



## Galilee Grapes offers taste of Holy Land

March 5, 2008 - Scranton, PA

By: David Falchek, a Times-Tribune business writer, reviews wines each week.

©The Times-Tribune 2008

**When Adam Haroz took a break from his studies at UC San Diego in 2005 to visit the Holy Land, he discovered something he didn't expect: a strong connection with his Christian brothers and sisters.**



It was in the stomping ground of Abraham and Jesus that Mr. Haroz recognized Galilee as a place of global significance. At the same time, he saw that devout Christians seemed willing to purchase just about anything connected with the Holy Land. Mr. Haroz, his older brother and father, thought they could give them something more worthwhile than a bogus piece of the “true cross” or spring water allegedly from the River Jordan: Wine grown and produced near Galilee.

Near Cana

The Haroz family purchased vineyards on Mount Tabor irrigated by water from the Jordan River where Jesus was baptized. The site is near the location of Jesus' first miracle — turning water into wine at the wedding at Cana. Mr. Haroz wanted to share the spiritual experience with Christians through the wine Grapes of Galilee, which he has been advertising in Christian publications. He hopes to see Grapes of Galilee drunk for pleasure or for religious gatherings, such as First Communion receptions or weddings.

The labels, featuring their dramatic “Children's Bible” oil paintings of Jesus' baptism and his walking on water, made me a bit uneasy. So I showed a few friends, Catholic and Protestant. They agreed that the labels were over-the-top, amateurish, or just off-putting. Mr. Haroz also has heard complaints that he is commercializing Jesus to make money from Christians, as though that were something new. The accusation bothers him and he responds personally to each, saying he wants to provide something of value that connects Christians to the Holy Land.

The label art, original paintings by a Christian artist, is “positive and uplifting,” Mr. Haroz said.

As for what was inside the bottle, two of the wines were on the stairway to heaven, but not quite there. One clearly belongs in purgatory. In Pennsylvania, the Grapes of Galilee wines are special order, meaning they usually require the purchase of six bottles or more and a waiting period.

Grapes of Galilee 2006 Chardonnay started off with green apple and lemon smells, but after a few minutes it turned tropical with mango and passion fruit notes. Was it a miracle? Probably not. It was just the wine opening up with the air. This is a decent, easy-going, food-friendly chardonnay. \$14. Three and a half stars.

Grapes of Galilee 2005 Merlot smells interesting, with caramel and rich fruit, but it tastes like crushed green leaves, is unripe and very tart. Like Jesus said, “by their fruit, you will recognize them.” I recognize these green flavors as a sign of over-cropped, unripe fruit. \$14. Three stars.

Following the merlot, Grapes of Galilee 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon offered some redemption. This is a modern style of cabernet: ripe, fruit-forward and easy to drink. It has peppery, red currant smells and a bit of cocoa, with easy-going tannins. \$14. Three and a half stars.

Wine has historically united Jews and Christians, for whom wine is an essential part of their religious rituals. When teetotaling Muslims ruled much of the civilized world, Jews and Christian kept winemaking alive. With Easter and Purim celebrations approaching, I'll drink to that.