

Thanks to two beloved Beth El members with great palates, we have some kosher-for-passover wine recommendations! Prof. Joel Fleishman, who formerly wrote a wine column for Vanity Fair magazine, and Ben Abram, who recalls his first taste of whiskey in the basement of our fair shul, have curated a selection to spice up your four cups at Passover this year. Find their tasting notes below. They have created two collections at different price points. If you are celebrating with others over Zoom, perhaps consider sending them this shopping list as well so you can at least drink the same wine, even if you're eating at different tables. You can order directly from KosherWine.com and ship straight to your door.

Budget recommendation list -- \$118 total for four wines

If you only buy one....

Covenant Winery's 2016 "[Blue C Adom](#)" (Israel, \$40) is a very nice blend of Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon grown in the Golan Heights. It's beautifully balanced and carries real heft (lots of flavor). Covenant's founders came together in Napa bonded by the question of what it would take to make a world-class kosher wine; they succeeded in California and with the Blue C have shown the same skill in the Golan Heights. As an added bonus, one of the Covenant founders, Leslie Rudd z"l, davened downstairs at Beth El for the high holidays in the last years of his life. "You will not get tired of drinking Blue C at the Seder."

If you're looking for value...

Katlav's 2016 "[Nes Harim](#)" (Israel, \$33) is an unusual blend of 60% Petit Verdot and 40% Merlot -- typically in the wine world we see Merlot blended with Cabernet Sauvignon, but this blending with Petit Verdot as the primary grape (again, unusual) came out nicely. Sweet fruit flavors, nice tannins that give a dry framework, and for wine lovers who enjoy something a little "funky," this one has a lot of barnyard flavor often associated with wines from Bordeaux. It's a wine with integrity! Rabbi notes you can taste the oak from the French oak barrels in which it was aged. Prof. Fleishman "gives it an 'A.'"

If you're focused on budget...

Binyamina's 2017 "[Reserve Shiraz](#)" (Israel, \$20) has all the essentials of a drinkable wine: core of fruit, mildly sweet, and dry tannins that frame it. It's made mostly from Shiraz grapes with a splash of Viognier, aged for 12 months in American oak barrels. The winemakers note that it is a vegan wine (all kosher wines are).

If you're looking for something a little lighter...

Louis Blanc's 2015 "[Morcantel](#)" (France, \$25) is a smooth-drinking expression of the kinds of wines that have come out of Burgundy for centuries, with a blend of Pinot Noir and Gamay grapes. It has a very fragrant nose with a fine taste as well: sweet flavors, which resolve nicely into a smooth finish. It's a little dull (not the kind of bright fruit flavor you sometimes find in Burgundy) but is very, very drinkable, and a fabulous kosher wine for this price point.

More expensive recommendation list -- \$225 total for four bottles.

A great way to start or end the meal...

Yarden's 2007 "[Katzrin Blanc de Blanc Late Disgorged \(Sparkling\)](#)" (Israel, \$63) is a terrific sparkling wine, made of 100% Chardonnay grapes grown in Northern Golan Heights. It tastes like a late disgorged Chardonnay should: notes of stonefruit and citrus, with a long finish. If you enjoy the occasional sparkling wine, you'll appreciate this late disgorged Israeli bottle: all of the tastes and effervescence of youthful vitality with the maturity and finish for which late-disgorged sparkling wines are known. (Disgorgement is a part of the process of making a good sparkling wine, in which the excess yeast is removed, and late disgorgement simply means that the bottles are aged for a longer period before they are disgorged and corked, therefore increasing the time the wine ages *without* access to fresh air, letting its flavors develop but not ripen *per se*.)

A fabulous Israeli red....

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Heading to France...

Chateau Guimberteau's 2016 "[Lalande-De-Pomerol](#)" (France, \$50) is made from mainly merlot grapes from the right bank of Bordeaux in a small region right outside of Pomerol called Lalande-De-Pomerol. As with many good merlots, this wine is soft and flavorful: fruity, but with a nice sour flavor that adds complexity. This wine is a crowd pleaser that Prof. Fleishman describes as "Very classy wine!"

Lastly, something truly unique from Italy....

Aura di Valerie's 2017 "[Amarone della Valpolicella](#)" (Italy, \$72) is a blend of Corvina, Corvinone and Rondinella, famous within the Veneto region in the northeast of Italy. Amarones are produced from grapes that have been dried slightly before pressing, which tends to give these wines a sweet and raisin-y flavor. This bottle is a very good wine with a nice finish: smooth, light, and balanced between sweet and dry profiles in a way typical of Amarone though atypical with most wines. Aura di Valerie's winemakers run in the same circles with Beth El member Adam SaNoguiera, and he notes that they set out to make the world's first known kosher Amarone. They did great! This wine has enough flavor to present well even as a fourth glass, or would pair nicely with full-flavored dishes such as brisket, duck, and other dark meats. If you have never tasted Amarone before, it is a unique experience.