



They live through the music

Chronicling a photographer's experiences meeting the man who restores WWII-era violins

• EVE GLOVER

Violins of Hope is a project and concert series set up by Israeli master violin maker and player Amnon Weinstein to memorialize Jewish lives lost in the Holocaust by meticulously restoring the surviving violins. The project is dedicated to the hundreds of relatives he never got the chance to meet because they were murdered by Nazis.

So far, Weinstein and his son, Avshalon, who is also a violinist, have amassed a collection of over 80 of these very special musical instruments that have been played in concerts by renowned musicians throughout the world, the first of which was in Istanbul in 2001 with just a solo violinist accompanied by a pianist.

One of the most momentous performances was in 2014, on the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. The German government arranged for Weinstein to fly to Berlin

with violins from his collection, which were played by Hitler's former orchestra, the Berliner Philharmoniker. The audience included the German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who was then the minister for foreign affairs. It was an act of defiance and restitution, and a powerful way of showing how the spirits of those who were killed still live on.

In 2015, Daniel Levin, fine art photographer and professor, traveled from his home city, Cleveland Heights, Ohio, to meet with Weinstein at his studio in Tel Aviv. He wanted to know what a luthier (maker of stringed instruments) like Weinstein does, and how exactly violins that have barely survived the most horrific conditions can be restored to the point where they can once again play music.

"I was curious about this man, and who would even have the guts to do this, and the skills and the drive," says Levin, whose 10-day trip was funded by a grant from the Jewish Federation of Cleveland.

The experience was life changing and it inspired him to compile his photographs with accompanying stories into a book, which he titled *Violins and Hope: From the Holocaust to Symphony Hall*. Like a rich tapestry that keeps unfolding to reveal unexpected layers and designs, Levin's book intertwines the stories behind the violins he photographed at Weinstein's studio with important historical figures and events.

AMNON WEINSTEIN restores a Holocaust violin at his workbench. (Photos: © Daniel Levin 2015)



A GROUPING of Klezmer mother-of-pearl violins in Weinstein's collection.



COVER OF 'Violins and Hope: From the Holocaust to Symphony Hall,' featuring a Yaakov Zimmerman-dedicated instrument.

"It's a book about the raw uniqueness of music, about photography, and it's about the birth of the State of Israel and the Holocaust," he explains.

THE BOOK begins with a deeply personal forward written by Franz Welser-Möst, the Austrian music director of the Cleveland Orchestra, which was touted last year by *The New York Times* as being "America's finest (orchestra)." Welser-Möst's father fought in the German Army in WWII, and this is one reason it was so important for him to conduct the Cleveland Orchestra when they performed a "Violins of Hope" concert in Cleveland in 2015.

"I believe, with all my heart and mind, that we as descendants – for myself as an Austrian, for each of us as a citizen of a country in this world, as humans individually and together

– must willingly acknowledge and carry, if you will, the moral baggage of the past with us," he writes. "We can celebrate success and achievement and happiness only by also acknowledging and embracing the bad that society has brought forth. Because, ultimately, each person must bear witness to the fate of everyone around us."

Upon first meeting Weinstein, Levin describes him looking very much like he had envisioned.

"I imagined in my fantasy mind's eye, Geppetto, and I wasn't disappointed; he's kind of a Geppetto-like figure, a fantastic face, a biker mustache. He's a very interesting-looking man and he always has his apron on and these amazing tools."

Levin depicts Weinstein as "almost like a pathologist, like a coroner. He tends to open up a case and maybe let it sit there



JOSHUA BELL in portrait at the Cleveland Museum of Art, created by Daniel Levin.



PORTRAIT OF Asael Bielski in Weinstein's violin cabinet.



THE WESTERN wall of Weinstein's office.

for six months, and just kind of look at it, and not touch it. He'll take the button off – that's at the bottom of really any string instrument, a little pointy, round thing – and then he lets light come through the F-holes, those S shapes in the front, and then he puts his eye through that little hole at the bottom and looks in, then he takes the strings off and he takes it apart... he does this whole forensic thing."

Aside from varnish and some minor touch-ups, the restoration process is not about external appearances, it's about sound.

"Even a curator of a museum would not approve of Amnon's restoration. If this was the Smithsonian, you don't touch those violins. But it was critical that they be touched; touched with love, made playable to the greatest degree they can be so that maybe they even sound better than when they were new, because many of these are not high-end violins. It's not about just the objects themselves, but the visceral experience of master musicians, and even children playing on them, that's what it's about."

LEVIN REMEMBERS the first time he met Weinstein's wife, Assi Bielski Weinstein, was when she pulled up on a retro pink bicycle to the falafel shop where he and Weinstein were getting lunch. She worked for many years on the Israeli radio station, Galei Tzahal, and was also a writer and editor. She is the daughter of Asael Bielski, one of the heroic Bielski brothers who formed a partisan resistance group against the Nazis and their cohorts.

From 1942 to 1944, the Bielski brothers fought on the front lines with other volunteers while hiding fellow Jews in the Naliboki forest of northwestern Belarus. They saved approximately 1,250 Jews. Asael died fighting a few months before Assi was born.

Levin explains, "They really became known because they were fighters; they would blow up trains and they would be snipers and kill Nazis. The Bielskis were the leaders. There

would even be female partisans who would sneak into power plants in the city and blow them up."

The 2008 film *Defiance* documents their story.

One of Levin's photographs in *Violins and Hope* shows Weinstein's studio with an impressive array of violins delicately hung against a wall filled with pictures; it's like each instrument hangs in suspense, waiting patiently to tell a story too sacred for words. Assi discloses to Levin how a violin maker in the south of France sent them a violin that had been given to him by a worker who was fixing train rails that held cattle cars headed to Auschwitz. A Jewish man threw his violin outside the train's tiny window and called out to the workers, asking them to keep it safe for him. One of the workmen kept the violin for about 70 years in his attic. After he passed away, his children sold it to a violin maker who contacted Weinstein.

ASSI RELAYS to Levin the story of how music saved the life of Henry Meyer, who was a well-known child prodigal violinist. When he was 20 years old and lay sick in an Auschwitz infirmary, a Jewish doctor recognized him and switched his identifying number card with that of a corpse so that SS officers could not select him.

Another life-saving violin Assi and Weinstein are still trying to locate is one once owned by a young Romanian boy, Abraham Melamed. A commander of Melamed's ghetto gave him a violin to play, and he loved the music he performed so much that he took Melamed's parents off a train on its way to Auschwitz.

Strikingly detailed photographs in *Violins and Hope* illustrate how each violin reveals its story through its markings, most of which are left visible to preserve the integrity of the history behind them. Violins with delicately inlaid mother of pearl Stars of David prove they once belonged to Jews of a certain period in time, and a number of Klezmers, whose aggressive wounds and worn out bows show they must have played this highly spirited genre of religious folk music.



THE 'HEIL Hitler 1936 swastika' violin Weinstein chose not to reassemble following his discovery of the desecration.

A somber photograph of an opened violin reveals a hidden pencil sketching of a swastika with the words 'Heil Hitler 1936' written in cursive above it. Weinstein surmises that a luthier covertly inscribed this when its Jewish owner brought it in for servicing. Another photograph shows an Auschwitz violin with a carved Star of David on it, whose restored sheen and outer beauty belie the fact that it came with ashes still inside of it.

Weinstein was impressed with Levin's work:

"I must admit that my workshop is a bit very old-fashioned, with heavy furniture and a serious atmosphere. When Daniel Levin entered the workshop, I was quite busy repairing instruments, but told him to feel free to do what he loves so much and is so good at – looking through his lenses and clicking photos. When I saw the first exhibit in Cleveland I was astounded. Could this be the workshop I have lived in all my life? Daniel saw elements I overlooked and details I paid no attention to. Well, I'm thrilled and overjoyed to see my son Avshalom and our world spread out so sensitively – it's simply beautiful!"

IN THE book, Levin includes a portrait he took of American violinist and conductor, Joshua Bell, holding a famous violin he owns, the 1713 Gibson ex Huberman Antonio Stradivarius. Bronislaw Huberman was a Jewish Polish violinist who was discovered as a child prodigy for his extraordinary musical talent. He was gifted this violin by a Polish count when he was just 14 years old.

