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# School entry plan will 'destroy community'

BY CHARLOTTE OLIVER

▶ **THREE UNITED Synagogue rabbis** have warned that a Jewish secondary school's plan to change its admissions policy could spell disaster for thriving communities in Hertfordshire.

The rabbis — Meir Salasnik of Bushey, Jonathan Hughes of Radlett and Ephraim Levine of Watford — said Yavneh College's proposal to end its feeder school system would mean an exodus of young families.

From 2017, Yavneh College, in Borehamwood, which has more than 1,000 pupils, wants to stop its policy of prioritising applications from children at two Jewish primaries — Hertsmere in Radlett and Clore Shalom in Shenley — and instead give preference to families living in selected postcodes.

Opponents of the move fear children at schools outside Borehamwood will lose out.

In an online article for the JC, the rabbis said the proposed change would see parents move away, "taking their children, their ideas and their

enthusiasm with them... Within a few years, we risk losing the most valuable things we have — our children and our future".

The rabbis, who together represent more than 3,350 congregants, said the plan would result in a "depressing vision becoming a reality" where their communities would be "devoid of youth, energy and vitality".

They added that the school had cancelled at short notice a meeting scheduled with Yavneh's headteacher Spencer Lewis and its governors to discuss their concerns.

In response to the rabbis' claims, the school said that "because of the great demand for places... the number of students accepted into the school from each of the communities led by these rabbis is already in single digits, and so we would caution against hyperbolic suggestions that these proposed changes place the 'future of communities at risk', when in reality we are talking about no more than a handful of families."

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▶ **GOLDEN OLDIE**



Holocaust survivor Yisrael Kristal, who at 112 is thought to be the oldest man in the world. He was born in 1903 in Zarnov, Poland

▶ **HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY COVERAGE**, P6-11

## Spell on a kibbutz inspired key Corbyn aide's hard-left politics

BY ROSA DOHERTY

▶ **THE MAN** leading the influential grassroots movement supporting Jeremy Corbyn formed his political ideas during a spell on a kibbutz.



In his first in-depth interview, Jon Lansman, founder of the Momentum pressure group, told the JC that it was a trip to

**Israel influence:**  
Jon Lansman

the Negev as a teenager that sparked his interest in left-wing politics.

Mr Lansman said life on a kibbutz in the 1970s had made him less of a Zionist, but, he added: "It was actually a very politicising experience. What I liked about it was the pioneering spirit, the

sense of community and radicalism of it."

Mr Lansman's Momentum group led the grassroots campaign backing Mr Corbyn ahead of his shock victory in last summer's Labour leadership contest.

The former aide to the late left-wing

MP Tony Benn also described how trauma of losing his wife to cancer had wiped out much of his political ambition and made him seek a back-room role instead.

▶ **SEEP** 4-5



## FOOD

Menachem Israelievitch works with some of France's greatest winemakers making kosher vintages of world class wines

BY VICTORIA PREVER

**K**OSHER WINE has come a long way. The days of sweet, red kiddush wine are long gone. It is possible to fill your kiddush cup with some of the best wines in the world, including some of the top Bordeaux vintages.

The man responsible for overseeing the kosher versions of these world-class kosher wines is Menachem Israelievitch, chief kosher winemaker for Royal Wine for all of France, Italy, Spain and Portugal.

As he explains, these wineries and others in the region producing top quality wines don't need to boost their sales.

"In Bordeaux, they sell their wine almost before it's made."

Yet several of these top-flight wineries now produce a kosher vintage—normally a direction taken by non-kosher wineries to tap into a niche market in order to boost sales.

The process of kosher wine production involves far more than simply allowing Israelievitch and his team of 30–40 shomers access to the wineries to check the rules are being adhered to. It's more of a total handover.

"To ensure wine is kosher, it must be made exclusively by Jewish hands," explains Israelievitch. "The winemakers may not touch it, so the *mashgiach* (shomer ensuring kashrut) must do it all—although the winemaker still makes all the decisions."

Even so it's a huge leap of faith for the winemakers: "These bottles come out under their label, which means it reflects on them, and their chateau is judged by the wine that we produce. The barrels and the grapes are for them like children which need constant attention and warmth. And then we come in and tell them that they cannot touch the barrel from the beginning until the end of the process; it's a very difficult proposition."

