



# The New Israeli Wine Guide

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September 2014

**TOP  
20**

A year has passed since we published our preview copy of the New Israeli Wine Guide. The encouraging response and practical criticism we received encouraged us to continue with our work.

Now, after months of tasting, re-tasting, writing and editing we are happy to present the top 20 wine list from the 2015 issue which will be published in full around passover.

Our work remains completely independent and without any commercial support. The principles that guide us haven't changed either; Each winery was asked to send up to three wines of their choice and all tastings are blind and thus completely objective. Although we could not cover all the wines and wineries in Israel, the number of wines we have tasted increased substantially and therefore the 2015 issue will include a larger number on wines - newcomers and veterans.

Adam Montefiore mentioned in his Introduction to the 2014 issue that the success of this project will be measured by its ability to be carried out over many years. We have done our best to succeed and hope you will enjoy the result.

We would like to take this opportunity and thank all the wineries that participated and to everyone else who supported us - professionally and personally.

Gal Zohar & Yair Gat



**Mourvèdre, Chateau Golan 2012**

**Blend:** 100% Mourvèdre

**Region:** Golan Heights

**Ageing:** 12 months in oak

**Alcohol:** 14%

**Red Velvet**

Beautifully balanced, the nose shows dried herbs and fruit, a hint of floral notes and some new well integrated oak spices. The Palate is multi-layered with a super silky and elegant mouthfeel, with lots of refined spices, black pepper and a real old world class to it. Balanced and refined.

**92**

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**Merlot Reserve, Teperberg 2011**

**Blend:** 100% Merlot

**Region:** Judean Hills

**Ageing:** 18 months in oak

**Alcohol:** 13%

**Kosher**

**European Class**

Low key nose with soft ripe fruit and fine oak spices.

The palate is much more generous, dominated by fresh acidity and crunchy red fruit. The oak is extremely well integrated and the wine shows both complexity and balance. Hint of minerality and earthy notes on the long finish.

**90**

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**Merlot Harel, Clos de Gat 2011**

**Blend:** 100% Merlot

**Region:** Judean Hills

**Ageing:** 14 months in oak

**Alcohol:** 14%

**Black Magic**

An attractive nose dominated by fruit, spice and a green note to it.

The palate shows lots of fruit concentration, very good integrated acidity, soft and well rounded tannins and a rough earthy note. Rich, elegant and long finish.

**91**

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**Yaar Yatir, Yatir 2010**

**Blend:** Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot and Merlot

**Region:** Judean Hills

**Ageing:** 16 months in oak

**Alcohol:** 15%

**Kosher**

**Brave old world**

Both pronounced spiciness and ripe fruit concentration on a surprisingly balanced and perfumed nose.

Balance and elegance on the palate. Other than fruit complexity the wine shows dried wild herb notes and a soft herbaceous character. It's an harmonious and well balanced wine with a very long length.

**90**

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**Limited edition, Carmel 2010**

**Blend:** Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Malbec

**Region:** Upper Galilee

**Ageing:** 16 months in oak

**Alcohol:** 14.5%

**Kosher**

**Big on complexity**

Elegant nose with pine oak notes, dried herbs and a cold climate character to it.

An old world influenced palate with fruit, soft spice, touch of sweetness and beautifully integrated oak leaving a mark of soft and round tannins. The finish is long and persistent.

**89**

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**Savant Red, Kishor 2012**

**Blend:** Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot

**Region:** Galilee

**Ageing:** 14 months in oak

**Alcohol:** 14%

**Kosher**

**Refreshingly surprising**

Very tight on the nose with crushed red fruits and a hint of toasty oak.

With lots of crunchy red fruits and fine integrated acidity, the palate is well rounded yet slightly overshadowed by prominent oak presence.

**88-9**

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**Red Moon Bar Maor Winery 2012**

**Blend:** Merlot and Cabernet Franc

**Region:** Carmel Mountains

**Ageing:** 12 months in oak

**Alcohol:** 14.5%

**Precise concentration**

An intriguing nose, dominated by bright red fruit, complemented by meaty notes and lots of spice. The palate is fresh, shows lots of acidity, vibrant crisp red fruit and a hint of ripeness. The acidity is refreshing and precise and balances the earthy, black and complex body.

**88**

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**Hemingway, Sea Horse Winery 2012**

**Blend:** Petite Sirah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah

**Region:** Judean Hills

**Ageing:** 16 months in oak

**Alcohol:** 14.5%

**Hand Made**

The nose is a wild one, slightly alcoholic, shows lots of oak spices, ripe fruit and even a soft oxidative character.

With crisp red fruit and good acidity, the palate is interesting and enjoyable. The finish is spicy and harmonious.

**87-88**

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**Moon-A, Abaya 2011**

**Blend:** Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petite Sirah

**Region:** Upper Galilee

**Ageing:** 12 months in oak

**Alcohol:** 13.2%

An nose. There's mint, eucalyptus, dried herbs but also lots of fruit and spice.

Interesting.

Strangely refined, the palate shows soft red fruit, well integrated oak spice and a soft rustic character. There's lack of concentration on the midpalate but the wine shows unique character and great drinkability.

