



MENACHEM TEPERBERG, father of Moti Teperberg, who revived the family winery, then called Efrat Winery. (Photos: Teperberg Winery)

TRIO OF Teperberg winemakers (from left): Olivier Fraty; Shiki Rauchberger, head winemaker; and Daniel Friedenberg. (Shani Brill)

MOST IMPROVED WINERY



• ADAM MONTEFIORE

Teperberg Winery is now managed by the fifth generation, Moti Teperberg, who is also Israel's longest-serving current winery CEO. He has been at the helm since 1984. Teperberg is the third largest winery in Israel, after Barkan and Carmel, and the largest family-owned winery. Apart from the Shor family wineries, it is also the oldest existing winery in Israel, having been founded in the 19th century.

The family story began in 1827, when Avraham Teperberg fled Odessa to avoid compulsory conscription into the army, and turned up in Austria. There, he picked up his German-sounding name and was exposed to the wine trade for the first time. In 1850 he immigrated to Israel, and in 1852 he began trading in wines and spirits. He was particularly successful in selling to Christian Arabs, German Templars and pilgrims.

His son, Ze'ev Zaide Teperberg, decided to establish a winery in 1870. It was situated between Yehudim and Chabad Streets in the Old City of Jerusalem, in a place occupied by a car park today. To put this in perspective, it was not a winery like we know today. It was a small, domestic affair, producing sweet wine in casks for use as kiddush wine for Jews or altar and communion wine for Christians. The grapes included Dabouki and Hebroni, grown near Bethlehem and Hebron.

The third generation was Mordechai Shimon Teperberg. The company included a winery, a distribution business and wine shops in both Jaffa and Jerusalem. At one stage they even represented the wines of Carmel Mizrahi. However, in 1921 there was a debilitating, costly court case with Carmel over the ownership of the logo. Both wineries claimed the logo of the two spies carrying a large bunch of grapes. The compromise was in Carmel's favor, and they continue to use this logo until today. In 1925, the British Mandate ruled that all industries should leave the Old City of

Jerusalem and the winery was moved to Romema in western Jerusalem.

In 1925 there was a joint venture between Segal and Teperberg to found a distillery in the Templar community of Sarona. The Segal brothers were to be the expert distillers, and Teperberg's responsibility was distribution, sales and marketing. The project failed. Raw materials were too expensive and at around the same time the British Mandate permitted cheaper imports.

The costs of the court case, failure of the distillery and tough trading times, impinged on the success of the winery. In 1929 the winery went bankrupt. This means that of the wineries with roots that go back to the middle of the 19th century, only the Shor-Zion-1848 Winery branch of the Shor family has made wine continuously! All the others had breaks in wine production.

The Teperberg family winery was revived after the founding of the state in 1951 by Menachem Teper-



MOTI TEPERBERG, CEO of the eponymous winery. He is the fifth-generation and longest-serving CEO of an Israeli winery.

IMPRESS, INSPIRE: Teperberg vintages.

berg, Moti's father, along with his brother Yitzhak. The winery was situated in Mahaneh Yehuda, and it was named Efrat, after the route the grapes traveled to Jerusalem from Bethlehem and Hebron. Menahem wisely decided to focus on wine and left the retail part of the business to another brother. In the mid-1960s, Efrat was a tiny winery harvesting just over 100 tons of grapes.

IN 1964, Efrat Winery moved to Motza, just off the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway. By 1990 they were harvesting 250 tons of grapes a year. They produced inexpensive wines, kiddush wines and alcohol. I had the pleasure of meeting Menahem when he was 90 years old. He talked and talked, and I scribbled frantically. It was enlightening and interesting to scratch away the cobwebs of family folklore to get to the real details of family history.

Moti Teperberg, the fifth generation, joined the business in 1976 and became CEO at the young age of 31. He has a brother who is a judge, a sister who was a school principal, and five children. His son Amotz worked at the winery until recently. Amotz is talented and well-respected in the trade. I am hopeful he will return to keep the chain of succession going.

Through the '90s the winery began to grow. Teperberg was a strong presence in the Jerusalem area, but not so well known nationwide. The marketing was always rather dubious, and the wines sold because of price and *hechsher*, kosher certification, rather than quality. There was no hint of what would follow.

By the year 2000, they were producing nearly three million bottles of wine, spirits and grape juice annually. As the winery grew larger, it was clear that it had outgrown Motza. It was one of the most crowded, messy and chaotic wineries I have ever seen, with the floor awash with a spaghetti-junction of pipes everywhere!