Although Huberman's violin is not in Weinstein's collection, Levin describes it as "in a way, the ultimate violin of hope." Known as the 'Oskar Schindler of musicians,' for saving almost 1,000 European Jews from Nazi persecution, Huberman traveled throughout Europe to find the most talented musicians to bring to Palestine to set up an orchestra. He paid for 75 highly accomplished musicians, some of whom were already famous, to come to Palestine along with their families. In 1936 he founded the Palestine Philharmonic Orchestra, which later became the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra when Israel was declared an independent state in 1948.

Huberman's Stradivarius violin was stolen from him on two occasions. The first time was in Vienna, where it was returned to him a few days later, and the second time was when he left it in a dressing room in Carnegie Hall in 1936 while performing on another violin. It was not found until 1986, when the man who stole it felt compelled to confess to his crime on his deathbed. Sadly, Huberman was never reunited with his beloved instrument, as he had passed away nearly four decades earlier.

In 2001, Joshua Bell was in a violin shop in London buying



DANIEL LEVIN on one of his documentary adventures in Marrakesh, Morocco, 2011. (© Daniel Levin 2011)

strings when he picked up Huberman's Stradivarius and instantly recognized its sound from having played it before. It had already been sold to a German industrialist who collected violins but didn't play them. Bell could not imagine the violin being kept imprisoned behind glass and paid almost \$4 million to have it in his possession. Bell, who is Jewish, has since played it with the Nashville Symphony during a Violins of Hope concert and with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

When asked about Weinstein's mission, Levin told the *Magazine*, "I would say this is really his mission, and it happens – these concerts, whoever performs on them, children, whoever, they bring amazingly deep emotion, but at the same time, underneath it all, not just sorrow, but also hope. They really do."

"There's a reason for that word 'hope' for him. What Weinstein's life's mission is basically saying is, 'Hitler, you didn't win.'"

Violins and Hope: From the Holocaust to Symphony Hall will be released in August.

WEINSTEIN SHARES his rare cart-de-visite portrait of Bronislaw Huberman as a boy.





IN 1918, at the end of WWI, Austria surrendered to the Allied Forces and the town's administration moved to Czech authorities from the imposing Boskovice town hall (pictured). (Charles Ticho)



(Left) THE TOWN'S main square was the scene of all civic events, including protests against the Austria-Hungarian administration in Vienna. (Charles Ticho)

PRINCE CAROL of Romania, 1900. When as king he later visited Brno, the writer joined in the cheering.

Politics in days gone by

• CHARLES TICH0

In the 1850s, the Austro-Hungarian empire was like a goose trying to maintain some order among a horde of unruly goslings.

The country encompassed nearly a dozen various ethnic groups that had their own ambitions, loyalties and allegiances. Each group had its distinct level of loyalty to the government in Vienna.

The area that today comprises the Czech Republic was not much different. At one time the Czechs controlled an impressive piece of Europe with Prague as its capital. But in the struggle between the Roman Catholic Church, as represented by Austria, and the Protestant firebrands under the Czech flag, the Czechs lost and for three centuries thereafter were obliged to live under Austrian rule.

To maintain some order, the Viennese authorities introduced some pseudo-democratic laws including voting. Now, to maintain a German majority in the Vienna legislature, the Austrian administration concentrated on maintaining good relations with German-speaking groups throughout its vast empire. In the areas that are today's Czech Republic, the principal recipients of this preferred attention were the Jews.

To encourage the Jews in our family's hometown, Boskovice, to vote as a German ethnic group, Vienna went to some lengths to maintain friendly relations with the Jews of the city. The Austrian government designated the local count to be the *schutzherr* (protector) of the Jewish ghetto. For this service the Jewish community contributed to the count's treasury and the count, in turn, took interest in the affairs of the Jewish families under

his benign protection. In the 1800s, for example, the reigning Count Mansdorff donated a new administration building to the Jewish community and paid for the construction of the ghetto's new main well. Later, an equally generous count donated an area of land adjacent to the ghetto where a small grammar school could be built and where festivals and athletic activities could be conducted.

A familiar anecdote that was popular in the ghetto told of the occasion when the count was discussing Jewish affairs with the dayan. The question came up: "What is a dayan?"

The dayan, the Jewish elder explained to the count, is like an assistant rabbi who deals with matters that should not take up the rabbi's valuable time. For example, a dayan may be called upon to decide whether a certain goose, duck or chicken is kosher and can be cooked and eaten by Jews. If, as a result of a careful inspection the bird is declared not kosher, it cannot be eaten by Jews and must be discarded.

"Well, in the future," the count very generously offered, "just bring such an un-kosher fowl to my gamekeeper, and I would be happy to replace it with a matching bird from my farm."

The dayan gratefully accepted this generous offer and went on to explain that a dayan might also be concerned with the *mikveh* where the dayan must decide when a woman may engage in intercourse after having menstruated.

"Well," the count is reputed to have said, "I am perfectly happy to help and replace a duck, a goose or a chicken, but when it comes to the countess, I am sorry, there I must draw a line."

The occasional favorable treatment of the Jews, of course, generated resentment among the Czech population. They

considered the Jews to be traitors to their ambitions to have their own independent country. Thus the Jews had to walk a thin line between support of the Vienna court and the Czechs' political aims. This also raised a conflict within the Jewish community itself as the older generations leaned toward the support of the Vienna government while the younger generation, particularly those who went to Vienna to study, came home with ideals favoring the Czech position.

OF COURSE, all of this underwent a major reorientation in 1918 with the end of World War I and the defeat of Austria. The former empire was now partitioned into several pieces. One of these newly created countries was Czechoslovakia, an assembly of four provinces: Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and sub-Carpathian Russia. The Jewish ethnic minority in these areas now became a fervent supporter of the Czech cause.

For me that meant to be a loyal and ardent supporter of all things Czech. I was a great fan of all the sports teams that represented Czechoslovakia in international sports – soccer, ice hockey, tennis, skiing and athletics. I also joined in the cheering when King Carol of Romania visited Brno because Romania, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia created the Little Entente, a security pact to come to each other's defense if attacked. We also supported France and England because they expressed interest in our country. Of course, when the German tiger growled they all turned tail and abandoned us.

After World War II ended in 1945, our father made an effort to seek restitution of some of the family's possessions seized by the Nazis. After six years of turmoil and war there was little to recover of the valuables like paintings, furnishings and jewelry. The Germans had raided all our bank accounts and traded away all our investments. The only thing they could not take with them was the real estate – the houses, the factory and lands that my father owned before the war.

When the Communists seized power in Czechoslovakia in 1948, all efforts to recover the properties to the rightful owners stopped. The Communist Czech authorities had no inclination to negotiate with anyone. For 41 years, the miserable Communist regime held the country in a tight grip, until 1989 when, in the so-called Velvet Revolution, the Communists were ousted and were

replaced by a democratic administration. By that time, my father and my brother Steven had died. Steven became a very good and successful lawyer and had led the efforts to recover our property. With his passing, the recovery of the properties fell into my inexperienced lap.

After the revolution, the Czech government was, at least, willing to listen to claims. They allowed the building on Janska Street in Brno that was jointly owned by us and cousin Karl's family to be returned to us, and I also received the possession of our house on Dolni Street 5. However, they flatly refused to discuss the Brothers Ticho factory in Boskovice. It was seized by the Communists and was now operated by government-assigned owners. The house at U Templu #10 that the Fuchs family owned, where my grandfather was born, which became the property of uncle Jacob and that I had rebuilt and restored to keep it from collapsing, was sold by the city to new owners and recovery was rejected. There was another large apartment house on Minoritska Street that was owned by several Ticho uncles that was not returned to me, despite the fact that I was declared the rightful owner.

