

SHOW TIME

The hot ticket for kosher aficionadi

BY ANNA TOBIN

HERE WAS a time when most people associated kosher wine largely with the sweet red sacramental liquid used to bring in Shabbat. The kosher wine industry has expanded exponentially in recent years, however. From a variety of Chardonnays to Pinot Grigios, from Cabernet Sauvignons to Bordeaux and even rosés, all the wines you would expect to find on a top sommelier's menu are now available in kosher form.

The popularity of the Kosher Food and Wine Experience, which has been held every year since 2004 at London's Sheraton Grand Park Lane Hotel, is testimony to the growing interest from all sections of the Jewish community and beyond in kosher wine.

"At the first Kosher Food and Wine

Experience, we took over a small room at the Sheraton Grand Park Lane Hotel and entertained about 40 people. This year we are expecting well over 1,000 and, as the number of attendees grows, so does the number of wine producers keen to exhibit," says Ben Gestetner, manager of Kedem Europe, the largest kosher wine supplier in the UK, which organises the event.

THE ATTENDEES

Gestetner has noticed a real change in the demographics of the Experience in recent years too.

"We've always had a mix of ages and men and women coming from across the Jewish community but in the past couple of years it has become a lot more popular with the younger generation.

"The young are into alcohol, they are keen to try new things, they enjoy cocktails and what they see at the event is that the kosher consumer doesn't

have to miss out on any of that. We are not just exhibiting wines here, we have a range of spirits and liquors to try out too."

The number of award-winning wines and spirits on show even draws people from outside the Jewish community, with several world-revered wine writers regularly in attendance.

A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

The Kosher Food and Wine Experience tours the world over an intense two-week period.

It starts in Tel Aviv, moves to Paris, then London and on to New York and California.

More than 40 wine producers from as far afield as Argentina, Chile, New Zealand and California, as well as those closer to home in France, Italy, Spain and Israel, will be showcasing their best wines at the London event.

"Due to the fantastic setting in the ballroom of the Sheraton Grand Park

Lane Hotel and the wonderful food provided by Arieh Wagner, the London event is always the one that our suppliers get most excited about attending," says Gestetner.

"It's a very well-planned event. The Experience is on January 31 but we have been working on the logistics, inviting suppliers and arranging the stands and layout since before Rosh Hashanah."

The popularity of the event has also had a knock-on effect on the range of kosher wines on sale across the UK. Kedem Europe, a subsidiary of US-based Royal Wine Corporation, launched in the UK in 1992. Its initial customer base was formed of small kosher grocery stores but now its wines are also stocked by major supermarkets such as Waitrose and high-end retailers such as Selfridges.

"We also supply caterers and have a growing business with the restaurant trade," says Gestetner.

Instead of taking pot luck with a nice-looking wine you see in the supermarket or at your local store, the Kosher Food and Wine Experience is the chance to try before you buy, take some tasting notes and discover a host of delicious new wines and spirits.

BOOKING INFORMATION

Tickets for the event, which takes place on January 31, are now on sale. Single tickets cost £60 each, which includes entry to the main tasting and buffet food. Or you can buy two of these tickets for £100.

For £150 you can enjoy the VIP experience, which gives you entrance to the special private dining room in addition to the main tasting and buffet.

VIP guests can enjoy a special menu and a few additional wines and vintage whiskies not available in the main hall. Two tickets to the VIP experience cost £250.

Book at kfwelondon.com/tickets



Discover 250 top wines, fine spirits and more

THE 2018 Kosher Food and Wine Experience is going to be the best yet, with some exceptional new entrants to the line-up. What can visitors look forward to this year?

THE WINES

Around 40 wine suppliers from across the world will be present, allowing guests to taste more than 250 kosher fine wines. One of the focuses this year will be on Bordeaux wines, with many vintages that have only recently been produced in kosher form coming to the show for the first time.

"We are excited to have some really top-rated French wines this year — from Château Leoville 2015, Château Lascombes 2015 and Château Giscours 2015, for example," says Gestetner. "We've worked on the wineries and they've agreed to give going-kosher a try. They've been pleased with the results and this encourages them to produce more kosher products. The process of making the wine is exactly the same but we ensure the rabbis are there from start to finish. We even had one year when the kosher vintage was so good, the château it came from actually asked to buy it back from us."

While the wine industry is excited to discover this new kosher market, Israeli wineries are also busy making a name for themselves outside the Jewish community. The Kosher Food and Wine Experience has been instrumental in increasing the profile of Israeli wines, with several new vintages at this year's show. "We have some fantastic new Israeli wines," says Gestetner. "Israel is an upcoming market in the world of wine and we're excited to help spread the word."

Not only can you taste dozens of wines at the exhibition, it is a chance to speak to the wine producers themselves and to find out what makes each of their wines unique. They will help you to real-

THE KNOWLEDGE

ly taste their wines and detect all the different flavours within each glass. You can also pick up tips on wine selection and wine-and-food pairings, learn about different vintages and discover how to get the best out of each wine and the most effective way to store different types.

