

# Introducing

## A Comprehensive Culinary Experience

Over time, the *Zman* editors have received numerous requests to include a special food section. In order to accommodate our readers, especially our wide female readership, we concluded some time ago that we should take this request to heart. However, we knew that we could only agree to publish material of the highest quality. That's why, when Susie Fishbein agreed to partner with *Zman*, it was only natural to proceed with our vision.

Mrs. Fishbein is a world-famous kosher cook and cookbook author. The popularity of her *Kosher by Design* series, published by Artscroll, has spread far beyond the kosher market and has sold more than 450,000 copies worldwide. Susie has appeared in media outlets throughout the country and was invited as an honored guest to the White House in recognition of Jewish American Heritage Month.

*Zman* is excited to bring to our publication the talent and flair for delicious and attractive recipes that has made *Kosher by Design* so popular. We are privileged to participate with the same team that produced Susie Fishbein's books, including photographer John Uher, who has also shot the photos for this section.

Each month, *Zman* will highlight a specific ingredient based on seasonal availability or an upcoming *Yom Tov*. For instance, for this month's Purim edition, we bring you an inside look at the art of winemaking. We uncover what's "behind the plate" in our in-depth focus on the month's ingredient, and Susie will follow up with recipes developed exclusively for *Zman*, which incorporate that ingredient. Each recipe will be specially photographed after Susie prepares it.

We hope you will enjoy this tasty addition to the *Zman* lineup.

*B'teiavon!*

**Yaakov Astor, Editor-in-Chief**  
and the *Zman* Editorial Board

In honor of Purim, *Zman* takes an in-depth look at winemaking

By: Yakov M. Wagschal - Moshe Miller

# Essence Of The Vine

Here's what you need to know about wine, from master vintner Ed Salzburg, chief winemaker of Barkan Winery. He personally led the *Zman* team on a tour of his winery, one of the largest in Israel. We took a closer look at the process that brings grapes to glass, and got an introduction to the wide world of wines.

There are few substances that hold a more prominent place in Jewish practice than wine. Wine has a special *berachah* all its own—a distinction shared only by bread, the staple of life. The *berachah* on wine also exempts other non-wine liquids

consumed subsequently, because they are considered secondary to the wine. The most important *mitzvos* are accompanied by a cup full of wine.

Winemaking is almost as old as civilization itself. We know that one of the first

things Noah did after the *Mabul* was plant a vineyard and make wine (notwithstanding the fact that the Torah does not view his actions in a positive light). The oldest evidence known to archaeologists of wine production in ancient times has been found on wine-stained pottery in the Republic of Georgia, in the Caucasus, as well as in northern Iran. In 2011, an ancient winery believed to be the oldest yet found was discovered in a cave in nearby Armenia. Interestingly, this is the same general geographic area where Mount Ararat, where Noah first landed the ark, is believed to be located.

Wine takes a central role in almost any Jewish occasion, whether it be *Kiddush*, *arba kosos*, *Purim* or a *bris milah*. Therefore, it is only natural that expert Jewish winemakers should abound, producing some of the world's finest wines. However, fine kosher wines had not been produced in large quantities until only very recently.

Into the late 1970s, most kosher wine produced in America was sweet—really sweet. Dating from the late 1800s, sweet wine had become emblematic of what *Kiddush* and *Seder* wine was “supposed” to taste like. And there are clear historical reasons for this.

When large numbers of Jews first started coming to North America, it was very hard to make wine locally. No acceptable variety of grape existed that could flourish in the climate of the northeastern United States, where most Jews lived. Because of the strict requirements for making kosher wine, only Jews can be involved in the processing, and that required vineyards local to where the Jews lived. Importing kosher wine from Europe was prohibitively expensive, and the kosher status of wine coming from California was viewed with suspicion. (In 1904, American newspapers reported on a team of rabbis, “deeply concerned in the orthodoxy of their Jewish brethren,” who made a special trip to Fresno, California, to supervise the production of \$1.25 million worth of wine [in today's dollars] for *Pesach* of that year.)

The most common solution to these issues for many years was homemade or locally-produced raisin wine.

In 1849, a Massachusetts viticulturist by the name of Ephraim Wales Bull cultivated a new kind of grape, picked out of thousands of test plantings, which was able to flourish in New England. The sweet Concord grapes soon became a popular source of “table grapes” and grape juice, but they made a terrible tasting wine. Concord wine is infamous for its musty character. With some added sugar, though, winemakers discovered that the Concord wine became palatable. Now, vineyards could be cultivated in New York and other nearby heavily Jewish areas. Thus was born the classic sweet kosher wine.

During the British Mandate, struggling Jewish settlers in *Eretz Yisrael* were more concerned with establishing vineyards and getting their grapes to grow than the production of fine wines. Wineries sprung up that consisted of cooperatives of grape growers who were simply interested in turning their grapes into wine and selling it. For the most part, the fine points of fermentation techniques and barrel-aging were not on the agenda.

Fast forward to the 1980s. Kosher wineries with the highest level of *hash-gachah* are now operating throughout the Land of Israel, as well as in Europe and the US. California's Napa Valley has recently been pushed into the spotlight when two wineries won the infamous 1976 “Judgment of Paris.” In this competition, expert wine tasters judged US and French wines in a double-blind test and, to their shock, graded the California wines higher than the French wines, toppling them from their perch at the perceived height of world quality.

Kosher wineries have come late to the game, but now in the 80s vintners are realizing that superb dry red and white wines can be made kosher, competing with the best non-kosher wines. As the kosher market is growing broader, and more people who keep kosher want to be able to both serve and experience fine wines, the



Exterior view of Barkan's winemaking facility.

demand is causing fast growth in the kosher wine sector. Now, wineries that have only focused on taking grapes, fermenting them and bottling whatever resulted, are realizing that to satisfy the new generation of kosher consumers they are going to have to focus much more on quality.

## Barkan Winery

Today, the vast range of wines available on the kosher market is able to satisfy the most discerning connoisseurs. In a pre-Passover column from 2008, *New York Times* wine critic Eric Asimov had this to say:

*Kosher wines have improved so vastly over the years, and so many are available nowadays, that the... majority of kosher wines are good enough to appeal to anybody, regardless of rabbinical blessings, provided they are to your taste. Kosher wines today are produced everywhere, and some of the most intriguing ones, for historical and cultural reasons, come from Israel.*

In preparation for Purim, the **Zman** team decided to get a behind-the-scenes look at how wine gets from vine to glass. We were fortunate to get a personal tour of Israel's Barkan Winery from chief winemaker Ed Salzburg.

Barkan is Israel's second-largest wine producer. It processed 10,000 tons of grapes last year. Around three-quarters of its wine is sold in Israel, and one-quarter is exported, making Barkan Israel's largest wine exporter.

Barkan exports to over 40 countries, and each country's export has to be kept separate at the warehouse. Every country has its own regulations about how the wine must be bottled, labeled, packaged and stamped. Barkan's largest market, after North America, is France.

Salzburg, a native of Peekskill, New York, filled us in on Barkan's history as he led us to a breathtaking view of their 600 acres of vineyards near Kibbutz Hulda.

*Barkan is the successor to a number of wineries. The first one, the Friedman Winery, was founded at the end of the 19th century by Shlomo Friedman in Petach Tikvah. Soon after Israeli independence it was sold to the Thuva corporation and was renamed Thuva-Friedman. In the 70s,*



Barkan's barrel room, holding 5,000 oak barrels of aging wine, is the largest in Israel. The room must be kept at precisely 64.4°F at all times, and the barrels must be topped off every few weeks due to evaporation. A special misting system maintains high humidity.