

# About the Israeli wine - Argaman

**June 19, 2010:**

## **Segal Argaman wins Gold Medal at Bordeaux Wine Competition**

<http://www.israeli-wine.org/2010/06/19/segal-argaman-wins-gold-medal-at-bordeaux-wine-competition/>

### **Segal's Dovev Vineyard Argaman**

**Color:** Red

**Texture:** Dry

**Type:** Argaman

**Region:** Israel

**Brand:** Segal's

Segal's Wines have produced a new varietal wine made from the Argaman grape. The wine is called Rehasim Dovev Argaman 2006. Rehasim is Segal's label for single vineyard wines from the Merom Hagalil/ Upper Galilee. There is also a Rehasim Dovev Merlot and a Rehasim Dishon Cabernet Sauvignon in this series. (Dovev & Dishon are the names of the vineyards).



Segal Argaman 2007 from Dovev Vineyard in the Upper Galilee, has won the equivalent of a Gold Medal at 'Les Citadelles du Vins' Competition held in Bordeaux, France. Argaman is a cross between Carignan and Souzao, a Portuguese variety.

Avi Feldstein, winemaker of Segal Wines, produced a single vineyard wine from Argaman grapes grown in a vineyard in the Upper Galilee, which created new interest in the Argaman grape. Now the wine has won this prestigious award. Segal Wines is owned by Barkan, Israel's second largest winery, which is in turn owned by Tempo, Israel's largest brewery.

Cabernet Franc, Carignan and Petite Sirah are some of the more unfashionable grape varieties, becoming more associated with Israel. In the rush of quality international competition results announced in May 2010, the Ella Valley Cabernet Franc 2007, Carmel Carignan 2006 and Carmel Petite Sirah 2006 were all awarded Silver Medals in the Decanter and IWSC respectively. This is encouraging for those looking for wines with an Israel identity.

However, even though Carignan, for example, has been in Israel since 1882, **Argaman is the only truly Israeli variety.**

**Argaman was developed by Professor Roy Spiegel in the early 1990's.** A varietal Argaman wine produced by Carmel Mizrahi won a Silver Medal at the BTI in Chicago in the mid 1990's, but apart from that initial success, the variety tended to be lost in inexpensive blends. It was planted mainly in the Samson, Shefela or Judean Plain region. However Avi Feldstein has always believed in the variety. He insisted in planting Argaman in the premium Upper Galilee and producing the first single vineyard wine from it. His pioneering effort has born fruit in Bordeaux.

[http://www.onlykosherwine.com/Product/Wines/Segal's Dovev Vineyard Argaman 07937.html#FullDescription](http://www.onlykosherwine.com/Product/Wines/Segal's_Dovev_Vineyard_Argaman_07937.html#FullDescription)

Argaman, which means 'deep purple' in Hebrew, was first developed by Professor Roy Spiegel of the Volcani Institute of Agriculture. It is a cross between Carignan and the Portuguese grape Souzao. The object was to produce a variety capable of producing high yields and a good color, which would eventually replace Carignan as the main blending grape in Israel.

The first Argaman wine was launched by Carmel in 1996 and it even received a silver medal in international competition. However the overall feeling was that Argaman was not a great success, certainly not as a quality variety. Since then Carignan, which spans the history of modern Israel winemaking, has enjoyed a comeback. Wineries are beginning to realize that the future in Israel may be in Mediterranean varieties, which thrive in Mediterranean climates, like Israel. By lowering yields drastically, to 30-35 hl per ha, and selecting special old vine vineyards, both Carmel and Vitkin wineries have been able to make quality, award winning Carignans.

However Avi Feldstein, Segal's successful winemaker, has always had faith in Argaman. Firstly he continued using it in some of the lesser expensive Segal wines, which are sold in Israeli supermarkets. Then he determined to make a quality Argaman. He selected the site and planted Argaman in the Dovev vineyard at an elevation of 700 meters in 1999. Now, after a few years of trials, he has fulfilled his objective by releasing the results of his labours: a quality, single vineyard Argaman wine. The Segal Argaman was aged in French and American oak barrels for 15 months. The wine is 13.5% alcohol. It has a beautiful deep color, with soft tannins and an aroma of ripe summer fruits.

