

*Want to taste the newest kosher wines? Follow Simon Barry...*

# Kosher master-glass

**F**RENCH kosher wines are making a concerted comeback and will feature prominently in the 2014 Kosher Food and Wine Experience next month.

They will join wines from Israel, Spain, Italy, New Zealand, California, Washington State, and Oregon, as well as ciders from Poland and liqueurs from Israel and the UK. All will be on show on February 19 at the Sheraton Park Lane Hotel in Piccadilly, when there will be a chance to meet the producers, as well as sample the wines, together with food provided by kosher caterer Arie Wagner.

The event is an annual opportunity to taste new vintages of premium French wines straight from the barrel and to sip new releases for the first time in the UK. For the first time this year, wine lovers will be able to buy wines by the case and by the bottle, with a discount for sales on the night. There will be new and established wines, including winners of international awards.

Morris Herzog, director of Kedem Europe, which organises the event, says: "In the 1990s and early into the 2000s, there were some outstanding French kosher wines, such as Leoville Poyferre, Pontet-Canet, wines from Pomerol, St Julien and other domaines. By the middle of the first decade, Israel began producing very good premium wines and French production slowed down. However, in the past couple of years there has been a strong comeback in premium French wines."

Among French wines on show will be Chateau Moulin Riche St Julien 2011, Chateau Leoville Poyferre, Chateau

Pontet-Canet, Chateau Royaumont LaLande de Pomerol, a primarily merlot wine with cabernet franc and Chateau Giscours Grand Cru Classé 2012.

"The winemaker at Giscours has told us that the kosher vat is one of the best three from the 2012 vintage. It was so good, they even offered to buy it back," says Mr Herzog.

I tried two of the wines that will be headlining. The first is a 2012 Edmond de Rothschild Les Lauriers Montagne St Emilion, 80 per cent merlot and 20 per cent cabernet franc. Normally I would put a

wine like this away for the next 10 to 15 years at least. However, it was pleasing to drink despite its youth, with the signature notes you would expect of such a claret. There are underlying tones of black fruit and plumminess, the full flavour and dryness of the predominant merlot. But all of that will be developed in the next few years to produce a wine of depth and character.

The second wine I tried is something new. Three direct descendants of Sir Moses Montefiore have established a boutique winery to celebrate the 150th anniversary of his founding of Mishkenot Sha'ananim, the first neighbourhood outside the Old City walls of Jerusalem, which became the cornerstone of modern Jerusalem. When the land was purchased by him in 1855, it was known as "Kerem Moshe Montefiore v' Yehudit" – Moses and Judith Montefiore's Vineyard. Montefiore was a wine connoisseur, drinking a bottle every day.

The Montefiore Red 2012 is an equal amalgamation of malbec, shiraz and petite syrah. At 14 per cent alcohol by volume, it packs a punch – but so does the flavour. I drank it with turkey and it was as near a perfect match as you could imagine. It would be superb with any poultry or red meat.

Morad will be showing its fruit wines, such as pomegranate and passion fruit – and a kosher version of the Italian liqueur, lemoncello.

Castel's Grand Vin 2011 and Rose 2013 will be available for tasting, along with Herzog single-vineyard wines from Napa Valley. Another first is the appearance of kosher Goose Bay from New Zealand.



**Get to know the newest premium kosher wines at the exhibition**

*Tickets will be £40 each; two for £75; three for £100*