

# FAQ:

## What is mead?

Mead is also called honey-wine, though honey is often only one of the components. Mead takes a wide variety of ingredients—flowers, fruits and herbs—and ferments them with honey. For Example: black currants or flowers like dandelions don't have enough sugar on their own for the yeast to turn into alcohol. Adding honey provides additional sugar for the yeast to transform into alcohol and by doing so and allows the meadmaker, or "mazer," (see what is a mazer below) to preserve the fruits, flavors, and (often medicinal!) botanicals for the future. In addition the fruits and particularly the herbs help preserve the wine, fermenting them together is the secret to great meads. Meads encompass a wide range of interesting alcoholic beverages from light effervescent meads to strong and long aged ones and have been made by virtually every human culture throughout history, most of it not in Europe. (See below: *I thought mead was from Vikings and Renaissance fairs?*)

## How do you make mead?

There are as many ways to make mead as there are mazers, but in our case we use very natural processes that would be familiar to any natural winery. Our honey is diluted with well water and combined with the particular botanicals, fruits or fruit juices that are available locally and seasonally, and then fermented in wood barrels until there is no sugars remaining. In some cases we ferment in stainless or glass. We primarily use wild yeast that already exists on the fruits and in our honey, the yeast multiply and consume the sugars and convert them to alcohol. The water and alcohol extract the right flavors from the herbs and skins of the fruit until the mazer decides to remove them. It is a low tech process that we allow us to produce the highest quality products with the cooperation with the natural world.

## What kinds of mead does Enlightenment Wines make?

A few of our recent meads are below.

### *Nought*

made strictly from wildflower honey and wild yeast- fermented in used oak barrels.

### *Memento Mori*

Dandelion Wine Made with foraged dandelion flowers.

### *Night Eyes*

Sparkling mead with Cranberry, apple, cherry, rosehips and sumac.

### *Floralia*

Botanical Mead mead with foraged juniper, lavender, and marjoram.

### *Champion*

Sparkling Black Currant mead

### *Tempest, Teapot*

(This is not technically a mead, fermented like a mead but with maple sap instead of honey.) It tastes similar to a white port wine)

### *Mount Olympus*

Naturally infused with Mount Olympus flowers (Shepherd's Herb).

### *Jewels into Flowers*

Apple Mead with chrysanthemum and chamomile flowers.

### *Saturnalia*

Dry, wild fermented apple mead naturally infused with locally harvested lemon verbena.

### **What is a mazer?**

A mazer is one of many traditional vessels that honey wine was drunk out of. There is some evidence it was also the word used in northern European culture to refer to the maker of the honey wines themselves. Increasingly it has been adopted by contemporary mead makers to the one who makes mead or honey wine to emphasize the fundamental difference in approach between them and other wine makers, particularly grape wine makers. Unlike a traditional grape wine maker or rice wine maker, who focuses primarily on the single material of grapes, or rice - a mazer collects a wide variety of materials and combines them before, during, and after fermentation. In this way a mazer combines the talents of an herbalist making tinctures, a wine maker making any kind of wine- and cocktail maker producing a drink over a very long period of time. The key element of a good mazer is to have an intimate relationship with the natural world around them, so they can understand the full potential of their landscape. Because fruits and herbs vary considerably around the world, each mazer has their own working process and sources, ultimately producing their own unique local meads.

### **Why mead now?**

Mead is often introduced as one of the world's oldest beverages- but it is also one of United States fastest growing categories in the alcoholic beverage industry. This is for a few reasons. 1) People are looking for something new to drink that is well made from local, natural ingredients. 2) Mead is gluten-free, and a great product for those people looking for an alternative to beer. 3) Cocktail makers are desperate for new things to work with and are attracted to mead as a new source of cocktail bases. 4) Mead has a wide palate to draw from. If lavender and juniper botanical meads aren't your thing, you might love our elderberry and apple-based meads. There's a mead out there for everyone.

### **I thought mead was from Vikings and Renaissance fairs?**

No, not really! While there is historical evidence that English and Scandinavian cultures made mead, there is nothing special about this fact. Mead has been made by almost every human culture, as far back as we can find them. It does not belong to Europe alone. The oldest meads are found in China and India, and the strongest mead cultures today are found throughout Asia and Africa. Much of it is made by women. The singular association of mead with white male Europeans, particularly those with beards and axes, is an unfortunate and inaccurate stereotype—one that has been repeated both in the popular press and, even worse, by the mead industry itself. Enlightenment Wines hopes to educate the public with an accurate history of honey-based wines, one that has always been coupled with innovation, local agriculture, and sense of place.

**But mead is definitely Olde English and made by monks, right?**

Zzz See above.

**If your mead is made out of honey, why isn't it sweet?**

All alcohol, whether it be beer, grape wine, rice wine, or honey wine, starts out sweet. The process of fermentation is one in which yeast convert sugars into alcohol. All of Enlightenment Wines meads are "dry," meaning that the sugars have been fully converted to alcohol and there is little or none left in the wine. So, our meads do not really taste any sweeter than other dry wine. Dry meads are not just more palatable in our opinion, but they also let the herbs, fruits, and flowers they are made with shine through. Furthermore dry wines are more stable, and don't require filtering and chemicals in the way that sweet wines do. Making dry meads means we can use more natural processes and avoid filtering and sulfites.

