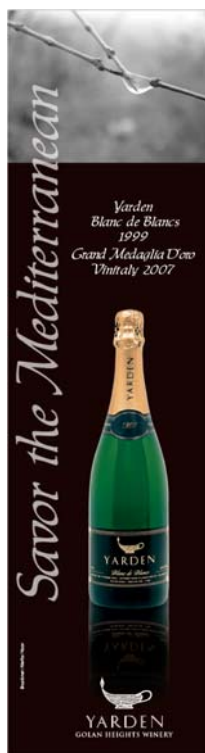
“MEDITERRANEAN” – WHY?

- Geographical area containing many of the world’s leading winegrowing regions
- Universally recognized, international name
- Not currently used on wine shelves as a defined growing region
- A unique way to differentiate Israeli wines (not only kosher)
- An innovative statement that bypasses the kosher stigma
- A new way to encourage welcome cooperation with other Mediterranean countries in activities such as public relations, advertising and joint tastings

Anat Levi Rushansky, CEO of Yarden Inc., is leading a strategic marketing effort in the US under the banner of Israeli wines from the Mediterranean basin. At present, Yarden Inc. already is marketing a new package that features two wines in a 12-bottle carton together with the new marketing message.

GOLAN HEIGHTS WINERY PUBLISHING AN AD IN THE WINE SPECTATOR MAGAZINE

For the first time
Golan Heights Winery
publishing a series of
advertisements for the
Yarden brand, in the
prestigious and
world-renowned
The Wine Spectator
magazine.



Pears Baked in Baking Paper

Ingredients (4 servings):

4 pears
2 cinnamon sticks
1 vanilla pod
3.5 tbsp. candied ginger
1.5 tbsp. sultana raisins
4 small strips lemon zest
1 glass dessert wine
Butter-flavored oil spray

Preparation:

Heat oven to 180°C.
Cut four squares of baking paper 12"x12".
Halve and core the pears, place two pear halves on each piece of paper.
Cut the vanilla pod lengthwise and again each piece in half.
Slice the cinnamon stick into 4, and next to each two pear halves put a piece of vanilla and cinnamon.
Slice the ginger thinly mixing with the raisins, then spread over the pears together with lemon zest.
Place carefully on a baking sheet and shape each paper into a 'bag'. Pour a quarter of the wine into each bag.
Spray some butter-flavored fat on the paper edges to give the dish a butter aroma. Fold shut the paper bags or tie them with a string.
Bake about 40 minutes, until pears are soft when a fork is inserted. The paper will become deep golden.
Serve in paper with only the top torn open.

Wine recommended to accompany dish: Yarden Muscat



ANNAT LACHMY

Yarden Inc. Office Manager

“These days
she is recording
her own CD,
so when you buy
a bottle of wine
she might sing
for you...”



Annat has served as Office Manager at Yarden Inc. since 2004. As an Israeli, she feels very proud and honored to work for a company connected with Israel while living in the US.

At Yarden Inc., Annat has become exposed to, and learned much about, the world of wine – a world with which she has fallen in love.

For Annat, Yarden represents a warm, loving family, which is especially important to her since her close relatives live in Israel. Yarden also means to her professionalism, success, and the best wines she’s ever tasted. Annat’s recent favorites are 2003 Yarden Cabernet Sauvignon, 2004 Yarden Chardonnay Odem, and of course Yarden Katzrin.

Before joining Yarden Inc., she didn’t realize how popular Yarden wines were among her friends and family. “Almost everybody who has tasted our wines says that they are the best wines from Israel,” she shares. She soon succeeded in getting additional family and friends, in Israel and the US, hooked on the wines of the Golan Heights Winery. In New York, she will make sure you get the best wines for any occasion.

Besides working at Yarden Inc., Annat is a professional singer (www.annati.com).

She previously served in the Israeli army for two-and-a-half years, where she functioned as a lieutenant operations officer for an infantry brigade; even then she would sing and perform for the soldiers, “to make them smile and forget about the battlefield for a while.” Later, in 1999, Annat moved to New York City to fulfill her dream of becoming a singer. Even though the “only” instrument she plays is her voice, she comes up with beautiful and unique melodies for her songs. Annat describes her own sound as “passionate pop” – a unique blend of pop, house, soft rock, Middle Eastern motifs and other radically varying styles. These days she’s recording her own CD and also is a lead singer for “The Spinozas” – so when you buy a bottle of wine she just might sing for you!

Among her duties at Yarden Inc. are assisting and working closely with the CEO and the rest of the staff, servicing customers, maintaining daily office operations, and making sure everything runs smoothly and successfully – all with a smile on her face.

Annat also sees her work at Yarden Inc. as a mission to introduce Israel’s finest wines to the US and to “spread the love about being part of such a talented and professional company.”