The astonishing thing was that Moti Teperberg, who grew up in a shtetl of liquid religion, had the vision to see there was a different way. The hyperactive Moti, more a businessman than wine guy, was to prove not only that he had a vision but would also create his legacy.

The first sign of ambition was appointing an internationally trained winemaker for the first time. Shiki Rauchberger became the winemaker of Efrat Winery in 2002. He had studied at UC Davis in America and worked with Peter Stern, who was the wine consultant of the Golan Heights Winery for 20 years and then of Carmel Winery for a further five years. He was also winemaker of Herzog Wine Cellars.

Stern was arguably the key individual in the quality

revolution of both Israeli (with Yarden) and kosher wine (with Herzog.) Shiki credits him with being the main influence on his career. Shiki became winemaker of Carmel's Rishon Le Zion Cellars from 1993 until Moti Teperberg tapped him to plot the metamorphosis from Efrat to Teperberg Winery. He is a very talented winemaker, who is most happy when being among the vineyards. He is also a truly nice guy.

Then, in 2006, Moti Teperberg moved the winery to a new, spacious site at Tzora, near Beit Shemesh (not far from Dir Rafat Monastery, Tzora Vineyards and Mony Winery). The winemaking team was strengthened with the addition of French-born Olivier Fraty, who trained in Bordeaux, and great inroads were made in connecting the vineyards to the wines via the winery. The more recent addition to the winemaking team is the American-born Daniel Friedenberg. Together they represent an impressive team all with different backgrounds and experiences.

FOR THE first time in 140 years, Teperberg started making wine in the vineyards. Their vineyards range from the Golan Heights to the Negev, but most are situated in the Judean foothills and Judean hills. The first attempt at rebranding introduced the "Teperberg 1870" brand to the Israeli market.

After numerous changes in marketing strategy and personnel, the third master stroke of Moti Teperberg was employing a smart, meticulous marketing professional, Roy Harel. With great precision, and at no little cost, they rebranded the winery using the logo of a large Hebrew letter 'tet' on the label (the first letter of the family name in Hebrew), basing the new look on history and family. The new brands ranged from the entry level Vision, Impression, Inspire and Essence, up to the premier label Legacy.

The wines perform at every level, and due to the smart marketing, the wines also have an impressive presence on the shelves. The Essence Rose, Inspire Famitage (a Dabouki blend) and Inspire Devotage (Malbec Marsalan) are favorites of mine. The Legacy Cabernet Franc is outstanding. There are wineries making good wine with appalling marketing, and vice versa.

To Teperberg Winery's credit, the wines are very good at every price point, and they had a relaunch, which did justice to the quality of the wines. The new Teperberg Winery is as far removed from the old Efrat Winery as it could be. The turnaround during the last decade has been very impressive. They are now producing six million bottles of wine a year and harvesting nearly 7,000 tons of grapes a year.

Teperberg Winery has launched a few wines to cel-



brate their 150th anniversary. The ones I liked the most were as follows:

- **Teperberg Impression French Colombard 2019.** A delightful white wine. Fresh, fragrant with a flowery aroma and a refreshing finish. Only 11.4% alcohol, which makes a nice change. NIS 40
- **Teperberg Inspire Cabernet Sauvignon Syrah 2019.** A great drinking wine. Very fruity, with mouth-filling flavor, good structure and the soft fruit flavors continue through into the long finish. NIS 40
- **Teperberg Providence 2016.** This is the prestige icon wine launched earlier in the year. It is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot with a little Syrah, all grown in the Upper Galilee. The wine is deep, with concentrated aromas of black berry fruit. It is full-bodied, complex, with full fruit flavor backed with nuances from the oak aging. It has a long, well-balanced finish. NIS 250

Avraham Teperberg entered the wine business as a trader. Ze'ev Zaide Teperberg founded a winery. Mordechai Shimon Teperberg engineered the move from the Old City to western Jerusalem, and then the business became a victim of the economic problems of the time. Menahem Teperberg, Moti's father, reestablished a winery and made the decision to focus on wine. Moti Teperberg was then the one who brought the winery truly into the wine world.

Teperberg Winery is, without doubt in my mind, the most improved winery in the last decade. How appropriate it is to be able to say that when they are celebrating its 150th anniversary! ■

The writer, a wine trade veteran, has advanced Israeli wine for nearly 35 years. He is referred to as the 'English voice of Israeli wine.' www.adammontefiore.com