So, while our side won the war, we sustained substantial losses. Who was it who said "War is hell?" Whoever it was, was certainly right. ■

The Jews had to walk a thin line between support of the Vienna court and the Czechs' political aims



VIENNA'S AM Hof Square, 1890. The administration there went to some lengths to maintain friendly relations with Jews of the city. (Photos: Picryl)

‘His curiosity knew no bounds’

Remembering Aby Har-Even, the brilliant rocket scientist who was a victim of the Acre riots



ABY HAR-EVEN ‘was singlehandedly responsible for turning Israel into a world power in the space industry.’ (Left: Science, Technology and Space Ministry; Right: Tal Inbar)

• SIGAL BEN-DAVID

‘Hero of Israel,’ “one-man space agency” and “huge loss for the defense establishment” are just some of the descriptions of Israel Defense Prize laureate and rocket scientist Aby Har-Even, who was injured during riots in Acre last month and who died on June 6 at the age of 84. His contribution to space exploration and Israel’s national security is unknown to most Israelis, and much of his activity will remain a mystery in the future, too.

“Up until the last minute of his life, Aby retained his child-like curiosity, as well as a desire to remain informed about goings-on in the space and missile industries,” says Tal Inbar, space analyst and board member of D-MARS in Mitzpe Ramon. “He was not young, but he had a fierce passion for life and knowledge. At each stage in his life, he achieved greatness. There was the development of IDF air defenses, then the space agency and the related scientific experiments, and of course his contribution to security-related affairs while he was still wearing his IDF uniform. The public is not aware of most of the projects Aby was involved in.”

Har-Even was born in Romania and made aliyah with his parents in 1950, with the family settling in Jerusalem. He studied mechanical engineering at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, and then later, during his military

service, did a degree in electrical engineering to aid him in his efforts to found a new department within the IDF. Har-Even was involved in procuring advanced weaponry for the IDF’s arsenal: defensive weapons and anti-aircraft guns. Later on in his career, he commanded the Hawk missile battery, which was deployed to protect the Nuclear Research Campus, served in the R&D department and headed the team that reviewed lessons learned from the Yom Kippur War. In 1977, he was awarded the Defense Ministry Prize for a secret project whose details are still prohibited from being publicized to this day.

Har-Even also served as head of the Special Measures Division in the Defense Ministry, and the last position he held before retiring from the IDF in 1979 with the rank of colonel, was head of the General Staff’s R&D Department. As a civilian, Har-Even filled a number of positions at Israel Aerospace Industries, was the fifth director of Israel’s Space Agency, and led a team that developed Israel’s Shavit satellite rocket launcher. In recent years, Har-Even spent a lot of time working on R&D at Rafael Advanced Defense Systems. Due to the confidential nature of much of his work, however, we are unlikely to ever understand the scope of his contributions to Israel’s security.

“After completing the development of the Shavit satellite launcher, Aby began offering consulting services to American technology companies,” explains Inbar. “Later on, he began

HE WAS very close with the late Ilan Ramon, Israel’s first astronaut. (NASA)



working with Israel’s civilian space agency. Among other projects he was involved in was the mission with Ilan Ramon, Israel’s first astronaut to go to space. Aby was extraordinarily close to Ilan, and the two of them would spend hours and hours together, even at times that were not easy from an administrative, organizational or budgetary point of view. Aby took advantage of his diplomatic skills both at home as well as outside of Israel in an effort to make sure this mission would take place. When the space shuttle exploded upon reentry into earth’s atmosphere, this was a great shock.”

Over the years, Har-Even and Inbar became extremely close friends. Two days before Har-Even was injured in the riots, he met with Inbar to discuss the latter’s documentation project. “Aby was a really nice person – very convivial,” Inbar continues. “People who’ve worked with him over the years – even as far back as the 1960s – always have nice things to say about him. I’ve never heard even one person bring up any criticism. Every time I’d get together with Aby, he’d bring me some materials and pictures from home, which made his wife happy, since he could not bear to throw anything away. He would tell me he had a hard time sleeping at night, that he was always worrying about documenting events for posterity. He wanted to make sure that people would learn about our work after he



and I weren’t around anymore. Some things were classified, so of course people may never know about them.”

Did Har-Even’s personality help him advance Israel’s space agency?

“Absolutely. When he began, it was just him and his secretary. His people skills and the friendships he formed with counterparts in other countries were essential to the signing of agreements with Russia, Ukraine, the Netherlands, Canada and of course the US, where he was close personal friends with NASA administrator Dan Goldin. Aby was obsessed with the educational aspects of science and space research – he wanted to share all of this knowledge with the community. The people of Israel can sleep soundly at night thanks to Aby. There aren’t many people like him around anymore. The Israeli public has no idea how much they owe this great man.”

On the night of May 11, while staying at the Efendi Hotel in Acre, Har-Even was injured when Arab rioters set fire to the building. He was brought unconscious to Haifa’s Rambam Hospital, suffering from serious burns and smoke inhalation. On June 6, he passed away with his family at his side.

“His greatest contribution was his work with Israel’s Space Agency, where he focused on Israel’s ability to launch satel-

‘I CAN’T even tell you the number of times he called me in the middle of the night to tell me about a star he’d seen.’ (Science, Technology and Space Ministry)

HAR-EVEN was injured when Arab rioters set fire to the the Efendi Hotel in Acre, where he was staying. (Illustrative of riots; Left: Roni Ofer/Flash90; Right: Jalaa Marey/Getty Images)



SPACE ANALYST Tal Inbar. (Courtesy Tal Inbar)

(Right) AVI BLASBERGER, director-general of the Israel Space Agency. (Nir Shmoli)



The people of Israel can sleep soundly at night thanks to Aby

lites,” notes Dr. Igal Patel, former chairman of the Israeli Astronomical Association and now a member of the International Astronomical Union. “Aby helped Israel join the international space community. His second greatest contribution was to Israel’s security, since he was responsible for the development of the Shavit launcher, as well as all of the reconnaissance satellites. This launcher is capable of placing a heavy satellite in orbit around the Earth.”

In 1994, Har-Even was appointed director of the Israel Space Agency, which began as a small, low-budget organization. He served in this position for almost a decade, and according to colleagues spearheaded a number of breakthroughs during that time. “His most important accomplishment was getting Israel into space,” continues Patel. “The moment a country achieves this capability, its status changes overnight, and the ramifications are tremendous. Aby was singlehandedly responsible for turning Israel into a world power in the space industry. As soon as we achieved that status, we were inundated with requests from other countries for collaborations, which we’ve now carried out with India, the US, Mexico, France and Canada. Aby laid the foundation for all these partnerships.”

What challenges did he face?

“We were a small country, without a lot of resources. Shimon Peres attempted to purchase a satellite from the Americans, but they declined our request. It was an extraordinarily exclusive club. It was like a third grader asking to join the national championship league. The challenge of achieving this status when we were starting from scratch was enormous.”

In recent years, Har-Even and Patel worked together to establish a space center in Israel, which Har-Even had agreed to chair. “Aby was so modest. The public was never made aware of his actions,” explains Patel. “Most 84-year-olds aren’t busy volunteering and engaging in so many activities. This was quite a singular situation. Space capabilities excited him more than anything else. I can’t even tell you the number of times he called me in the middle of the night to tell me about a star he’d seen, and ask me what I know about it. He was passionate about making it easier for children and adults to learn about space travel. I will miss him terribly, and it breaks my heart that he won’t be around for the inauguration of our new space center.”

In what way did Har-Even make a difference?

“Aby spearheaded projects that served traditional industries, such as a civilian telescope that was developed by Israel’s military industries, but it was also important to him to advance Israel’s civilian space industry,” says Avi Blasberger, director-general of the Israel Space Agency. “It was incredibly important to him that all interactions be carried out in pleasant conversation, with full cooperation from all the involved parties. His willingness to share his knowledge, to work with any and everyone, is rarely seen these days. I can think of a number of collaborations Israel was involved in that would never have taken place had Aby not been involved. And without a space agency, Israel would never have been able to carry out international science collaborations at this level.”

Har-Even was someone who understood the importance of forging connections between people, governments and ideas. “One day, he called me up and invited me to a meeting in his office with a colleague from Germany who was interested in collaborating with Israel,” Blasberger recounts. “Following that meeting, I engaged in numerous collaboration with that same person. You have to understand that Aby succeeded in carrying out all these projects despite the fact that he had such a paltry budget. He managed to succeed by pure determination.”