Israelievitch was born and bred in France's City of Light. He spent his early education in a yeshivah in southern Israel but wine always had its place in his life.

"I would come back each year for two months at grape harvest time. When I was 16, a friend suggested I go with him to work as a *mashgiach*, which I did. I found it interesting and so every year during my vacation I did this job. When I finished at the yeshiva in 1999, I took over the responsibility for vinification for the Loire Valley all year round and looked after all the wines in the Loire and in Burgundy."

At that point, Israelievitch was employed by Royal Wines to oversee the three wineries in the Loire and four in Burgundy who made kosher vintages, with a team of men who helped cover the large geographical area. He and the others visited each winery regularly to ensure kosher production.

"We have to be there for each step—for the racking, for the addition of each ingredient for example."

In 2009, he stepped up into the shoes of his predecessor and mentor, Pierre Miodownik, who was in charge of Royal Wine's kosher wine production for two decades, and who initiated the production of kosher wine in France.

"Miodownik produced the first kosher French wine for Chateau de Paraza in 1982 and in 1986, he persuaded the



## Royal man who makes Barons

makers of one of the most famous estate wines in France, Baron Edmund de Rothschild, to make a kosher wine."

Miodownik established the relationship for Royal Wine with many chateaux in Bordeaux and the wine-making regions. "When he made aliyah I took over charge of production of Royal's wines in France and Spain," explains Israelievitch.

Now, with 40 years of experience and endless courses in oenology under his belt, it is Israelievitch who is responsible for maintaining the relationship with the winemakers. "Rather than pop in at harvest time, I retain a personal friendship with the winemakers throughout the year."

"It has always been with reluctance that they have taken us in; they are very proud winemakers. However, and this has been the secret of our success, Royal Wine has become known throughout the world as a company with serious respect for wine and winemaking tradition."

It is a mark of Royal Wine's success that the makers of Champagne Barons de Rothschild—a collaboration between three great Chateaux: Lafite, Clarke and Mouton Rothschild, approached them to make a kosher vintage of their champagne.

His remit also includes sourcing new wine makers to make wines specifically for the kosher market.

"In that situation I am the wine maker. I know the kosher market and what my customers like to drink. I have to take decisions on the style and type of wine. Each winery has a different method of working, so I'm continually learning."

**Above:** Israelievitch is a constant visitor to the vineyards and wineries. **Left:** a kosher Barons de Rothschild champagne is now available

In order to source new non-kosher wines when negotiating a kosher vintage, Israelievitch and his team need to taste them.

"Kosher rules allow us to taste the wines but not swallow them," he explains. "That's the best way to taste wine anyway."

As there are very few, if any, Jewish communities in the wine heartlands he spends a lot of time travelling between the different vineyards. "I have 25 to visit this year, and as they cannot do anything in the process without us there, that keeps me and my team very busy. The extent of our involvement is what keeps kosher wine prices up, as it takes so long to produce. It can take two years to make a wine, from the harvest through to it being bottled; and we may have to visit two or three times a week at some points of the process."

The French kosher wine market is still growing and it seems that kosher wine drinkers are getting a taste for the finer wines. "Last year Royal's French wine market grew by 20 per cent and the top end wines grew by 30 per cent whereas their kosher wine market worldwide grew by 10 per cent."

Israelievitch, believes that as people have become more interested in wine generally, they are drinking more wines from France.

"It is the source of winemaking, where all the tradition and technique is handed down from generation to generation."

Menachem Israelievitch will be at the Kedem Food and Wine Experience 2016. Details at: [kfwelondon.com](http://kfwelondon.com)



**'Rather than pop in at harvest time, I keep up with the winemakers throughout the year'**

# THE JWC

THE JEWISH CHRONICLE



KOSHER FOOD AND WINE EXPERIENCE

# Salt beef, sushi, whisky and champagne, all the kosher fun of the fair

BY VICTORIA PREVER

**P**OLISH OFF your tasting glass and sharpen your elbows — this year's Kosher Food and Wine Experience is only just around the corner, with more exhibitors than ever.

The huge food and wine tasting — conceived originally by the Herzog family, to showcase Kedem's kosher wines and spirits — is now a calendar fixture for many of London's kosher wine cognoscenti.

