

WINELAND, A beautiful new book of wine photographs.
(Photos: Courtesy)

ROSH HASHANAH WINES



• ADAM MONTEFIORE

The classic wine to fit into the Rosh Hashanah ritual is a sweet wine. We eat sweet foods, signifying hope for a sweet year, so why not sweet wines, too?

To most people the word “sweet” equates to a lack of quality. Too much exposure to kiddush wines, I suppose. Sweet wine is a most misunderstood category. Many who in reality prefer sweetness in wine are embarrassed to say so, but the sales of Blue Nun show many like semi-dry and semi-sweet wines.

Of course, many sweet wines, called dessert wines, which sounds more acceptable, are some of the rarest and most expensive wines there are. They are painstakingly made. Don't forget that up to 100 years ago most wine consumed was sweet. The French drink dessert wines as an aperitif, served ice cold, so I see no harm in adopting the same practice for a Rosh Hashanah meal.

Let me offer two sweet wines for your consideration. The **YARDEN HEIGHTS** is arguably the finest, and definitely the most awarded, dessert wine in Israel. It is made from Gewurztraminer from the cooler-climate Golan Heights vineyards. It is delicious, and surprisingly fresh because its acidity is high though masked by the sweetness, and it represents one of

Israel's finest wines.

The next wine is at the other end of the spectrum. The **PRIVATE COLLECTION MOSCATO** in a blue bottle, is playful, fun and unpretentious. Sweet, fizzy, low-alcohol, it is a great choice because even those who hate wine will like it. As for the wine snob, it is a wine that will make them smile.

In fact, any dessert wine between the Heights Wine and the most basic Moscato will do. Serve them cold from the freezer. (Just don't forget them there!) Drink them for kiddush and with the traditional starters.

However, you also need wines with the meal. Here are some suggestions.

BARKAN BETA MARAWI 2017

Marawi is an indigenous single-vineyard Holy Land variety grown in Bar Giora. The wine is the best Marawi to date, fruity, with nice mouth feel and a good finish. The Beta label is a boutique wine label made by Barkan's new winemaker. Only sold in restaurants, it represents the new Barkan potential for innovation and quality. Interesting label, fascinating wine... the Beta Colombard is also excellent.

TABOR HAR CHARDONNAY 2017

Tabor Winery is the fifth-largest winery in Israel, and its wines offer excellent value for money at every price point. Their whites are always in the top drawer. This Chardonnay is well made in the modern style.

Unoaked, it has tropical fruit, is refreshing and perfect with food. NIS 38

MONTEFIORE WHITE 2017

I could not write about this winery previously. Now that my family is no longer involved, I am happy to give credit to one of the most easy-drinking aperitif or first course wines. It is made from Colombard, Chardonnay with a little Semillon. It is crisp, fragrant and great value. NIS 70