Segal's Wines is an historic name in the Israeli wine scene. It was a family winery founded in the early years of the State of Israel, before being purchased by Barkan, Israel's second largest winery. Their wines are produced independently, by their own dedicated winemaker, using Barkan's facilities.

**The Segal's Argaman will certainly be of great interest. For a country without indigenous varieties, it is the nearest there is to Israel's own grape variety.**

[https://www.onlinekosherwine.com/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=2211](https://www.onlinekosherwine.com/product_info.php?products_id=2211)

## **Segal's Argaman Dovev Dry Red Wine '06**

### **Dovev Single Vineyard, Galil**

Argaman Dovev was harvested at the end of September. The black and heavy bunches were crushed, and the must was fermented on Dovev Merlot skins. This way of fermentation was adopted due to the fact that the plentitude of color and content of the wine is larger than its Tannin charge. After an extended maceration, the wine was transferred into French and American oak barrels, more than half of them new, and was aged for 18 months.

**\$30.19/bottle**

**\$175.65/case**



<http://www.israelwines.co.il/ArticleItem.aspx?id=600>

## Segal's Single Vineyard Argaman

**By: Daniel Rogov**

On Tuesday, 4 November, I tasted three of the wines in Segal's single vineyard Rechasim series. The first of those was their 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon and the second the 2004 Merlot (the tasting notes for which can be found at [viewtopic.php?f=29&t=19781&p=170071](http://viewtopic.php?f=29&t=19781&p=170071) )



The third wine was the Argaman wine in the same series. Argaman, for the uninitiated is a cross between Carignan and Souzao grapes, **an entirely Israeli invention – in fact, the only grape that has originated in Israel in modern times**. It has been no secret that I have shown a marked lack of enthusiasm for this grape since its introduction some twenty years ago. Some people have yet to forgive me for writing when the grape was first unveiled that "Argaman has three major plusses – excellent color, excellent color and excellent color". I found then as I have over the years with the few varietal wines that have been released from this grape that Argaman lacked body, depth, aroma, flavor or charm.

Because I found the wine very closed at that first tasting, I obtained several other bottles to set aside, my plan being to taste one about a month from that tasting and then ever three-four months thereafter. The time had come and today's tasting included the wine. Before the tasting note, let it be said that (a) I find winemaker Avi Feldstein of Segal one of the most charming and pleasant people in the entire local wine industry; (b) I thoroughly enjoy Feldstein's desire to occasionally be playful and (c) that he makes some excellent wines. Despite all of which, unlike quite a few of my colleagues, I have a few problems with this wine, the tasting note for which follows.

Segal, Argaman, Rechasim, Dovev, 2006: Dark, literally impenetrable royal purple in color and medium- to full bodied, one might be tempted to think this wine was made entirely from Argaman grapes (a cross between Carignan and Souzao) but that is not quite the case. Argaman may boast fantastic depth of color but is, to be charitable, lacking in most other qualities (e.g. tannins, aroma or flavour), so to give this wine the "push" it needed, it was fermented on the skins of Merlot grapes and then aged in French and American oak, half of which was new, for 18 months. It might not be unfair to say that while we can credit the Argaman grapes for the wine's deep color, the tannins, flavours and acids came from the Merlot and the oak. Despite all of which, the spicy and smoky wood proves somewhat dominant, the tannins come out as just a bit chunky (i.e. country-style) and the plum and berry flavors prove jammy and perhaps just a bit too near-sweet. Interestingly, not a bad wine so much as it is a highly stylized wine that many may enjoy. My estimate is that this is not a wine meant for cellaring, its elements never coming together fully and perhaps destined to collapse within the next year or two. Worth trying a bottle to see if this is to your taste. Drink now or in the next year or so. Score 85. K (Re-tasted 3 Dec 2008).