"This year will be a little bit different — the Park Lane Hotel has been modernised and refurbished," explains Morris Herzog, the managing director of Kedem Europe and Royal Wine Europe, "and we will be launching several new wines".

After several years, the formula might have started to get a little tired, so the Herzogs and co-founder, Arieh Wagner — the food part of the experience — have made a few tweaks this time around to keep customers on their toes.

"This year it will be more or less the same format — you don't change a winning horse — but there will be a few different dishes on offer and we have rearranged the space to stop it being so crowded," says Wagner, who has been behind the popular sushi/salt beef menu since the event's inception.

"We had 800 guests last year, which was a lot, so we are capping the numbers this year and upping the

quality of the experience by dividing the dining between two areas. The same menu will be offered in the main downstairs area, as well as in an additional upstairs area."

On the menu this year will be a pasta station with various sauces, duck pancakes, sushi, lamb tagine with couscous or rice, the usual salt beef carvery and a panini station with salt beef and cold cuts of meat.

According to Herzog there will be 100 VIP tickets on offer, which entitle the bearers to a number of exclusive experiences: an enhanced food menu served in a private area — no need for those razor-sharp elbows in there — with a range of premium wines on offer which will not be available in the main wine-tasting room.

"In the VIP lounge there will be private dining, as well as premium vintage whisky tastings, unique wines and a foie gras station," says Herzog.

At £100 per head, the VIP ticket (which bizarrely will include a free cigar) is not cheap, but should offer a premium experience, with some very special wines available to taste including Flam Nobel, CB by Pelter and some of Herzog's vintage wines.

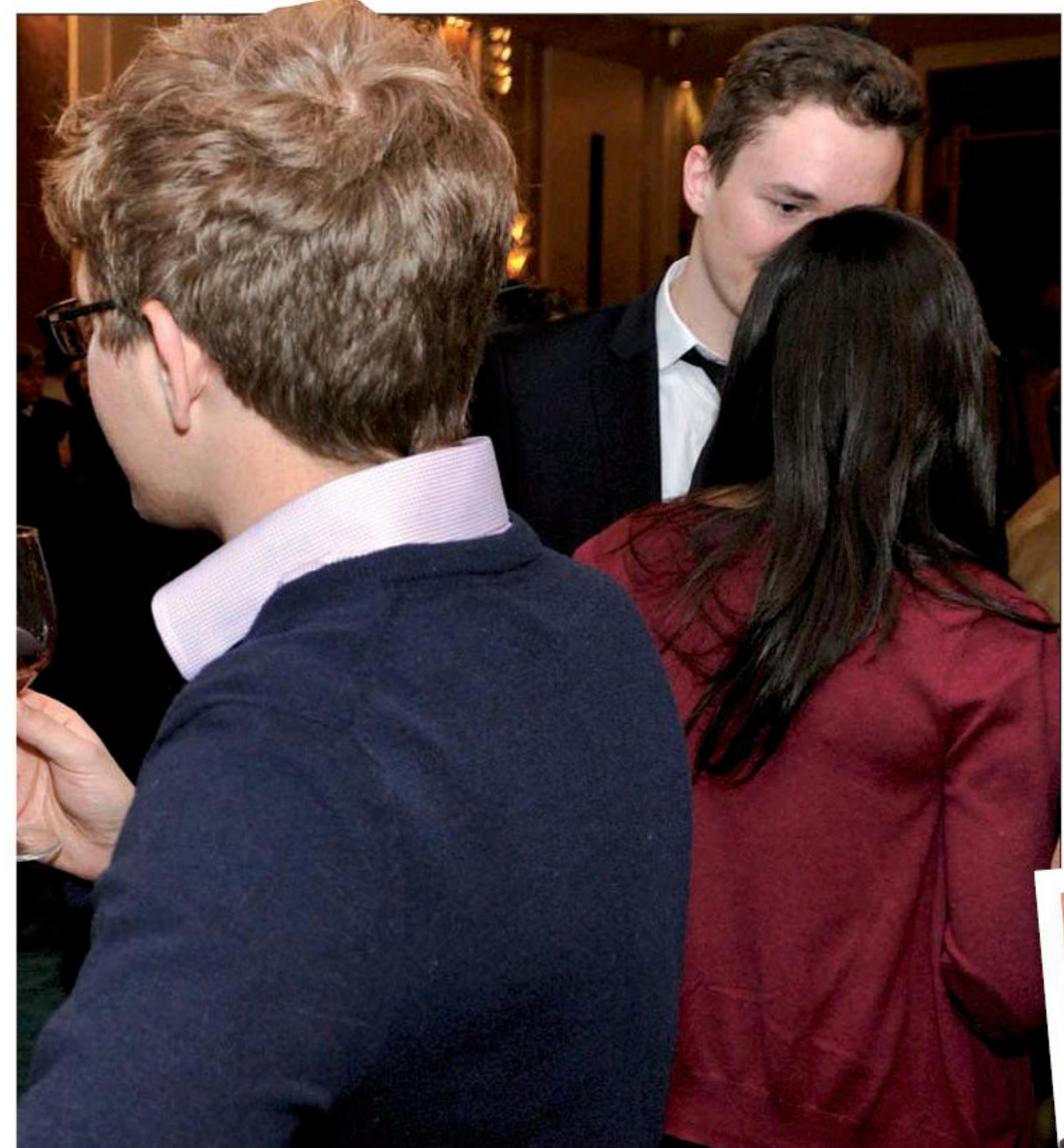
In the main show area, joining the familiar winemakers, will be some new faces. From America comes the best-named winery — why has no one used it before? — Hagafen Wine Cellars and from Israel there is "Matar by Pelter", the kosher label from the Pelter winery — one of