YARDEN GEWURZTRAMINER 2017

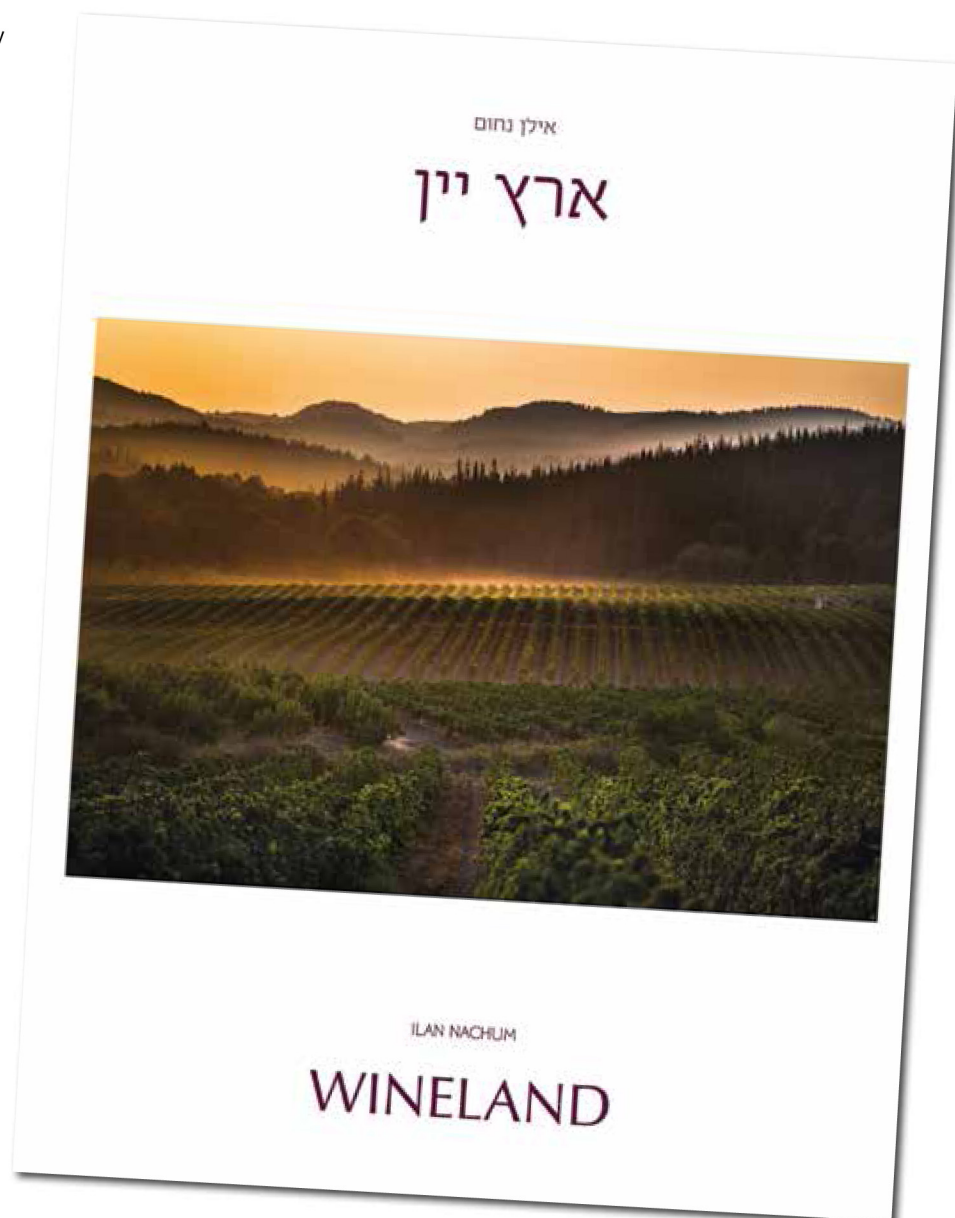
The Golan Heights Winery was the pioneer of Gewurztraminer in Israel. This off-dry wine is arguably one of the best GewurzEs on the market. Spicy, aromatic, but tight with a refreshing finish. There is sweetness but not too much. NIS 75

TEPERBERG ESSENCE ROSE 2017

A pale rosé, very fruity and well balanced. Made from Grenache and Barbera grapes. It is the taste of the Mediterranean. This will go with anything. An anytime, any food wine. NIS 75

BINYAMINA HA'MOSHAVA SHIRAZ 2017

Great value wine with good Shiraz nose. It is fruity, quite light with a clean finish. Good BBQ, pizza or pasta wine. Binyamina Winery's less expensive wines represent good QPR. NIS 29





(FROM LEFT) 1848 Winery 7th Generation Cabernet Sauvignon; Recanati Bittuni (Omri Meron); Psagot Peak; Amphorae Med Red; Windmill Merlot; Hayotzer Bereshit; Castel Grand Vin; Montefiore White; Tabor Har Chardonnay; Bazelet Hagolan 188.

