

Wine, family and tradition

The largest family winery in the country, Teperberg has come up with new branding that emphasizes its history and values

■ By ADAM MONTEFIORE

The Teperberg Winery has recently launched a new look for its wines, across the board. This historic winery therefore completes a process that began a long, long time ago.

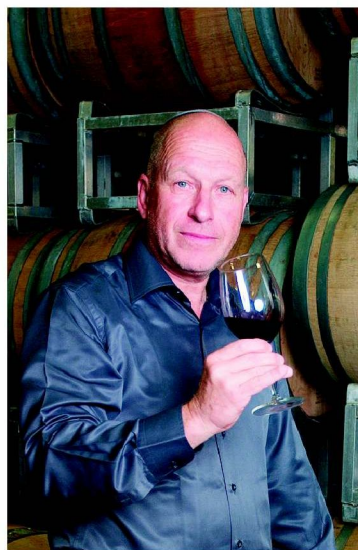
There are four revolutions that characterize the history of Israeli wine. First there was the French Revolution, when the wine industry was founded in the 1880s by Rothschild, using French expertise. In the 1980s the New World Revolution began, led by Californian winemakers, improving the quality of Israeli wines. The 1990s was the beginning of the Boutique Winery Revolution, which provided color and variety.

Teperberg is part of the latest revolution, the Traditional Winery Revolution. Since the beginning of the 2000s, there has been a noteworthy renaissance of the large wineries.

The first of the traditional wineries to transform itself was Carmel Winery. Today, its finest wines are among the best in Israel. Another was Binyamina Winery. The current talented winemaking team of Yiftach Peretz and Yael Sandler are making pretty good wines today.

Do you remember Askalon Wines? They became known as Segal Wines and also started making some quality wines, particularly in the hands of winemaker Avi Feldstein. Even traditional wineries such as Arza and Zion started to make changes. And then there is Teperberg.

The family saga began in 1827, when Avraham Teperberg fled Odessa to avoid the army and ended up in Austria. There, he would have come in contact with wine for the first time and picked up his Germanic sounding name. In 1850 he made aliya, and in 1852 he began trading in wine and spirits. Among his customers were Christian Arabs and Templers. His legacy was that he founded a wine dynasty that would



Moti Teperberg



Winemakers Shiki Rauchberger (right) and Olivier Fratty

last until today.

His son, Zeev Zaide Teperberg, decided it was not enough to distribute wine but that they should also make their own. He established a winery in 1870, which was situated between Hayehudim Street and Chabad Street in the Old City of Jerusalem, not far from the Zion Gate.

Sir Moses Montefiore was the most distinguished overseas visitor to Jerusalem at that time. He drank a bottle of wine every day and would buy small casks of wine as a souvenir. Furthermore, every community or individual he visited would welcome him with a bottle of their finest wine. It amuses me to think that on one of his visits to Jerusalem, he may have come across either a Teperberg or his wine. Maybe fanciful on my part, but it would certainly have been quite feasible.

The third generation was Mordechai Shimon Teperberg. By now the business included a winery, a distribution business and retail shops in Jaffa and Jerusalem. In 1921 there was a costly court case between the Teperberg and Carmel wineries over a disputed logo,



the one with the two spies carrying the bunch of grapes, which they both claimed as their own. In 1925 the Teperberg winery was forced to leave the Old City due to Arab riots and the request by the British Mandate that industry should leave the area. They moved the winery to Romema in western Jerusalem, later to be the site of the Egged bus station.

Also in 1925, the Teperberg and Segal families went into partnership to build a distillery at Sarona, within the Templer community. The Segals provided the distilling expertise, and the Teperbergs the marketing, distribution and retail knowhow.

This business failed because raw materials became more expensive and, at the same time, the British permitted the import of spirits and liqueurs. Mordechai Shimon wanted to leave the drinks business, but he was persuaded to continue by his rabbi. In the end they lost a lot of money, and the winery went bankrupt in 1929.

The revival of the business was led by the very young Menachem Teperberg, the fourth generation, along with his brother Yitzhak. He reestablished the family winery in 1951



the good of the end product.

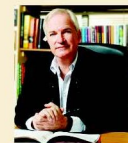
In 2006, the winery moved to a new site in the Judean Foothills, near Deir Rafat, close to vineyards as Moti always wished. They changed the name of the winery from Efrat to Teperberg, to emphasize it was still a family winery.

Now they have come up with a complete new branding. The new logo is a very traditional: a large Hebrew letter *tet*, and the slogan is "Family winery since 1870." The new labels cleverly emphasize family, history and tradition with a touch of modernity.

Today Moti Teperberg is the longest-serving CEO of a winery. Teperberg has grown to be the fourth-largest winery in Israel and the largest family winery. In 2014 the winery harvested more than 7,000 tons of grapes, a far cry from the 250 tons harvested in 1989.

If Zeev Zaide visited today, everything would be unfamiliar. The grape varieties (international varieties instead of local Arab grown varieties), the vineyards (all over, instead of just from Bethlehem and Hebron), the style of wines (dry instead of sweet), the size of the operation, the number of stainless steel tanks.... However, he *would* recognize the name over the door (and on the label), and that would make him feel very much at home. I am certain he would be very proud of his great grandson. *Y'shar koah*, Moti and Shiki!

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in Mahaneh Yehuda and named it Efrat, after the ancient route the grapes traveled from Bethlehem to Jerusalem. Menachem decided to focus on the winery and passed the retail part of the business on to another brother. In 1964, they moved to Motza, the village at the entrance to Jerusalem.

Efrat was a small winery, no larger than a medium-sized boutique winery today. Enter Moti Teperberg, the fifth generation. He joined the business in 1976 and became CEO in 1984. Slightly hunched like a prize fighter, almost bobbing and weaving as he waits for the next opportunity to catch his interest, he has a ready smile and a hyperactive air about him. He came into a winery mainly selling kiddush wine, grape juice and alcohol to the Jerusalem market. The first thing he did was expand the business, until the Motza winery was bursting at the seams. In 10 years from the late 1980, the winery's production grew tenfold.

He was always a businessman before a

wine guy, but he had the vision to realize that trends were changing. A winery could no longer live off kiddush wine and grape juice. He understood that to improve the final product, he would have to seek better vineyards or gain more control of vineyard management and employ an internationally trained winemaker. The winery would need to move to a new, larger site and invest in more advanced equipment and technology. And, step by step, that is what he did.

Firstly, Moti hired a new winemaker. Shiki Rauchberger became the chief winemaker in 2002. He has a reputation as one of the leading winemakers in the country. Previously he worked at Carmel's Rishon Lezion Cellars. He studied at UC Davis and worked with the legendary wine consultant Peter Stern. The associate winemaker, Olivier Fratty, who studied in Bordeaux, joined him in 2006. They are obviously a very successful partnership. The union between the two schools, new and old world, clearly works to

