

Kosher Wine

Frequently asked questions

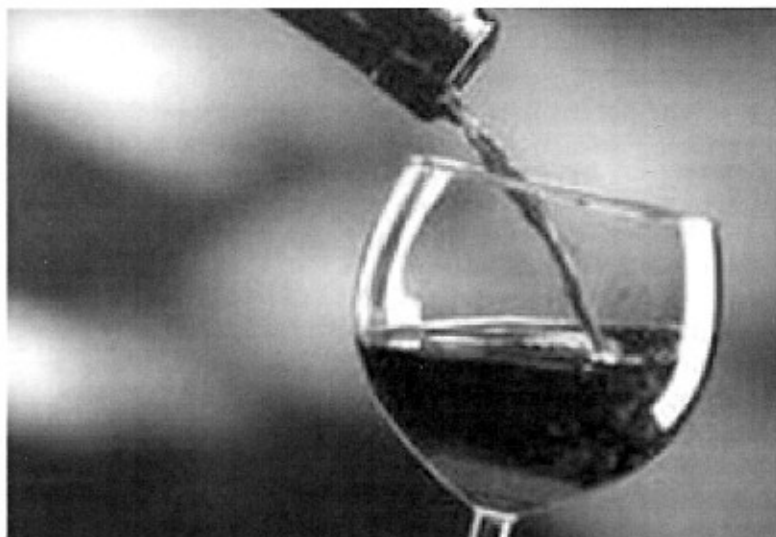
Following the recent successful Ladies guild wine-tasting event, Rabbi Portnoy answers some of the most frequently asked questions on the subject.

Why do I need Kosher wine? Isn't all wine Kosher?

Most wines although not all, comprise only kosher ingredients. However there is an important rabbinic enactment preventing the consumption of wine of non – Jewish origin. There are two reasons for this: **Yayin Nesech** – Wine was used historically for idolatrous libations. Nowadays this phenomenon is rare but is still relevant in certain places around the world. and.... **Stam Yeynam** – Wine is one of the items that our rabbis restricted to that of Jewish origin in order to limit social intercourse outside the faith. Jewish origin in this context would mean supervision from the earliest stages of manufacture. Whilst in today's society these laws may be difficult to understand, we must defer to the superior wisdom and mystical insight of our sages.

When will there be a wider range of Kiddush wines?

There is no such thing as Kiddush Wine. All red and indeed white kosher wines as well as grape-juice may be used for Kiddush and as you will see this evening, there is now a huge range of beautiful kosher wines available. The same applies to other important occasions when wine is drunk like the Seder or in association with a mitzvah i.e. a Wedding, Brit, or any other Seudat Mitsvah.



Incidentally, although some authorities prefer wine over other beverages whenever it is available, the majority of halachic opinion requires us to make kiddush on wine on Friday or a Yom Tov nights only. Kiddush during the day- time and Havdalah, can be made on any drink that is considered to be *Chamar HaMedinah* - lit. *drink of the nation*- especially if you prefer it over wine. Usually this would be another alcoholic drink but in essence any drink significant enough for one to invite guests to partake thereof.

At our recent Simchah we spent a lot of money on our kosher wines and were then told that staff waiting at table would not be allowed to pour it! Is this true and if so what is this rule all about?

Yes it is true. Simply put, Wine which is opened or poured by a non Jew would fall into the category of *Stam Yeynam* before it even reached your mouth!

Is there any way around this problem?

Sure! You could organise Jewish wine - waiters or ensure that your guests open and pour the wine themselves. Alternatively one could use *Yayin Mevushal* which would resolve the problem altogether.

What's that?

Yayin Mevushal is wine that has been pasteurised and in so doing has been excluded from the halachic restrictions placed upon wine. Nowadays there is a vast quality - range of wines and even some champagnes that are *Mevushal*. So, in a non domestic situation - in order to avoid any of the problems mentioned earlier - wines served at S'machot in our shule or under local Kashrut Supervision must always be *Mevushal* unless one wishes to serve the most expensive champagnes which by there very nature cannot be pasteurised. In such a case Jewish wine waiters would have to be engaged.

LECHAYIM!