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Pour Me

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Passover wines you won't want to spit out

By A.K. Carroll

Telcome to Pour Me, a new monthly column from your friends at the Lamorinda Weekly. When it comes to the world of spirits (the kind associated with regarding kosher products (no gelhangovers, not hauntings), there is much to know and always something new to learn. Look to this space for new trends and local products, recipes, recommendations, and profiles of local winemakers, brewmasters and mixologists. We kick off the series with a for wine — or just plain bad. But spotlight on kosher wines, undersung contenders among the world making a kosher wine comes with of viticulture.

If you're anything like me,

when you read the word "kosher" the first thing you think of is salt, pickles or hot dogs. You may know something about the restrictions atin, shellfish or meat mixed with dairy), but you probably know little about the world of kosher wine. If anything, you've heard that it is notoriously sweet — often made with Concord grapes or other grapes not typically suitable this is not always the case. Though its own set of challenges (and requires a great deal of supervision), winemakers have made headway in crafting kosher vintages that are not only palatable, but pleasant.

What's Kosher?

The question of "what" makes for a kosher wine is also a question of "who" and "how," according to David Raccah of kosherwinemusings.com and other kosher wine sources. In order for a wine to be kosher, it must be produced, handled, and supervised by Orthodox Sabbath-observant Jews. The wine can only contain kosher ingredients, which means fruit from vines that are at least three years old, no hybrid crops and no unkosher additives or enzymes. This is where it gets tricky. Many of the acid blends and fining agents typically used by winemakers are a no-no when it comes to kosher laws, which means an extra hurdle to a well-balanced vino.

In order for a wine to be kosher for Passover — a weeklong spring celebration that runs April 10-18 this year — it must also be free of corn syrup and chametz (leaven, including yeast). As the chief catalyst for fermentation, additive yeast (often a byproduct of a grain) is a major part of typical winemaking. While most kosher wines are also pesach (kosher for Passover), some, like the notorious Manischewitz, don't make the

must also be kosher. Only Orthodox Jews can handle the wine and winemaking equipment at all in the \$6-\$10 range. stages of the journey, from harvest flash pasteurized prior to bottling, a process called mevushal. This nay fall in the \$20-30 range. practice is a remnant of centuriesnon-Jewish person to handle and pour the wine once it has gone through the process. Non-mevushal wines, on the other hand, must be served by a Sabbath-observant Jew in order to remain kosher.

There you have it: A quick tutorial to the world of kosher wines. But, which to serve at your holiday meal? Lamorinda stores offer several options. On the lower end of the spectrum, Trader Joe's carries a Perrenal Chardonnay and

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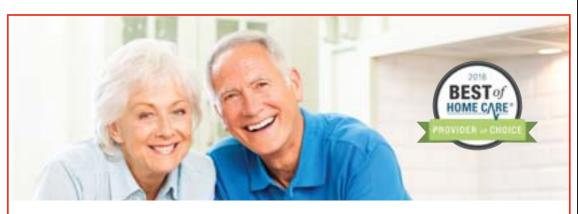




The winemaking process itself Merlot that qualify as kosher and go for under \$6, as well as an assortment of Baron Herzog wines

Barzon Harzog wines can also to bottle, with a lot of cleaning and be found at Moraga Wine and supervision along the way. Conse- Spirits, as well as the Orinda Bevquently, most kosher wine comes Mo. The Lafayette Whole Foods out of Israel and the majority of it carries high-end mevushal wines is made by Orthodox winemakers. from Californian and Israeli wine-Some kosher wines are boiled or makers at Covenant; the Mensch Zinfandel and The Tribe Chardon-

For the biggest selection check old ceremonial law and allows a out the new Lafayette BevMo, where wine specialists and customized tags make it easy to locate a wide range of kosher options, from a \$6 bottle of sweet Concord-grape Mogen David to Napa-made Hagafen wines, which are subtle about being kosher and considered on par with comparable non-kosher wines. You'll also find a selection of Baron Harzog bottles, as well as non-meshuval wines from Yarden of Israel. L'Chaim!



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Where to find Kosher wines

Blanc \$5.99-9.99

Trader Joe's: 3649 Mt Diablo Blvd, Lafayette (925) 299-9344 Perrenal: Chardonnay, Merlot \$4.99 Baron Herzog: Cabernet, Chardonnay, Merlot, Sauvignon

Moraga Wine and Spirits: 1437 Moraga Way, Moraga (925) 376-6111

Baron Harzog: Cabernet and Chardonnay \$12.99

Whole Foods: 3502 Mt Diablo Blvd, Lafayette (925) 284-5305 Covenant: Mensch \$20.99, The Tribe \$32.99 HoneyRun Mead \$13.99

BevMo: 6 Camino Pablo, Orinda (925) 254-3161 Baron Harzog: Cabernet \$14.99 and \$13.49 Chardonnay

Barkan: Cabernet \$14.99 BevMo: 3590 Mt Diablo Blvd, Lafayette (925) 282-8185

Mogen David \$5.99 Baron Herzog: Cabernet and Chardonnay \$12-16 Jeuneusse, Black Muscat and Cabernet \$12-16 Yarden: Red blend, Chardonnay, Merlot \$16-30 Hagafen: Chardonnay, Riesling, Pinot \$20-30

Jackson's Wines and Spirits: 3524 Mt Diablo Blvd # A, Lafayette (925) 284-4100

Hagafen: Chardonnay \$21.99 and Cabernet \$39.99