

Kosher Wine, Naturally

JULY
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Benjamin Cantz and some buddies from the University of California Santa Cruz went to help an art teacher pick grapes on her farm for a few weeks in the summer of 1971.

Cantz never left.

Now 50 and silver haired, he lives on the rolling, red-wood-dotted, 64-acre farm in northern California where he grows what he describes as the world's first organic, kosher dry red and white wine. His grapes have "no pesticides, no fertilizer or herbicides."

Since sulfur dioxide is used in the processing, Four Gates Wine can't officially be called organic. "So I'm forced to label it as 'kosher wine made from organic grapes.'"

Cantz, Sabbath observant since 1981, first became a vintner for himself. "I started drinking kosher wine ... when I became Orthodox and I found it to be subpar," he says. "Some people like drinking soda pop with their meal. Not me. But dry wine and food, they go together, so I decided to make quality kosher, organic dry wine to drink with

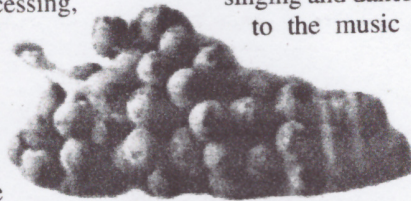
my meals."

The farm, owned by his now 91-year-old former art teacher, was a vineyard at the turn of the century. "But it was uprooted during prohibition," Cantz says.

Santa Cruz's coastal location and cool weather extends the growing season, "leading to a more complicated and sophisticated tasting grape."

Cantz invites members of the local Jewish community to the farm once a month to celebrate a "vegan"

Shabbat weekend, singing and dancing to the music of



Shlomo Carlebach.

With no permanent workers, he pays Jews from Santa Cruz and Berkeley to help pick during harvest time. "This year," he says, "because I had such a big harvest, I was forced to hire one professional picker. He did 10 times the amount of work of all the Jews together."

Robby Berman