

What is Kosher Wine?



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We are often asked if we market any kosher wines. In the strictest sense of the term, no. Kosher wine by strict definition is wine that is made under Jewish supervision, by Sabbath observing Jews, which contains no non kosher ingredients. In Israel the rules are far stricter than in the rest of the world. For example, in Israel the grape vines must be at least four years old before the grapes can be used. The vineyard must not be used on the seventh year. Only grape vines may be grown in the vineyard. All the machinery used to make the wine must be kosher. That is it cannot be used to make non kosher wine. Only Sabbath observing Jews are permitted to make the wine. Unless the wine is mevushal. Which is brought to a boil, or pasteurized. All ingredients and fining agents must be kosher. Including the yeast and the fining agents. Think of a fining agent as a clarifying agent. Some common fining agents are bentonite, Sparkolloid, gelatine, egg white, and silicon dioxide or kieselsol. Not all of these are kosher.

Before I continue, here's a short biography about myself. I was born and raised Jewish. My Father owned a Kosher Deli Restaurant, and my Mother was a Dietitian. We did not keep a kosher home, but went to Temple every Saturday, and kept the holidays. Sometime in my teens I slipped away from the Temple, but never let the teachings slip far from me. As I grew older I felt the desire to search and research religious meaning, and studied most the common religions. Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, even Communism. Which isn't a religion, but a way of life. My journey ended no where.

Sometime in my early forties I found Jesus. That's a story for another article. Anyway I am now a Completed Jew. It irritates me when I try to talk to Jews about kosher wine. Most are set in their ways, and will not even listen to someone else's point of view. Never close your mind to anyone else's point of view. Sometimes they do know what they are talking about. Now you're reading this thinking what in the world is he ranting about, and what does any of this have to do with kosher wine. Here is my point. Most all wine basically is kosher. Now don't start an argument with me just yet. Hear me out. In the ancient days of the Jews they were not allowed to use anything that was not kosher, for fear that it was used, or could be used by idolaters. That is why they come up with strict guidelines as to what made something kosher, and other things not kosher.

Kosher wine can be referred to as supervised wines that are kosher according to Orthodox standards. However, Reformed and Conservative Jews differ from Orthodox in that they consider all wines to be kosher, or at least not unkosher.

Please read [Elliot Dorff, "On the Use of All Wines" YD 123:1.1985.](#)

So except for the fact that most vineyards don't hire Sabbath observing Jews to make their wine, and the most popular fining agents are egg whites, and bentonite, both of which are kosher, but not kosher for Passover (that's another article) that would make most wine made in the western world kosher. Simply because most vineyards are not producing wine by idol worshipers, or for idol worshipers. And if you read Dorff's article you will note that Christians are not considered Idol worshipers. So unless you are celebrating Passover, enjoy a glass of wine, and don't worry about who made it, how it was made, or what part of the world it came from. Kosher to one person is not always the same as kosher to another.

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