Californian newcomer Hagafen Cellars



**VIPs will have vintage whisky and foie gras**



Israel's top non-kosher producers. Hagafen Cellars is in Napa Valley — the heart of California's premier wine-grape region. Winemakers Irit and Ernie Weir founded their estate in 1979 and their first commercially released vintage was harvested in 1980. "I'm one of the veteran producers of kosher wine," says Ernie Weir. He previously spent 20 years as vineyard and nursery manager of Domaine Chandon, which was co-founded by French champagne house Moët and Chandon and the first French-owned sparkling wine house in the Napa Valley.

The Weir's vineyard has grown over the years to a well-established wine company whose wines are distributed throughout North America and overseas. Since 1980, Hagafen wines have been served on numerous occasions at the White House to visiting VIPs including a succession of Israeli presidents and at President Barack Obama's White House Sedarim. "We used to supply wine to Ronald Reagan when he was Governor of California. When the wine buyer there went to work at the White House, he carried on buying from us," says Weir.

The wines that are being produced by the Weirs include Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Roussane, Sauvignon Blanc, Syrah and a White Riesling. They also produce Brut Cuvée sparkling wines, as well as several late harvest dessert wines.

Pelter is a family winery and was considered one of a select few five-star wineries by the late Daniel Rogov — Israel's top wine critic. Anyone who knows anything about wine in Israel will be familiar with this boutique winery, which has a near cultish following.

Tal Pelter began to make wine on his family's farm at Moshav Zofit in the Golan Heights in 2002, after completing his oenology studies in Western Australia.

He produced 4,000 bottles in 2002 and, with his brother Nir, has expanded production and increased sales ever since. They have vineyards across Israel.

Until they launched the Matar label in 2014, having spent three years putting in place the measures to

**Sushi and wine tastings are part of the experience**

achieve kosher certification, you could not get a hechschered version of this critically acclaimed wine. Matar is a distinctly different winery from Pelter but shares a winemaker and location. Pelter decided to create Matar as an arm of his: Pelter winery instead of making the original winery kosher, as he still wanted to actively make his own wines. He continues to make non-supervised wine at Pelter but, at Matar the wines are made by observant Jews with his guidance.

From France there

will be the newly released Barons de Rothschild Champagne, the results of a collaboration between three branches of the Rothschild family.

For whisky lovers, William Grant — known for its exceptional single malts — will be at the event for the first





WINE-TASTING

# How to drink clouds and other wine advice



From top: Matar, Covenant and Clos Mesorah; below: Rothschild

**J**AY BUCHSBAUM, director of wine education at Royal Wines Corporation, chooses his favourite wines from eight wineries who will be offering tastings at KFWF 2016.

**MATAR BY PELTER ISRAEL**  
Gaining a rare five-star rating from the late Daniel Rogov, the leading food and wine critic in Israel, the Matar label was the first to offer this highly rated wine under kosher certification.