“Every time he’d talk about space, he’d have a twinkle in his eye,” Inbar concludes. “There is no one in the space community who didn’t have the opportunity to consult with Aby. His curiosity knew no bounds.” ■

Translated by Hannah Hochmer.

IN TOUCH with Ilan Ramon while in space; Ariel Sharon is at second from right. (Flash90)



Social group anxiety



PSYCH TALK
DR. MIKE GROPPER

The fear of social groups is more common than some would believe. Studies have shown that about 8% of the population – men and women almost equally – have some type of social phobia or shyness problem that shows up in group situations.

An underlying component for those who suffer from social group phobia is the fear of being humiliated and embarrassed in such situations. In other words, although a person may feel comfortable with one or two friends, that same person may feel overwhelmed in a group situation and avoid it at all costs.

For many of these individuals, the social isolation aspects of COVID-19 have been a relief and have provided a socially acceptable way to avoid group situations. However, as we return to a post-COVID-19 world, some people may be suffering from a recurrence of past difficulties.

Sam, a 43-year-old married man with three teenage children, called me up to get help with his fear of going back to his workplace. He is a programmer for a hi-tech company and was able to work at home up until recently.

I had initially treated Sam when he was in his 30s. At that time Sam was suffering from social anxiety.

He told me that when he was seven years old, he made aliyah from St. Louis with his mom, dad and younger brother.

During the initial treatment he told me that as a first grader in St. Louis, he was a good student, had many friends, loved playing baseball and was a happy boy. When the family made aliyah, they moved to a small village in northern Israel. No one spoke English, and he did not speak Hebrew. Kids started to make fun of him. He felt rejected and hopeless. He became angry, started to act out, got into many fights and, looking back, he did not know how he survived those early childhood years.

Perhaps his choice of profession, a programmer, really reflected his social anxiety and his desire to avoid social interaction.

During our first treatment, Sam was able to share his feelings about his sense of humiliation, loneliness and, at times, depression.

The computer was an easy replacement for Sam. During his teenage years, he would lose himself for hours playing computer games.

Therapy was successful and Sam was gradually able to become comfortable with social group experiences. I remember doing cognitive therapy with Sam and helping him to change his approach to these group encounters from anger to a perspective of “I can deal with this and it will be okay.”

During the past year, the social isolation took a

heavy toll on Sam and he lost much of the confidence that he had gained from his first round of therapy. Sam started to have anxiety attacks when he thought about going back to his workplace, attending group meetings and entering community life events.

During Sam’s second course of treatment, I once again applied a cognitive-behavioral therapy approach. The following techniques proved to be very helpful.

Fear hierarchy and exposure technique

I asked Sam to construct a “fear hierarchy” of the social group situations that he was afraid of and rate them according to difficulty. Once this list was completed, we started with the least anxiety-provoking social group encounter and worked our way up the list.

In order to work on his list, I taught him many skills,



AS WE return to a post-COVID-19 world, some people may be suffering a recurrence of past difficulties. (Alexandra Gorn/Unsplash)

including relaxation and deep breathing exercises, imagery techniques, mindfulness, and communication skills, and helped him to change maladaptive beliefs to more positive thoughts about the group situations he encountered.

The reversal imagery technique

I asked Sam to describe one of his recent group interactions. He talked about a work meeting. I asked him to tell me who was there and to tell me about what he thought about these people, what he believed they thought about themselves and what they thought

about him.

It was not surprising to me that Sam described most of the group members as thinking highly of themselves and thinking very critically of him.

I asked Sam how his thoughts made him feel. He quickly told me that he was filled with anxiety and was fearful that he would be looked down upon by his colleagues.

I told Sam that I wanted him to try a small experiment, which I call the reversal imagery technique. I asked him to imagine that all of the members of this group felt scared that they would sound stupid when they talked at the meeting.

For instance, I suggested to him that we could imagine that one person is really shy and afraid that you will be overly critical of her comments. Another person, perhaps, is sure that the boss favors Sam over him. A third person could be fearful that you will not like him and he is very afraid of your rejection.

My point was to get Sam to use some imagery to diffuse his own inner self-doubt and negativity by trying to imagine that all of the group members potentially worry about the same things that he was afraid of. I helped Sam to realize that we are all human beings and have many of the same insecurities that he sees in himself.

Perhaps his choice of profession really reflected his desire to avoid social interaction

Sam’s ability to internalize this idea had a positive effect on how he felt. Sam was helped to realize that he could change the direction of his thoughts and therefore drastically reduce his social group anxiety. The reversal imagery technique helped Sam take on a different perspective about how he perceived people in a group situation and empowered him to have more confidence in these encounters.

So, if you are like Sam and reconnecting to your group environment is making you very anxious, don’t be hard on yourself. After all, you are probably out of practice. Perhaps, previous life experiences may have made you vulnerable to social group anxiety.

For Sam, treatment helped him to move back to a previously obtained level of self-confidence in his social group interactions. Sam made a very wise decision. ■

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Keep it simple

• NERIA BARR

As the summer progresses – make sure you drink enough, protect yourself from the sun and enjoy the long hours of daylight.

Get three in one

Vichy added new items to its inclusive sunscreen collection, this time 3 in 1 anti-aging with and without tint. The new lines include tinted SPF 50 anti-aging cream that helps protect the skin while hydrating it, as well as preventing dark spots, thanks to the PhE-Resorcinol ingredient that reduced the production of melanin in the skin. The tint helps smoothing skin appearance. The second cream with anti-aging ingredients, SPF50, antioxidant cream with no tint, also includes CamoCamo ingredient rich in vitamin C. NIS 109.

Available in private pharmacies and at www.vichy.co.il



(Photos : Companies mentioned)

Spritz it on

GIGI presents for the hot summer days a new Fresh Water Mist, in their renowned City Nap collection. The new mist is enriched with vitamins, antioxidants and other plant-based calming ingredients. On a hot summer day – nothing is more refreshing than a spritz of cooling water, mixed with energy-providing ingredients and a lovely smell of herbs. Use as makeup fixer, energy boost or protection from pollution – any time anywhere. NIS 190.

For availability go to www.gigi.co.il



(Sasha Dubinsky)

Balance and strengthen

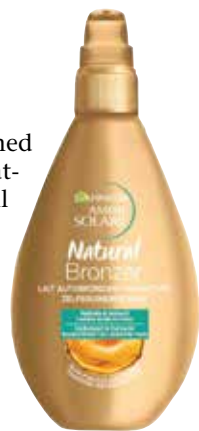
Schwarzkopf launched a new line called Gliss Nutri Balance Repair. The formula includes ginseng root and birch water, that help rebuild the outer layer of the hair fiber, restoring the inner strength. Keeping the scalp clean and healthy helps healthier hair to grow resulting in beautiful, light and shiny hair, especially important during the hot season. The formulas are without any artificial colorings or silicone. The new line includes 4 products – gentle shampoo (NIS 18.90), scalp-balancing conditioner (NIS 18.90), gentle peeling – the star product (NIS 32.90) and spray balancing conditioner (NIS 32.90).

Available in stores around the country.



Get an instant tan

Garnier offers a solution for all of those who wish to look tanned without the risk of exposing our skin to sun radiation. Their natural bronzer gives legs and arms a natural-looking tan, as well as hydration in minutes. Apply with circular motions on clean skin, wash your hands and wait for the cream to fully absorb before wearing clothes. The results promise an even tan for a long time. The bronzer contains apricot oil to give skin extra glow. NIS 40. www.garnier.co.il



(Gold Fish Studio)

Achieve an academic style

Getting ready for the new school year? Swagg, the online shop that offers premium bags and gifts, now has a new collection of the French brand Cabaia that will be a favorite among the fashionable students. Very chic and made from excellent materials, the backpack collection is colorful and stylish, and yet also very practical. Check out the vegan water-resistant bags with an extra wide opening to fit all laptops, changeable front pockets that can be removed and used separately and more. We loved the colors and patterns. Check them out online and they will deliver anywhere in the country. From NIS 279.

Only at swagg.co.il or in the brand's shop in Netanya, 12 Haomanut Street.