**87-88**

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**Marselan Reserve, Recanati 2012**

**Blend:** Marselan

**Region:** Golan Heights

**Ageing:** 12 months in oak

**Alcohol:** 14.5%

**Kosher**

**Gentle Giant**

The nose shows sweet spice notes, concentrated ripe fruit and a hint of earthiness.

The fruit on the palate is pleasantly ripe, there's roundness, concentration and intensity all wrapped in a soft silky mouthfeel. The finish is long and warm.

**87-88**

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### **Shoresh Tzorah 2013**

**Blend:** 100% Sauvignon Blanc

**Region:** Judean Hills

**Ageing:** 7 months in oak

**Alcohol:** 14%

**Kosher**

#### **White Class**

Very pleasant and classic Sauvignon Blanc notes here. Herbaceousness, stone fruit, a hint of sweat and light oak spices.

The palate is mineral driven and complex, shows fantastic mouthfeel, great balance with good integrated oak notes and a very long and elegant finish.

**92**

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### **White signature, Sphera 2012**

**Blend:** Chardonnay, Semillon and Riesling

**Region:** Judean Hills

**Ageing:** 12 months in oak

**Alcohol:** 13%

#### **Good vibrations**

A well balanced and exciting nose with pronounced stone and citrus fruit complemented by present oak spices. On the palate there's structure, substance and good fruit but also very good acidity. This is a very well made intellectual wine with a long and spicy finish.

**91**

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### **Garage de Papa Lewinsohn 2013**

**Blend:** 100% Chardonnay

**Region:** Upper Galilee

**Ageing:** 10 months in oak

**Alcohol:** 13%

#### **Life in Harmony**

Clean mineral nose with soft citrus fruit and classic bourgogne-esque minerality coming through.

Rose petal, Citrus, saltiness, minerality on the palate, all in a rather refined and elegant package. Tight and very well crafted.

**91**

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### **Chardonnay, Clos de Gat 2011**

**Blend:** Chardonnay

**Region:** Judean Hills

**Ageing:** 12 months in oak

**Alcohol:** 14.1%

#### **Rich and famous**

A very ripe new world style fruit on the nose mixed with honey, caramel and christmas cake like spice. There's some minerality too.

The palate is surprisingly balanced. There's intense concentration, sweetness and slickness but there's also lots of acidity and minerality which lifts the wine. The finish is long and complex.

**90**

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### **Riesling Kayumi, Carmel 2012**

**Blend:** Riesling

**Region:** Upper Galilee

**Ageing:** Unoaked

**Alcohol:** 12.5%

**Kosher**

#### **The real thing**

Citrus and stone fruit on the nose, followed by minerality and a light petrol note.

Good gripping acidity followed by minerality, some fruit ripeness and very good overall balance. Lots of varietal character here. The finish is as crisp and fresh as the palate.

**90**

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**Sauvignon Blanc, Ella valley 2013**

**Blend:** Sauvignon Blanc  
**Region:** Judean Hills  
**Ageing:** Unoaked  
**Kosher**

**Straight and simple**

Fruit forward the nose shows soft classic herbal SB character, a hint of tropical fruit and soft rose petal notes. Very fresh on the palate with a lovely little spark, the wine shows tropical notes, lots of citrus and a nice sharp edge to it. Delightfully simple.

**89-90**

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**Flam Blanc 2013**

**Blend:** Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay  
**Region:** Judean Hills  
**Ageing:** Unoaked  
**Alcohol:** 13%  
**Kosher**

**Humble happiness**

Lots of freshness on the nose. Nice little complexity here, floral and aromatic with a slight hint of ripeness. The palate is very crisp, dominated by fresh acidity, crunchy limey fruit, a floral hint and a nice bite.

**89**

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**Sauvignon Blanc, Sphera 2013**

**Blend:** Sauvignon Blanc  
**Region:** Upper Galilee  
**Ageing:** 7 months in oak  
**Alcohol:** 13%

**Cristal clear**

Aromatic on the nose with classic gooseberries, lovely citrus, herbaceousness and a soft tropical note. Richly textured on the palate, the wine shows good acidity, balance and a long generous citrusy finish.

**89**

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**Chardonnay Volcanic, Har Odem 2013**

**Blend:** Chardonnay  
**Region:** Judean Hills and Golan Heights  
**Ageing:** 5 months in oak  
**Alcohol:** 13.5%

**Nice to have**

some citrus and fresh notes on the nose. nice and simple. The palate is fresh and aromatic, it shows biting acidity and even some minerality. there's a hint of warmth and ripeness, some bitterness but overall a pleasant, fresh and drinkable wine.

**88**

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**'C' Blanc du Castel, Domaine du Castel 2012**

**Blend:** Chardonnay  
**Region:** Judean Hills  
**Ageing:** 12 months in oak  
**Alcohol:** 13%  
**Kosher**

Lots and lots of gunpowder, stone minerality and quite a lot of ripe fruit and oak spice notes. The palate is rich, well textured and complex. There's some more gunpowder on the palate, bitterness, good fruit but the wine lacks balance at present time.

**88**

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