I spent three years following its journey to kosher certification. The winery was meticulous about everything and everyone involved with the wine—and it shows. Each of its wines is named after a type of cloud—CB stands for cumulonimbus and is a super-reserve with very limited availability. I would also suggest the Strata—a wonderful blend that is at once full flavoured and very accessible.

**COVENANT CALIFORNIA**  
Covenant's Jeff Morgan began his career as a wine critic and has brought

that critical perspective to every wine he produces. Hence his wines are at once rich, big, beautiful and highly rated.

Morgan is always on a journey, he had his first barmitzvah when he was in his 50s and he now keeps a completely kosher home. This is simply a demonstration of his quest to always grow and do better and he applies this to his life as he does to his wines.

His flagship wine is his Napa Cabernet made with wild indigenous yeast—it is the richest wine California has to offer. I personally gravitate to his Chardonnay, which is classic Napa with bold vanilla and oak but excellent fruit to balance it out.

**ROTHSCHILD FRANCE**  
In 1986 Baron Philippe de Rothschild and his wife Nadine made the first kosher Medoc the family has ever produced, at the famed Chateau Clarke.

Their new Champagne is a classic blend of Champagne grapes with minimal dosage (the sugar added to the wine just before corking) to make this wine elegant, crisp and a real treat.

This is the first time in Rothschild family history that all parts of the family have come together to make wine. While each has first-growth properties, bringing them together to make a Champagne at this quality level is amazing.

**ELVI SPAIN**  
Elvi wines are made from some of the oldest vines in Spain and are all estate bottled. The owner and chief winemaker Dr Cohen is an expert in the techniques of balance and structure and the wines show this.

Dr Cohen's ambition to make wine in the same place and in the same tradition as the Jews of ancient Spain did before the Inquisition, has been accomplished. Today, Jewish communities throughout the world are enjoying some of Spain's best wines.

Clos Mesorah is the reserve wine, also somewhat limited availability but worth seeking out for the way it so perfectly displays the signature characteristics of this region and for the gorgeous flavour in the mouth.

**HERZOG CALIFORNIA**  
Herzog is the overwhelming leader in the production of the finest Californian wines that happen to be kosher. Its pioneering wine-making techniques are evident in the wine produced. The Herzog family has been making wines for eight generations and

its history includes being exclusive providers of wine to royalty in Czechoslovakia in the mid-19th century; the survival of the Herzog family during the Second World War and their eventual renaissance in winemaking in America in the mid-20th century.

It is hard to choose from its portfolio, since so many of this winery's wines are top-flight but I'll name three—the classic Chalk Hill Limited Cabernet, the Reserve Alexander Cabernet and a real favourite, the Reserve Russian River Chardonnay.

**ALEXANDER ISRAEL**  
Yoram Shallom of Alexander is an artist first and foremost and he is fond of saying that he was drawn to winemaking out of a need to express his artistic talent, "not merely to the visual eye but to the physical body as well."

Visiting his new winery will demonstrate this well—every corner offers artistic expression.

Every one of Yoram's wines is especially intense—his winemaking philosophy is to pick the grapes at their optimum ripeness and produce the very richest wine that can be achieved in Israel, while retaining balance and structure.

If you want to be blown away by a wine, you must try his Amaro.

Made in the same way as the great Amarones from Italy, this wine is the most intense wine Israel produces.

**CASTEL ISRAEL**  
Castel is considered the Chateau Margaux of Israel and is perhaps Israel's finest boutique winery, with great wines and balance in everything it makes.

The wines are consistently rated the highest year after year—in the 90s and above.

While all will speak of Eli Ben Zaken's classic Grand Vin, I suggest you try his Castel C—100 per cent Chardonnay—close your eyes and you will swear it is a classic French white Burgundy of comparable quality to Montrachet.

**GOOSEBAY NEW ZEALAND**  
While Goose Bay started as a non-kosher winery, Phil Jones has turned nearly all his production to kosher, yet much of this certified kosher production is consumed by mainstream wine drinkers, as it's just so good. Jones' wines are consistently rated best in class and often best in value.

Try the Goose Bay Sauvignon Blanc and, if it's available this year, his Fumé—an oak-aged version of the original, with some smokiness and softer, rounder tannins.