Be nice to your skin

Cerave is a no-frills no-nonsense cosmetic brand we have recently become infatuated with. Offering hypoallergenic products with no perfume and no parabens, their products are gaining more and more followers. Now they have launched a new hydrating cream for both face and body suitable for dry and very dry skin, and for children as well as grownups – making it a super cream for the whole family, which I for one will be very happy to pack on my next trip. Created with dermatologists, the cream's formula contains hyaluronic acid and three ceramides, essential for the protection of the natural barrier. The ceramides are released layer by layer, offering hydration for many hours. NIS 54.90.

Available in pharmacies throughout the country as well as many online stores.



Walk on air

Renowned German women's-shoe company Caprice, sold exclusively in Israel by Blue Heart stores, launches new "On Air" insoles that promise to make you feel like you're walking on air. The brand that won the prestigious Five UK shoes prize in the last two years developed insoles that contain no fewer than 300 air bubbles that make walking easier and more healthful for the feet, knees and back. The circulating air also cools the feet and collects sweat, which is evaporated during the night, leaving the shoe fresh and ready for the morning. The innovative insoles are available in a variety of fashionable shoes, including sneakers, trainers, flat shoes and even shoes with heels. NIS 149 to NIS 460.

Available in Blue Heart stores and www.blueheart.co.il



(Shay Franco)

Dress for a wedding

'Tis the season to be wedding... or at least to be a guest at one, or two or more. Yes, the wedding season is upon us and besides all the gifts and other expenses, one needs to find clothes. Segal presents their new summer collection offering elegant classic looks as well as young and urban looks for the groom and his friends. The classic suit line by the world's leading brands is offered in dark colors – grey, blue and black, offering the best trends, as well as younger lines in pastel colors. To finish the look there is a large selection of buttoned-down shirts, plain or with stylish prints, shoes, belts, ties and more. Each customer of Segal will get a fitting by the brand's expert tailors and grooms are offered everything they need in the brand's own sewing room. NIS 1,990 and up. Definitely worth a visit.

Segal Fashion, 36 Hanamal St., Tel Aviv Port; 8 Ha'aliya St., Tel Aviv; Ha'ayal Street, Jerusalem; 5 Giboreyi Israel, Big Poleg, Netanya.

Be a highbrow person

Anastasia Beverly Hills, an international premium makeup company has finally landed in Israel offering a beautiful collection for makeup enthusiasts. Known first for its Golden Ratio eye-brow method, this brand became famous after the founder appeared on Oprah. Her collection includes eyebrow products such as clear gel, colored gels and a collection of pencils in 11 different shades, as well as foundations, eye makeup, lipsticks and highlighters. Prices range from NIS 10 to NIS 45.

Available at the Super-pharm stores and at shop. Super-pharm.co.il/Anastasia-beverly-hills



(Dean Samet)

Give your pet the royal treatment

Royal Canin. The French premium pet food firm announced a new campaign focusing on mixing dry food and pouches of wet foods, adjusted to the pet. The idea is to raise awareness for the benefits of adding wet food to the regular food. The formulas offered by Royal Canin provide necessary nutrition according to the type, race and size of the pet, as well as according to their age.

Available in pet shops around the country. For more information go to www.royalcanin.com/il



Drink more water

La Croix is a popular American brand of carbonated water that originated in La Crosse, Wisconsin by G. Heileman Brewing Company and is now distributed in Israel. Their flavors include various fruits and fruit blends, such as mango, coconut, passion fruit, berries, raspberry and cranberry, grapefruit, hibiscus, key lime, orange, water melon, pear-peach, apricot and mandarin. The drinks have zero sugar and zero calories so if you really like carbonated drinks – this choice is a good one. NIS 5 to NIS 7.

Available in stores around the country.



(Tal Terry)

Protect small eyes

Children need good sunglasses too. Damage to the eyes begins at childhood and the sooner you get them accustomed to wearing sunglasses the better, according to eye specialists. This summer you can protect their precious eyes in style with the timeless Ray Ban models made smaller, including Hollywood stars' favorite Wayfarer model offered in a few colors. NIS 399.

Available in stores.



Get a quick lunch

Herbalife introduces a new snack – Formula 1 Express – that can replace a meal. The snacks, based on soy protein, are offered in two flavors – chocolate and berries, and are also good for vegetarians. Rich in protein (13 grams) and containing eight grams of fiber and more than 20 vitamins and minerals, including vitamins C and E, B12, magnesium, iron and calcium, the health bar includes no artificial sweeteners or preservatives, and offers an especially low glycemic level and only 207-211 calories per bar. NIS 95.5 for a pack of seven bars.

Available at herbalife.co.il



(Dan Peretz)

Enjoy the natural flavor

Nature Valley is a favorite snack in my family, especially because unlike other snacks, they have a few that contain no gluten, no milk and no soy, all ingredients that many are allergic to. Their new flavors in the Fruit & Nut line – with apples and cranberries, and with peanuts, almonds and raisins, were voted excellent by both the youngsters and the older members of the family and became instant hits. Containing less sugar and fat, no preservatives and food colorings, they also won the approval of the moms. NIS 24.90 for a pack of four.

Available in stores.





SEREN DPT Tasting Room offers an 'Israel wine experience' not far from the old clock tower in Jaffa. (Seren DPT)

WINE IN THE CITY



• ADAM MONTEFIORE

In truth, I wrote this article before COVID-19. Every time I was about to publish it, there was another closure, and the wine venues – along with all the bars, restaurants and catering halls – were closed yet again. Then as we recovered from coronavirus, Hamas, no great wine lovers, decided to delay it even more. Now at long last I am able to share this article with you.

One of the venues I was going to talk about did not make it through the year, but the others are still flying the wine flag within our major cities.

The wine lover in Israel, as everywhere else, loves to visit wineries. However, most wineries tend to be in outlying areas. Unlike in Europe, where wineries blend into villages and are positioned alongside vineyards, near hotels, restaurants and other gourmet destinations, here wineries are banished more often than not to industrial estates. This is an archaic law or ruling that is immensely damaging to wine tourism. In any case, a visit has to be planned in advance and normally necessitates an outing taking up half a day or more.

However, wine lovers need not despair. If you do not have time to visit wineries, there are tasting rooms and winery visitors' centers within the city. So, wine lovers can taste, buy, learn and talk about wine along with enjoying a little food, without going on a day trip.

The latest of the tasting room genre is the Seren DPT Bar & Tasting Room in Jaffa. This is a play on the word Serendipity, which is an unplanned and fortunate discovery; finding something good, by accident. An

example would be wandering around Jaffa and finding the unique tasting room, minutes from the old clock tower and seconds from where the legendary Yo'ezer Bar was once situated.

Seren DPT offers tutored tastings, wine explanations, lectures, workshops and wine education seminars. There are wines available by glass, flight or bottle. It is situated at 7 Yo'ezer Street to the east of Jaffa's famous clock tower. It is in the area known as the Monastery or Greek Market, full of people and tourists (in normal times). They may be found browsing in the street markets, drinking coffee in the coffee bars and eating in nearby restaurants. Street musicians perform on street corners. Now they can also enjoy a glass of wine while soaking up the atmosphere.

Seren DPT (www.seren-dpt.com) offers an "Israel Wine Experience." It is a joint initiative of three people: Oded Shoham, Asaf Margalit and Amos Jacoby. Oded is one of the great personalities of Israeli wine with many years of experience of every facet of the wine trade, from planting a vineyard onward. Asaf Margalit is owner-winemaker of Margalit Winery, which was Israel's first quality boutique winery and Israel's first cult wine. It was founded in 1989 by his father, the legendary Dr. Yair Margalit, and remains one of the best wineries in Israel. Asaf Margalit became the winemaker in 2000 and is today considered one of Israel's finest winemakers in his own right. Amos Jacoby is a veteran and well-respected antiques dealer.

One of the special benefits of Seren DPT is that you can taste wines of the caliber of Margalit and Clos de Gat by the glass by using Coravin. This is an advanced and expensive toy for wine connoisseurs that allows

pouring a glass without any deterioration in the quality of the bottle. Therefore, it offers the opportunity to taste some expensive wines by the glass, which you would not usually think of purchasing.

