

Adam Montefiore
 Jerusalem Post Wine Talk

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THIS NIGHT IS DIFFERENT

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Adam Montefiore

Passover time again. Our annual wine festival, where Israelis and Jews all over the world, drink four cups of wine. During Seder Night, the youngest in the family will ask the question: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" The answer is plenty. Lock down, isolation, limited groups, staying away from Grandparents. Everything is different this year because of Coronavirus. However terrible the situation is, it does not release anyone from the obligation to celebrate the Seder and drink the wine. No doubt the numbers at each gathering will be smaller. Families that traditionally celebrated together, will probably need to break up into smaller groups.

On a positive note, it may give an opportunity for wine lovers to choose better wines. You certainly do not want to invest in a best bottle if you have 25 people or more sitting down, half of which don't like wine anyway. I take myself as example. We are always a small group and with three people who have been in the wine trade, it is a good excuse to open some really good wines.

The Seder Night is set out like a Roman banquet. Certainly, in wine culture, there is an established order: first a sparkling wine as an aperitif, followed by a white wine with the first course, then a red with the main course and finally a dessert wine with the pudding. However, at Passover, the first glass is always flexible owing to a particular family's tradition. Some choose the best wine they have. Many still use grape juice. Call me old fashioned, but I still believe the Carmel Tirosh Grape Juice is the best and purest on the market. Others insist on kiddush wine (a sweet sacramental wine.) I would always recommend a Moscato, Red Moscato or Carignano instead. Sweet, slightly sparkling and low alcohol, these seem to be the ideal choice for young families.

For those seeking table wines, new buying opportunities have opened up because of the situation. Many wineries now offer internet sales and home delivery. Supermarkets like Shufersal, Tiv Taam and Stop Market offer a better range of wines. No longer can it be said that there are no higher quality wines in a supermarket. Most offer online services, as do wine shop chains like Derech Ha'Yayin. Passover for us is like Christmas in the drinks trade elsewhere. It is the peak time for wine sales, so there are also some good promotion deals to be had.

Benhaim Reserve Cabernet Franc 2016. Benhaim is one of the closest wineries to the center of the country, being situated in Ramat Hasharon. The wines are made in a full bodied, heavily oaked style. This Cabernet Franc, I have to say it is well made. It is big in the mouth, dense and continues through to a powerful finish.



 
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