WINE CHART

Roches de Yon Figeac	St Émilion	2015
Château Gazin Rocqencourt (Malartic)	Pessac Leognon	2015
Château Giscours	Margaux	2015
Château Lascombes	Margaux	2015
Chevalier de Lascombes	Margaux	2015
Château Grand Puy Ducasse	Pauillac	2015
Château Léoville Poyferré	St Julien	2015
Pavillon de Leoville Poyferré	St Julien	2015
Château Moulin Riche	St Julien	2015
Château Le Crock	St Estephe	2015
Château Fourcas Dupré	Listrac Medoc	2015
Hautes Terres de Fourcas Dupré	Listrac Medoc	2015
Château Larcis Jaumat	St Émilion	2015
Château Greysac	Medoc	2015
Château Fontenil	Fronsac	2015
Château Cantenac Brown	Margaux	2015
Château Fayat	Pomerol	2015

BARREL SAMPLES

Château Du Tertre 2016, Grand Cru Classé 1855, Margaux
Château Saint Corbion 2016, Saint Estephe
Château Montviel 2016, Pomerol
Château Royaumont 2016, Lalande de Pomerol
Château Clarke 2016, Listrac Medoc
Château Malmaison 2016, Moulis en Medoc

ROSÉ

Château Roubine premium 2017, Cru Classé Côtes de Provence.
La Vie en Rose by Roubine 2017, Côtes de Provence.
Instant B by Sainte Beatrice 2017, Côtes de Provence.

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GET INTO THE SPIRITS TOO

Wine is not the only beverage available to taste at the Kosher Food and Wine Experience. Visitors can sample vodkas, gins, brandies and other specialist liqueurs from all over the world, talk to the producers and encounter some great new cocktails.

THE FOOD

Caterer Arieh Wagner, director of Star-guest and director of kosher events at the Sheraton Grand Park Lane Hotel, will once again be supplying the food.

"We will be focusing on the different foods produced by each of the countries where our wines are produced," says Gestetner. "There will be food booths showcasing the best of Israeli cuisine, the best of American cuisine and the best of French cuisine, for example. The idea is to help you see how wines taste different when paired with different foods."

VIP EXPERIENCE

This year the KFWE is offering a VIP experience. Just 70 lucky people can enjoy an extended food menu in a private dining space. Specially created by Arieh Wagner, delicacies on offer will include the finest foie gras from France.

There will also be the chance to try some exclusive wines not included in the general wine tasting — and vintage whiskies will be served too.

Recipe for KFWE: allow six months to prepare

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER

Meeting of exhibition organisers from around the world, to set dates. The show tour starts in Miami and visits Tel Aviv, France, London, New York and California.

SEPTEMBER

- Suppliers start their planning.
- First meeting about food with Arieh Wagner and his team. New menus are invented every year (see below).

SEPTEMBER ONWARDS

- Website presents interviews with winemakers and connoisseurs.

NOVEMBER

- PR campaign begins.

DECEMBER

- Save-the-Date advert in the JC.
- Recruitment of young people who are shomer Shabbat, to act as pourers.

SIX WEEKS TO GO

- Ticket sales begin, including VIP tickets, of which only 75 are available. Arrival of the new KFWE app, which will guide visitors directly to the wines that interest them most.
- New wines are flown in from around the world.

TWO WEEKS TO GO

- As each shipment arrives, every

bottle is meticulously checked and registered. Suppliers' name tags are prepared. Meeting with security team. Signage finalised.

ONE WEEK TO GO

- Final meeting with Wagner's team.

THREE DAYS TO GO

- Food prep begins.
- Wines are transported to the venue.

ONE DAY TO GO

- Kedem team goes to hotel and again checks more than 1,000 individual bottles to ensure the expected wines are in place. If a shipment goes astray, replacements are rushed to the show.
- Room is set up, then a security guard sleeps in it overnight — these wines are worth thousands of pounds.

THE DAY

- 8am Kedem team arrives. Finishing touches are put to the wine and food.
- 2pm Pourers arrive and are issued with uniforms and instructions.
- 3.30pm Trade and press arrive.
- 6.30pm Doors open to the public.
- 8pm Peak time for visiting. In the restaurant-like atmosphere of the VIP room, things are more tranquil.
- 9.30pm Beginning to wind down.
- 10pm Close of exhibition. Pack-up begins — and takes three to five hours.
- 2.3am Kedem staff finally go to bed.



Take your plate on a round-the-world tour

USA

Pulled beefburgers
Honey and mustard hotdogs
Kosher Fried Chicken (KFC)

UK

Traditional salt beef
Roast beef and Yorkshire puddings
Shepherd's pie

SCOTLAND

Salmon carvery
Gravadlax, smoked salmon

ISRAEL

Shawarma, falafel in pitta, hummus, charriif (spicy sauce), Israeli salad

ITALY

Pasta Action station, where dishes are constructed before your eyes

JAPAN

Sushi and sashimi

CHINA

Famous duck pancakes
Stir-fry Asian vegetables and noodles

VIP

Foie gras bar
Ravioli and black truffles

Menu by Arieh Wagner at the Sheraton Grand Park Lane