Alternatively, you can select from any number of wines produced by small, boutique-quality wineries that are situated anywhere between the Upper Galilee and Mitzpe Ramon. It is possible to buy a bottle at the retail price and with an insignificant corkage fee. This you can enjoy with a platter of bread and cheese without any of the exaggerated restaurant mark-ups. Apart from Margalit and Clos de Gat, they also list wines of Bar-Maor, Capsouto, Ghito, Gros, Maia, Nana, Shiran, Stern and Yaacov Oryah, among many others. Seren DPT is also the ideal venue for wine lectures, winery tastings, company events and casual tourist visits too. Winemaker-wine educator Roni Saslove holds her courses there.

TULIP WINERY has always been one of Israel's most dynamic and innovative wineries. Their CEO, Roy Itzaki, is one of the most impressive winery managers in the country. He is smart, creative, thinks long term and is usually ahead of the pack. Now they have a foothold in Tel Aviv by opening the Tulip Show Room in beautiful Neveh Tzedek, wedged between Tel Aviv and Jaffa. This offers tastings, professional explanations and the opportunity to buy. Certain wine exclusivities, not on the general market, will also be available for the passionate wine lover.

Roy Itzaki says, "Our objective is to bring the uniqueness and quality of Tulip Winery to Tel Aviv." Tulip Winery is one of Israel's best wineries. Founded



(Left) VORTMAN WINERY in Haifa is perched high up on Mount Carmel, with a beautiful view of the Mediterranean Sea. (Vortman Winery)

THE TULIP Showroom brings the innovative, high-quality Tulip Winery to Tel Aviv. (Dror Varshavski)

in 2003 in Kfar Tikva, Kiryat Tivon, it is an extraordinary project that provides hope and work for adults with disabilities. No wonder they are situated in a place called "the Village of Hope." Tulip wines win all sorts of awards and high scores due to the quality of their vineyards, mainly in the upper Galilee, and the skills of winemaker David Bar Ilan. The wines, some of which come in very innovative blends, come under three labels: Tulip, Espero and Reserves. My favorites are the Net Sauvignon Blanc, White Tulip, White Franc and Tulip Syrah Reserve. Their prestige wine is the velvety, rich Black Tulip, which has received repeated international recognition at the very highest level.

The Tulip Show Room (www.tulipshowroom.com) is situated at 61 Shabazi Street in Neveh Tzedek. The Tulip Winery Visitors Center is well over an hour away by car from Tel Aviv. It is so smart of the winery management to bring the winery to Tel Aviv. If the mountain will not come to Muhammad, then Muhammad must go to the mountain. This decision has made Tulip Winery available and accessible to Tel Aviv, where the consumption of wine and concentration of wine lovers is higher than anywhere else in Israel. Incidentally, there are also some small, interesting wineries not so far from Tel Aviv. These include Afek (Rosh Ha'ayin), Benhaim (Moshav Neve Yamin), Garage de Papa (Petah Tikva), Ghito (Hod Hasharon), Gros (Moshav Nehalim), Neve Yarak (Moshav Neve Yarak) and Villa Wilhelma (Moshav Bnei Atarot).

Jerusalem Vineyard Winery (www.Jerusalemwineries.com), has a unique wine venue in a historic setting. Their winery is in Atarot, scarcely the best place to attract visitors. So, they have opened an innovative tasting room within the Montefiore Windmill in the Mishkenot Sha'ananim-Yemin Moshe neighborhood in the heart of Jerusalem. The windmill was built in 1857 by Sir Moses Montefiore and has since become an iconic part of the Jerusalem skyline. Mishkenot Sha'ananim, the first neighborhood outside the Old City, literally became the cornerstone of modern Jerusalem. The windmill was refurbished so it could grind flour and was reopened by the prime minister in 2012. Now you can also taste, buy and enjoy a glass of wine there, while overlooking the Old City Walls.

JERUSALEM VINEYARD Winery is one of Israel's older wineries. The Shor family founded their winery in the Old City of Jerusalem in 1848. In the 1940's, as the family grew, the two brothers split the business. Zion Winery continued to make wine and Moshe Shalom Shor founded Shimshon Winery, undertaking only to make spirits and grape juice. In 1951, the winery was passed on to his daughter Tzipora Shor and her husband, Yona Mendelson. After the Six Day War, the winery moved to Atarot. In 2006, it was

purchased by Ofer Guetta, and renamed Jerusalem Wineries. Lior Lacser, previously the much respected chief winemaker of Carmel Winery for many years, is the CEO and winemaker. At the Jerusalem Vineyard Winery Visitors Center, the wines worth buying are the flagship Special Reserve, the Montefiore Windmill Yemin Moshe at one end of the spectrum and a great value modern-style Chardonnay, and an award-winning fresh Rose in the mid-price range.

Wine lovers in Haifa are fortunate to have Vortman Winery (www.vortmanwinery.com) in their midst. This is one of our most interesting small wineries. It is owned by grower-winemaker Hai Vortman. The winery itself is by necessity apart from the visitors center. However, I can vouch for the fact that it is small, spotlessly clean and very professional. The visitors center is situated in the family house in the quiet Shambour district, perched high upon Mount Carmel, overlooking vines and the sheer drop to the Mediterranean Sea. Here you can taste and buy and enjoy the beautiful and unique view.

Vortman is an unsung, little known winery, but real wine lovers should seek it out. It was founded in 2003. The passion, modesty and professionalism of Hai Vortman, who cares for his own vineyard in the Shefaya Valley, next to Zichron Ya'acov, is quite apparent to all those who meet him. He reminds me that wine of character and individuality is a creation of a person and a place. He initially gained notice for beautifully

fresh white wines. Now his reds are also drawing attention. My favorites are the Vortman Colombard, Carignan and a Mediterranean blend called Levant.

Therefore, wine connoisseurs, wine lovers and tourists have new venues where they can taste, learn and buy. Some of these are close to residential areas and hotels, so visitors don't have to leave the city. These wine venues are something between tasting rooms, visitors centers, wine stores, wine bars, wine education schools and wine-themed events venues. Or maybe they are a mixture of all these things together.

Companies, wine lovers, families, students and tourists have the new option of organizing wine entertainment evenings. Just be sure to book well in advance. We say that in Jerusalem people pray, in Tel Aviv they play, and in Haifa they work. Now, in-between the praying, playing and working, they can also take time out to drink wine. Those in Jaffa, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa can visit Seren DPT, the Tulip Show Room, Montefiore Windmill or Vortman Winery for a unique wine experience. They are four of the most innovative wine venues in Israel. ■

The writer is a wine industry insider turned writer, who has advanced Israeli wine for 35 years. He is referred to as the English voice of Israeli wine. www.adammontefiore.com



THE JERUSALEM Vineyard Winery Visitors' Center inside the windmill, offers the opportunity to taste and buy. (Photos: Jerusalem Wineries)

THE MONTEFIORE Windmill, in Mishkenot Sha'ananim in the heart of Jerusalem, is a unique wine venue.





(Photos: Marc Israel Sellem)



One-dish dinners

• HENNY SHOR

Make life easier and have more time to enjoy your food without all the fuss by putting everything into one pan or pot and having all the elements of a great dinner without lots of work. I love the “prepare it all and just stick it in the oven when I get home” method that also works so well with crockpot dinners, where all the ingredients are put together before you go to work, and you can almost smell the amazingness in your kitchen from your office. The best part is knowing that when you get home, the only thing left is to do is grab a plate and a fork.

CROCKPOT SHEPHERD’S PIE (COTTAGE PIE)

It’s a meat-and-potatoes thing. Shepherd’s pie is a delicious comfort food that hits the spot every time. I took the challenge of making it in a crockpot instead of the time-consuming traditional way. This took less than a quarter of the time, and the flavors were enhanced by being released slowly over a longer time.

From all my Facebook recipe posts, this one went the most viral and is still getting shared and tagged months

later. I hope you enjoy the simplicity of making this and the scrumptious compliments you’ll be receiving.

Makes 4-6 servings – use a 5-6 liter crockpot.

