

## Pinsker's to offer more kosher wines

### Tastings

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By Elizabeth Downer, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



John Heller

Joshua A. Greenstein, vice president for sales and marketing for the Israel Wine Producers Association, speaks at a kosher wine tasting at Pinsker's Judaica store in Squirrel Hill.

Thanks to Pinsker's Judaica store in Squirrel Hill, Pittsburghers now have access to a long list of kosher wines.

Today's bear little resemblance to the sticky, cough-syrup-like sacramental wines of old. Those sweet wines still are available but the exciting news for drinkers is that modern versions taste much like wine made in a particular region from a particular grape variety. You can have a kosher Bordeaux from the Medoc or a kosher Chianti from Tuscany. More than 200 labels of such wines now are available at Pinsker's newly enlarged wine rooms.

Last week I enjoyed an open-house tasting with Jay Buchsbaum, vice president of Royal Wine Corp., the largest kosher wine distributor outside of Israel. He was introducing a sampling variety of top-quality Israeli varietals.

Israeli wines are an exciting story. This year, the Golan Heights Winery was declared "best winery in the world" at the Vinitaly competition. Yarden's Cabernet Sauvignon from this winery was listed in Wine Spectator's 100 best wines of 2010.

Wines have been made in Israel for 5,000 years but in the last 20 years, there has been a sea-change in the quality. Today, Israel has 15,000 acres planted in wine grapes and produces 36 million bottles, with an export market valued at \$27 million.

Mr. Buchsbaum led the group through a tasting of Israeli and French kosher wines from a fresh and lively Pinot Grigio from Herzog to a full-bodied Binyamina Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon aged in a combination of French and American oak.

There was an interesting Sauvignon Blanc that reminded one taster more of an Aligote grape and two Chardonnays, one oaked and one un-oaked.

Two of the more impressive reds were Bordeaux-style blends from boutique wineries Alexander Sandro and Shilo Mosaic. Prices ranged from \$9 to \$40.

Passover is April 6 this year and if your Seder will include premium table wines, you will find a great selection at Pinskers, 2028 Murray Ave., 412-421-3033.

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[My Jan. 5 column](#) looked at the Dec. 31-Jan. 15 issue of Wine Spectator's list of the top 100 wines of 2011 and pointed out those available locally in our state wine stores. Another useful list in that issue is of wines scoring 90 points or above but costing \$18 or less.

That list sheds light on what regions are producing the top "value" wines. Most wine consumers know that France produces most of the highest-priced wines. So it may surprise you to learn that France also is the largest producer of outstanding values. You might expect Chile or Argentina to win that distinction but in fact, they are minor players in this year's choices.

Of the 100 wines, 27 are from France, followed by 18 from Italy, 13 from Australia and 11 from Washington state. California appeared with only two wines, Chile three, while Argentina, Spain and Portugal each had four, and New Zealand five.

You can find these wines from the list in the state stores:

### **Tommsi Cabernet Sauvignon Maremma Toscana 2008, Tuscany, Italy**

**PLCB No. 20047, \$16.99, 91 points**

An intense wine, 100 percent Cabernet Sauvignon that will benefit from decanting and also will improve for another year or two.

### **Chateau Ste. Michelle Cabernet Sauvignon 2009, Washington**

**PLCB No. 6896, \$18.99, 90 points**

This winery is always a good bet for top value. The price here is over the \$18 limit for wines on this list due to PLCB added fees.

### **Renzo Masi Chianti Reserva 2008, Tuscany, Italy**

**PLCB No. 24395, \$10.99, 90 points**

This is considerably less than this wine is selling for elsewhere. It is made from 95 percent Sangiovese grapes and 5 percent Colorino. Will continue to improve with further cellaring.

### **Chateau Ste. Michelle Riesling 2010, Columbia Valley, Washington**

**PLCB No. 20958, \$17.99, 90 points**

Here is a great off-dry Riesling for you readers who tell me you prefer some sweetness in your wines.

### **Rocky Gully Riesling Frankland River 2008, Western Australia**

**PLCB No. 14244, \$14.99, 90 points**

This Riesling is dry with classic mineral and floral character.

**Cave de Tain Crozes Hermitage White 2009, Rhone Valley, France**

**PLCB No. 29495, \$18.99, 90 points**

This wine offers a rare opportunity to taste 100 percent Marsanne grapes from the Rhone Valley. Cave de Tain is a cooperative winery and like a number of such producers in France, they are able to keep the prices of their wines relatively lower than the boutique growers.

**Starborough Sauvignon Blanc 2009, Marlborough, New Zealand**

**PLCB No. 5189, \$13.99, 90 points**

2009 was considered a excellent vintage in Marlborough.

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*Others on the list are available by Special Liquor Order:*

**Capezzana Barco Reale di Carmignano 2008, Tuscany, Italy**

**PLCB No. 512042, \$16.59, 92 points**

This is a Super Tuscan blended from Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Caniolo grapes.

**Georges Duboeuf Moulin-a-Vent 2009, Beaujolais, France**

**PLCB No. 507753, \$18.09, 90 points**

This Beaujolais Cru is a long way from Beaujolais Nouveau!

**Pierre-Henri Morel Cotes du Rhone-Villages 2009, France**

**PLCB No. 517289, \$15.99, 90 points**

This typical Rhone blend has nice structure and balance.

**Domaine Pelaquie Cotes du Rhone-Villages 2009, Rhone Valley, France**

**PLCB No. 525342, \$16.79, 90 points**

A blend of Grenache, Syrah and Cinsault grapes.

**Viticcio Toscana Bere 2009, Tuscany, Italy**

**PLCB No. 516720, \$13.99, 90 points**

An elegant Super Tuscan blended from 50 percent Sangiovese, 25 percent Merlot and 25 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, this is a wine that exceeds expectations for bottles at this price.

**Argyle Riesling Eola-Amity Hills 2009, Willamette Valley, Ore.**

**PLCB No. 515768, \$13.49, 90 points**

A refreshing, off-dry New World Riesling.

**Drylands Sauvignon Blanc 2010, Marlborough, New Zealand**

**PLCB No. 516378, \$20.29, 90 points**

Although the top price for the list is \$18, the additional cost here represents fees added by the state of Pennsylvania.

**Mills Reef Sauvignon Blanc Reserve 2010, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand**

**PLCB No. 52609, \$16.59, 90 points**

The reserve sauvignon blanc is made from low-yielding vines.

**Ravines Riesling 2009, Finger Lakes, N.Y.**

PLCB No. 514286, \$16.99, 90 points

A very dry and elegant wine.

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