



Event co-chairs Tim Gluck and Ed Epstein look over some of the kosher-for-Passover artisan cheeses event-goers enjoyed.

# ISLAND SYNAGOGUE CELEBRATES SPRING *with wine, cheese and chocolate*



Diane Medved displaying an Israeli red Amarolo wine called "Alexander the Great," which was an auction favorite.

**F**riends and members of Island Synagogue welcomed spring by tasting a curated collection of kosher-for-Passover wines, cheeses and chocolates March 11 in their first annual pre-Passover event.

Table décor of yellow forsythia branches and glowing paper lanterns carried the spring motif, coinciding with one of the Hebrew names for Passover, "Chag Aviv," or "Holiday of Springtime," this year March 30 through April 7. To the soft strains of classical guitar played by musician Steve Allen, the 80 attendees eagerly considered a wide selection of wines for purchase for their Passover **Seder** dinners, each tradition-filled meal requiring four cups of wine (or grape juice) per person.



Shoshana Weinstein, Nina Garkavi and Aliza Kwiatek enjoying wine tasting at Island Synagogue.

Passover re-enacts the liberation of the Jewish people from Egyptian captivity 3,330 years ago, with recollections of the Ten Plagues and Moses leading the escape through the Red Sea. Families gather to eat Matzah, (unleavened cracker-like "bread"), tell the story of the exodus, and enjoy a festive meal punctuated by the important "four cups," now sourced from around the world. Island Synagogue's wine expert Ed Epstein gave a talk on wine appreciation, and Rabbi Yechezkel Kornfeld explained the factors making wine and cheese kosher.

The Tasting allowed guests to circulate to tables of kosher red and white wines, a wide variety of artisan cheeses and types of chocolates, traditionally a Passover hostess gift, all available for delivery in time for the holiday. "What a wonderful way to see your friends, enjoy an evening of conviviality and plan for Passover," smiled Island Synagogue member Kim Weinstein, while checking out a package of organic Viney Sheep cheese.



The theme was springtime at Island Synagogue, as the rabbi welcomed guests to the first fundraiser in its new home on Island Crest Way and SE 47th St.

Ten event sponsors were privileged to sip a special 2012 Galilee Amarolo red wine, "Alexander the Great," a bottle of which was offered for auction and quickly purchased at the event, the synagogue's first fundraiser in seven years. Island Synagogue acquired their noted mid-century modern building on Island Crest Way and SE 47th Street from the Christian Science Church three years ago, and its social hall event space accommodates 400. A silent auction and raffle of kosher-for-Passover gift baskets culminated in a humorous "quiz" that left participants, already elevated from tasting the Israeli, California, French, Italian and South American wines, in excellent spirits.