1 kg. of ground beef (about 2 lb.)
6-8 potatoes
¼ cup oil + 2 Tbsp.
3 onions diced
4-6 cloves of garlic peeled
2 tsp. salt
Dash of pepper
Feel free to add spices that you enjoy and season to your taste.

In a frying pan, heat the ¼ cup of oil. Then add the onions to sauté until translucent. Then add the garlic cloves and sauté for about another minute and shut off the flame.

Thinly slice the potatoes or use the slicing blade on the food processor to scallop the potatoes. Add the salt and pepper to the sliced potatoes and mix well.

Pour 2 Tbsp. of oil into your crockpot and turn it to low.

Here is how to assemble the ingredients in the crockpot:

– Half the potatoes
– Then a third of the onions
– Add all of the ground beef and break it up so it isn’t clumpy
– Some more onions
– The remainder of sliced potatoes
– Top it off with the last bit of onions.
Keep the crockpot covered and let it cook for 6-8 hours on a low temperature.

CHICKEN DINNER IN A PAN

One of the favorite dinners in our home is the one-pan chicken and potatoes. For me the reasons are obvious: one pan, three minutes of prep, two hours to cook, and gets eaten up pretty quickly too. What I also love about this recipe is that I can prepare it all the night before and leave it covered in the fridge, so when the first person gets home the next day they just need to uncover it and pop it in the oven.

Makes 4-6 servings.



A FAVORITE: One-pan chicken and potatoes.

1 whole chicken or 4-6 pieces of bone-in chicken
4-6 potatoes
1-2 cups peas and carrots
½ cup water
1 tsp. kosher salt
3-4 Tbsp. apricot (or strawberry) jam
1 Tbsp. seasoning of your choice or combo, such as garlic, onion, turmeric, pepper

Cut the potatoes into cubes, with or without peel, and layer them in a glass baking dish (a disposable pan can work too). You can use frozen, canned or fresh peas and carrots and spread them over the potatoes, add the water and sprinkle on the kosher salt and mix it all in the pan. Add the chicken and then spread the jam on top along with your seasoning. Cover very loosely with foil and bake for 2 hours, then remove cover and bake for another 10-15 minutes.

Variations

In a crockpot: Follow the above directions but add 2 cups of water and let cook on low for 6-8 hours

With rice: Use 1½ cups of rice instead of potatoes plus 2½ cups of water

BAKED ZITI – ONE PAN, NO POT

Tuesday in our home is “dairy dinner day” (say that five times fast!) My husband loves ziti with penne pasta, so I boil the noodles and then strain, then layer, then bake... you know the drill. But a few weeks ago I was on the phone with my mother in New York while I was doing my evening dishes. (This is how my mom helps with the dishes, we talk and I wash.)

She told me that she made a one-pan ziti without boiling the noodles first and it came out amazing. I was like, “What? I can save 20 minutes every Tuesday and have one less pot to wash?” So for all you who are still boiling noodles, I am here to change your life!

Makes 9” x 13” pan, serves 6

500 gr. – about 5 cups – of uncooked penne pasta
One jar tomato sauce – 750 grams, 26 oz. about 3½ cups
2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
1 tsp. salt
2½-3 cups of water
Feel free to add a bit of dry oregano, basil or crushed red pepper to your liking.

Preheat the oven to 170C/350F.



BAKED ZITI: A cheesy treat. (Illustrative; Anne G/Flickr)



SHEPHERD’S PIE hits the spot every time. (Henny Shor)

Place the pasta on the pan, then add the tomato sauce, 1½ cups of cheese (save the rest for the top), salt, seasonings of your choice and mix well. Add the water (use more for creamier texture and less for more al dente). Sprinkle the remainder of cheese on top and then cover first with baking paper and then foil. Bake for 90 minutes, then uncover and bake for another 10 minutes to make it crispy.

CROCKPOT CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

Why in a crockpot, you ask? Well, first of all this is all about one-pot dinners. But what about dessert? Isn’t that the reason we eat dinner in the first place? Besides, I really wanted to see how this would come out, and I LOVE kitchen challenges!

I think this is perfect for when you are using the oven to make dinner and you want warm fresh cookies for dessert without having to interrupt your meal to make them. Or let’s say you’ve got dinner guests and you’d rather spend time with them than be busy making sure the cookies are warm and perfectly done just in time for dessert.

As one of my clients said to me after being inspired to make a crockpot dinner, “It was like having a personal chef.”

I challenge you to make your life easier with a one-pot dinner and dessert.
Here’s my easy chocolate chip cookie recipe for your crockpot.
Makes a crockpot-sized cookie, serves 8.

1 egg
1 tsp. vanilla extract
½ cup sugar
½ cup brown sugar
½ cup oil
1½ cup flour
½ tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
½ cup chocolate chips

In a bowl, mix the egg, vanilla, sugars and oil with a spoon or rubber spatula. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well. Line the crockpot with baking paper and spread the cookie dough on the bottom. Bake for 1½ hours on the low setting then shut off and keep it in the crockpot until you are ready to serve. Then remove the large cookie by lifting it up by the baking paper, cut the large cookie into slices and top it with whipped cream or ice cream.

The writer is a kitchen coach inspiring confidence and creativity in the kitchen. She runs online kitchen workshops, does private events for organizations, and is available for one-on-one coaching. www.inthekitchenwithhenny.com



WHY NOT make your life easier with a crockpot dessert? (Henny Shor)



• MEITAL SHARABI

Coronavirus has impacted our lives in a lot of ways, one of them being how many of us vacation – sometimes making it harder to find a spacious, uncrowded place at a fair price. So it's not surprising that the demand for outdoor camping holidays has soared this year.

There is something to the simplicity of camping, the connection to nature, at a price tag worth every agora (relative to the high cost of hotels) that fascinates many families. Camping can cater to everyone, opening up the most beautiful places in the country. Look in your children's eyes and see their excitement as the tent is pulled out of the backpack and spread on the ground; in minutes, a sheet of cloth becomes a wonderful magic house for the kids.

So where should you place your tent? Here's a collection of options.

1. Sleep with the Hasbani's trickling water

In the north of the Hula Valley lies the Maayan Holiday Village, right next to the HaGoshrim Kayaks. The unique location of the village allows a great starting point for hikes, attractions and national parks.

The holiday village has undergone many renovations and now includes a variety of accommodation options in separate complexes: a camping complex, a bed and breakfast complex, and a glamping complex.

The well-kept camping complex offers a pleasant and

secure overnight camping site on the park lawns. You can set up tents next to the scattered plane trees and very close to the creek, and hear the trickling water of the Hasbani. For the convenience of those who spend time at the campsite, a new and spacious locker area has been set up. In addition, food trucks will be placed at the entrance to the resort village, offering a variety of meals.

The park also has spacious toilets and hot water showers, a self-service kitchenette with electrical outlets, counter space, and refrigerators for rent.

Location: Maayan Holiday Village – Kibbutz Maayan Baruch

Price: NIS 90 per person over the age of two, at the entrance; NIS 72 if reserved ahead of time

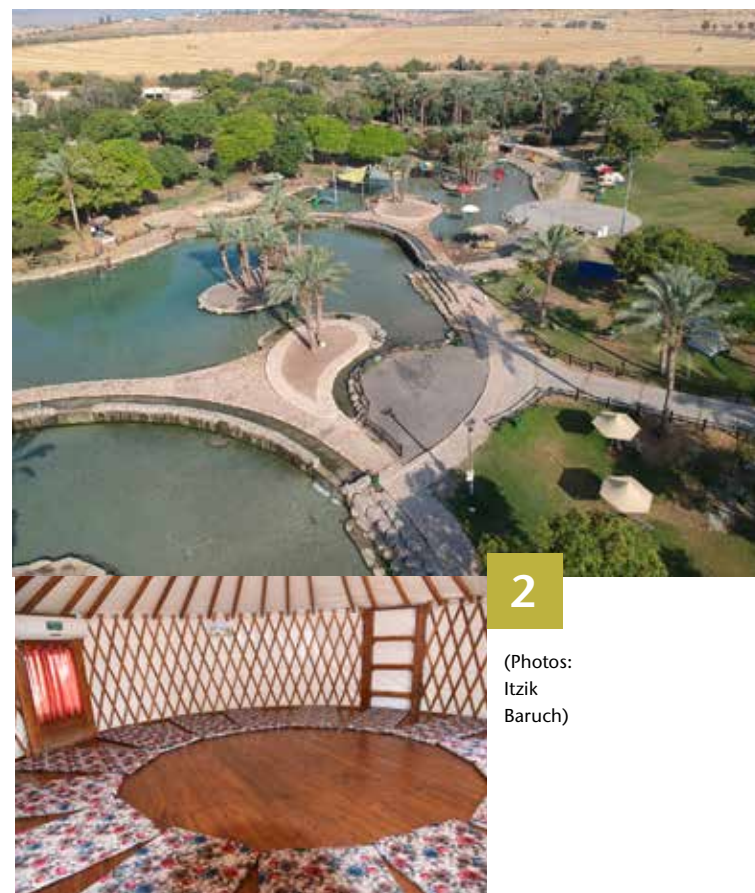
Details: 052-346-7457, 077-271-7518, www.maayanmb.co.il