His wines are rich, beautiful, and highly rated



WINE AND WOMEN

# Winemakers breaking the glass ceiling

BY RACHEL GROSS

**W**HEN MOST of us think of a winemaker, we imagine a stooped old French man complete with walrus moustache and black beret. Winemaking seems like a mystic profession, with secrets passed down from father to son from time immemorial. Or is it from father to daughter?

The world of wine has moved on since Lucille Ball crushed grapes with her bare feet. Stainless steel vats have joined handcrafted oak barrels as the tools of winemaking, as the craft has become a multi-million-pound industry. Some things remain the same—the careful selection of grapes to create a delicate balance of flavours is what makes winemaking an art. But some things change—and the male dominance of the field is one of them.

Around 50 years ago, MaryAnn Graf became the first woman to graduate in viticulture and oenology from the University of California Davis, the world's top school for winemakers. In the 2015 graduating class, women made up 50 per cent of the cohort.

While more women are coming up through the ranks, worldwide only 10 per cent of winemakers are women. A serious disparity, when 57 per cent of wine globally is drunk by women. But one country is pushing forward, obliterating the glass ceiling for women winemakers—Israel.

Israel has been the surprise success story of the wine world in recent years. Casting off its image as a maker of basic wines for sacramental purposes only, Israel has gained the respect of wine lovers worldwide. It now boasts its own international wine festival, the TerroVino competition, which this year drew 448 entrants from 30 countries.

Tali Sendovski, from the Golan Heights Winery, was the first female winemaker in Israel. She never intended to be a one. "I fell into it as a career. My family moved to the Golan region and with a degree in biochemistry my options were slightly limited. I spent two years working

Yael Sandler: 'where there's a will, there's a way'

at a dairy farm before moving to the Golan Heights Winery."

The winery was just starting out and Sendovski was brought in to set up the laboratory.

"I knew more about drinking wine than making it when I first arrived at the winery, but I fell in love," she says. It's a long-running love affair; nearly three decades later, she's still at the winery, specialising in Cabernets, Chardonnays and sweet red wines.

The winemaker's job involves monitoring every stage of the process, from choosing when to harvest the grapes, to the fermentation to blending the product of various vineyards.

Sendovski takes a parental pride her "newborn" wines and is hard pushed to name a favourite. "If I had to choose one, I'd say the Blanc de Blancs. There are few Israeli sparkling wines and it's been very successful." Her 2011 Yarden Heights sweet dessert wine won a gold medal in the 2014 Decanter world wine awards, competing against samples from around the globe.

As the first female winemaker in the country she has seen many others working their way up the ranks and has enjoyed her professional life so much that she would recommend it to other women as a career choice.

Yael Sandler is at the beginning of her career. Until recently she was working at the Binyamina winery, after returning from four years of study at the University of Adelaide, Australia. There is no viticulture programme at any Israeli university, so Israeli winemakers all have to study abroad.

Sandler grew fascinated by wine when she was working in a restaurant. "I wanted to have a deeper understanding of how this magical beverage was made," she says. "This is what pushed me to pursue a career that has become my greatest passion."

Sandler is undaunted by the possibility of a glass ceiling, saying "These days you see more and more women winemakers, as well as women filling other positions in the wine industry; sommeliers, marketing managers, winery CEOs and more." Although some tasks involve physical labour—moving heavy barrels or harvesting grapes by hand—she says that "where there is a will, there



Tali Sendovski recommends winemaking as a career choice for women

is a way." The only limitation she can imagine as she embarks on her career is juggling children with long hours.


During the harvest, winemakers are required to work unconventional, extended hours, sometimes starting at 4am. "I'm sure you can work it out either by having a supporting husband or a great nanny," she says.

Sendovski says that "Israeli wine making is always moving forward. It's

very innovative. With winemakers leaving to study, when they return to Israel they bring home the best technique: the world has to offer."

"Wine enthusiasts are always looking for something unique to drink," says Sandler. "Hopefully Israel offers something that they can't get any where else."

Her greatest wish for Israeli wines is that "one day someone in the UK will





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To be entered into the draw, please book two tickets for the Kosher Food and Wine Experience 2016. KFWF will feature a range of quality kosher wines, spirits and liqueurs for tasting as well as food from a leading Kosher caterer. To enter and for more information, please visit [thejc.com/kedemcompetition](http://thejc.com/kedemcompetition) Deadline 3pm, 8th Feb

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