HAYOTZER BERESHIT CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Light, fruity, full of flavor and good acidity. This is a wine to drink, not taste. Hayotzer Winery is the new quality arm of Arza Winery. Its wines are good, and all represent excellent value. The winery is owned by the Shor family, which has continually made wine since 1847-8. NIS 40

AMPHORAE MED RED 2015

This is a Syrah Cabernet Sauvignon blend. Quite bold with the oak. A mouthful of wine, but very drinkable! Amphorae is one of Israel's most beautiful wineries. Its wines are going through a metamorphosis under new ownership, new management and new winemaker. Watch this space... worth looking out for them in the future. NIS 75

RECANATI BITTUNI 2017

I can safely say this is the only Bittuni in the world. It is a Holy Land variety, grown by a Palestinian grower, made by an Israeli winemaker. Its style is really worthy of a wine half its price, but its uniqueness and rarity make it a fascinating buy. The wine has an attractive red fruit aroma with cherry berry fruit to the fore. It also has a kind of pomegranate, cranberry acidity which makes it a fine quaffing wine. I liked it very much. NIS 100

JERUSALEM WINDMILL MERLOT 2016

Jerusalem Vineyard Winery has opened an innovative tasting room in the historic setting of the Montefiore Windmill in Mishkenot Sha'ananim - Yemin Moshe. Winemaker Sam Sorka has made handcrafted boutique wines to be sold there. Best is the Windmill Merlot. It has great depth, good complexity and a long finish. NIS 120

PSAGOT PEAK 2016

A blend of Syrah, Petite Sirah and Mourvedre. The wine is complex, chewy with a smoked meat character. One of the best Mediterranean blends in Israel. Psagot wines are really delivering under talented new winemaker Yaacov Oryah. NIS 150

TULIP RESERVE SYRAH 2016

Tulip's Syrah is traditionally one of the best in the country. This new edition is no different. Deep-colored with aromas of black fruit and cherries, with spice, a hint of leather and burnt coffee and a long absorbing finish. Made by Tulip Winery in the Village of Hope, which cares for adults with special needs. NIS 120

1848 WINE 7th GENERATION CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2013

This a deep, powerful, oaky expression of a New World-style Cabernet Sauvignon. It is actually well made, but only those who like full-bodied wines with high alcohol should go for it.

1848 Winery has made impressive winery investments in the search for quality. Another branch of the Shor family, our oldest winemaking family in Israel. NIS 119

TURA MOUNTAIN PEAK 2015

Tura is a winery with fast-improving wines. This wine is a Bordeaux-style blend made from 850-meter vineyards in the central mountains. Deep, fruity and complex. The wine has "Wine from the Land of Israel" on its front label and carries the Hebrew year 5775. NIS 219

CASTEL GRAND VIN 2016

The classic Bordeaux-style Israeli wine. It has a beautiful nose of blackcurrant, blackberry with hints of tobacco, cigar box with soft tannins and prominent but well-integrated oak flavors. It has a full, mouth-filling flavor, is very complex, and it has a long, lingering finish. One of Castel's best ever. NIS 214

BAZELET HAGOLAN CABERNET SAUVIGNON 188 2015

Deep-colored, rich wine with ripe sweet berry fruit and aromatic oak flavors. Up-front and full-bodied. It is a limited-edition wine from the Tel Phares vineyard on the Golan, made in honor of the 188th Armored Brigade and its heroic battles on the Golan Heights during the Yom Kippur War. It is a Cabernet Sauvignon in a Burgundy bottle, with a screw cap which has a Magen David on it. Different, but certainly patriotic and a good cause! NIS 240

'WINELAND'

Finally, I have the perfect gift for any wine lover for Rosh Hashanah. A most beautiful book has just been published. It is called *Wineland* and is a photographic portfolio of Israeli vineyards and wineries. It is a hardcover in a large coffee-table format.

There are 288 pages crammed with the most beautiful photographs covering every aspect of wine. They illustrate the winegrowing and winemaking processes, reflect the changes through the seasons and focus on the different stages from the budding of the vine onward. The differences of the wine regions are made clear with some wonderful panoramic photographs which show Israel's wine country with a beauty not always appreciated by wine lovers or connoisseurs. The talented photographer is Ilan Nachum, an artist with many accomplishments to his name.

Wineland is in English and Hebrew, though there is very little text, and the story is told in photos. It would be a wonderful gift for the wine lover who has everything, or for anyone from overseas who has not yet been exposed to the beautiful Israel. It costs NIS 260 and is worth every agora. ■

The writer has advanced Israeli wine for over 30 years. He is known as the English voice of Israeli wine.
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