2. In nature with A/C

Opposite the Gilad Mountains is the Ganey Hugga Water Park. In the park there are the "Hugga" springs (where water flows between three lakes), grill corners on shady grassy areas, and zip lines straight to the pool and water amusements.

The park contains an upgraded and secure overnight campsite on the park lawns. For the pampered, there is a service for setting up tents, renting mattresses, chairs, spacious toilets, refrigerators and hot showers.

By the lakes which are lit up in the evening, activities await the whole family: a fishing park, activities for children, sunset walks around the park with explana-



2

(Photos: Itzik Baruch)

tions, playgrounds and more.

Also note that the park contains 14 air-conditioned tents (yurts) that include a refrigerator and mattresses: three large yurt tents, 52 meters in size, that can accommodate up to 20 people, and 11 smaller yurt tents that can accommodate up to six people. The park also runs a pre-arranged breakfast service.

Hours: The park is open every day from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Entry fee for a day: NIS 44 for children from age three

Price for camping: NIS 88 per person per night

Those wishing to upgrade to the air-conditioned family-size yurt – holding up to six people – can add NIS 470 per night.

Details: Ganey Hugga (04) 658-1111, www.huga.co.il

3. You can regret along the way

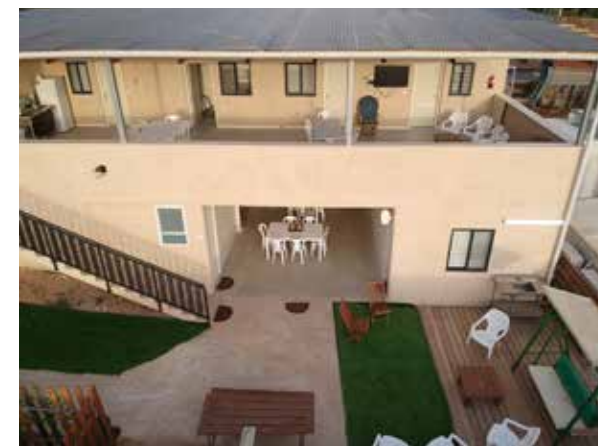
At the foot of Mount Tabor, in Moshav Shadmot Dvora, there's a new and unique holiday complex – "Khan Derech Haetz." It was established next to the "Derech Haetz" adventure park, thus creating a holiday complex, which includes a variety of accommodation options alongside a tourist attraction. The accommodation options include: rooms for hikers, a group room, an air-conditioned tent and an area for personal camping – so even if you planned on a tent but regretted it along the way because it's too hot for you – perhaps you'll take a room or guest apartment instead.

The complex is well-equipped and organized, offering guests: ample lighting, clean facilities for barbecues, a section for lighting bonfires, toilets and showers. In all, it offers a vacation that suits every budget, with accommodations based on sleeping arrangements.

Location: Khan Derech Haetz – Moshav Shadmot Dvora

Price: Personal tent camping – NIS 60 per person; tent built by Derech Haetz including mattresses (without sheets) NIS 75 per person; air conditioned tent with mattresses (without sheets) NIS 90 per person

Group guest room – up to 14 people and minimum of eight people, equipped with bunk beds with sheets, and attached shower and bathrooms – NIS 110 per person



3



(Haim Mesika)

Guest rooms for hikers – fits five people, including attached bathrooms and shower, towels, sheets and fully equipped kitchenette for the whole floor – NIS 165 per person

Guest apartments – fits 10 people, built with three bedrooms and a living room, includes an attached shower and bathroom and fully equipped kitchen – NIS 165 per person

Details: (04) 662-0606, www.derechaetz.org.il

4. Group party

Near Kibbutz Gadot, at the foot of the Jordan River, a new camping site was opened several months ago – the Jordan River Khan. It is suitable for families, friends and parties, and includes two complexes. One for 20 people and a smaller area for 10 people.

Here, there is no need to carry tents and mattresses; only food, drink and bedding need to be brought. The tents will be waiting for you along with shaded areas, seating, BBQ facilities, manicured lawns, security around the clock, bright night lighting, clean toilets and showers, refrigerators and electricity outlets.

Within walking distance there is the kosher Iskandar restaurant and plenty of attractions – kayaks, zip lines to the water, a ninja complex and many other activities for the whole family.

Price: At the complex for 20 people – NIS 160 per person, NIS 75 per person for each additional night

At the complex for 10 people – NIS 75 per night

Reservations: Haim Mesika, 050-221-9752

5. Recline with Romans

In Mamshit National Park, you can walk around the remains of an actual Nabataean city, from the Roman period. Although the area is small, you can discover an abundance of historical treasures: from magnificent houses and well-preserved streets to an impressive tower and ancient horse stables.

The parking lot in Mamshit includes full lighting, showers and toilets with access for the disabled, drinking fountains, pavilions, benches and tables, campfire sites (including wood), a kitchen that includes counters, refrigerators, gas stoves, mobile phone charging stations, stands for collecting coals and lighting barbecues and more. There is also a visitor service center. You can stay in several types of accommodations: in a tent that you bring from home or rent in the complex (including mattresses), a large tent with mattresses for several families and tukuls (huts) for up to eight people with mattresses, and upgraded tukuls that also include a refrigerator and seating area. In addition, there are rooms for rent designed for up to five people, with each room having beds, mattresses, a shower, toilet, refrigerator, kettle, microwave and air conditioner.

Price: Personal tent for an adult – NIS 55. Personal tent for a child – NIS 40. Family camping tent for an adult or tent encampment (including mattress)



(Avi Bahari)

– NIS 80. Family camping tent for a child (including mattress) or tent encampment – NIS 65

Reservations: Sleeping arrangements can be made through the website of the Israel Nature and Parks Authority.

6. Wake up to a breathtaking sunrise

The Masada site is familiar to almost every Israeli citizen. It is considered one of the most important, beautiful and special historical sites of Israel, which tells the story of the Jewish people and their war for their land. Masada was one of the last strongholds of Jewish freedom fighters in their struggle against the Roman army about 2,000 years ago. The mountain is considered a symbol of the end of the kingdom of Judah and its destruction at the end of the Second Temple period. Another unique attraction are the remains of the magnificent palaces from the time of King Herod. These blend well with the silent testimonies of the days of the Roman siege and the bitter end of the mountain dwellers.

In the Masada West parking lot you can enjoy full lighting, hot showers, a kitchen that includes counters, refrigerators, gas stoves, drinking water fountains, electrical points, permanent and portable picnic benches and tables, points for charging mobile phones, corners for campfires and grill lighting stations. There is also a visitor service center. You can choose from several types of accommodations: in a tent that you bring from home or one rented at the site (including mattresses), or a large tent with mattresses for several families. In addition, there are rooms for rent designed for up to five people, with each room having beds, mattresses, a shower, toilet, refrigerator, kettle, microwave and air conditioner.

Price: Personal tent for an adult – NIS 55. Personal tent for a child – NIS 40. Family camping tent for an adult (including mattress) – NIS 80. Family camping tent for a child (including mattress) – NIS 65

Reservations: Sleeping arrangements can be made through the website of the Israel Nature and Parks Authority.



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