**Will your mead give me a hangover?**

In our experience—and we do, um, "test" quite a lot of our own product—we find our meads very gentle on the body, particularly the day after. This tracks with the experience of drinking natural dry wines in general. Hangovers are generally associated with sweet and processed alcohol like cheap champagne, and since we don't produce sweet or processed mead, we don't have that problem.

**Will mead get me drunk or high?**

Typically our meads finish at about 12% alcohol by volume. This alcohol level is comparable to a typical white grape wine. Like any alcohol, drunk in excess it will result in inebriation—and we don't recommend that for any kind of beverage. However every kind of alcohol also produces its own unique effects, and that is true too for mead. We encourage you to explore the experience of mead drinking for yourself.

**How is your mead different than the ones I have had before?**

Enlightenment Wines seeks to make the finest, most interesting, and delicious natural meads on Earth. It's a tall order, but one we take seriously.

Most commercial meads on the market are made by grape wineries or beer brewers, and they tend to produce meads that are sweet, extremely alcoholic, quickly fermented, highly filtered, quickly and supplemented with a variety of fermentation aids. We believe these sweet, highly alcoholic meads clash with our palates and those of our discerning customers, who are also turned off by advanced chemical processing and filtering. Enlightenment Wines uses only natural winemaking techniques and we take our time, often as much as a year from start to finish. We focus on dry, unfiltered, chemical-free meads made from raw honey and unfiltered, minimally processed ingredients and try and keep the alcohol level within a reasonable range. This not only produces a higher quality product, but it also radically distinguishes us from the vast majority of meads on the market. Natural techniques and raw honey result in delicious and interesting meads. We are proud to win the approval of our selective and sophisticated patrons.

**Is your mead gluten-free?**

Our meads are gluten-free, a natural outcome of our 100% grain-free process.

**Where do you source your herbs fruits and flowers ingredients?**

All of our ingredients come from New York State. Many of our adjunct ingredients like juniper, sumac, dandelion, and wild grapes are wild-foraged in the Hudson Valley. Others like black currants and chrysanthemum are grown for us by natural and organic farmers we know and trust.

**Where does Enlightenment Wines honey come from?**

Our honey comes from Western New York region. The beekeeper is primarily a honey producer raising bees to produce unpasteurized raw honey. He avoids moving them around for pollination, which is how most beekeepers actually make money. His bees are more relaxed and more healthy, so they make better honey. Healthy bees require less intervention, produce better tasting honey and ultimately higher quality mead.

**What about the bee epidemic?**

Our beekeeper has assured us that his colonies are doing okay despite the bee epidemic. Colony collapse is much more of a serious issue for large scale commercial farmers who move their bees around a lot and are primarily for pollination. His hives are happy and healthy. We feel like our continued financial support of his natural beekeeping methods is the best way we can support bees and beekeepers in general.

**I bought a bottle of mead from you, do I need to keep it refrigerated?**

Like most wine, our meads are stable unless opened, and actually are pretty shelf stable even after they are opened. If you want to savor your mead over the course of a week or two- and there is a lot of air in the bottle, it will benefit from storage in the refrigerator. However, refrigeration is not required before it is opened.

**Do I need to age my mead before drinking?**

Enlightenment Wines meads are typically already aged about one year by the time they reach the public, and are not offered for sale unless they are ready to drink. If you would like to age your meads longer, or build up a collection, they will still be quite delicious in a few years, but aging is not required. In all cases, keep the bottles out of the light and in a cool place.

**There is some sediment in my bottle. Is something wrong?**

Honey includes a complex group of amino acids, i.e. proteins, some of which are not digested by yeast during the fermentation process. The residual protein contributes greatly to the mouthfeel and overall flavor of mead, which is why we avoid filtering it out. In some cases, small amount of protein and other sediments will settle to the bottom of the bottle. This highly nutritious sediment is unique to honey-wines (mead) and is packed with vitamins. Taste for yourself! You will never go back to filtered mead.

**Is mead brewed like beer, or is it distilled like a spirit?**

Neither. Mead *is* a wine. What makes a wine “wine” is strictly defined by the US government as fermentation from any fruit, rice, or honey producing an alcohol level above 9% and below 17%. This puts our mead (made from honey with an ABV of 12%) squarely within the “wine” territory. Beer, in contrast, is made at a *brewery* from grains and typically ends up with a lower alcohol percentage than wine. Spirits are made in a *distillery*- in which alcohol is separated through heat and evaporation from something that often starts out like a beer or wine. We don't do anything like that right now.

Furthermore- in almost every way our process looks a lot like natural grape wine making, except we start with honey and herbs rather than grape juice. See above (*How do you make your mead?*)

**Isn't wine made supposed to be made out of grapes?**

Not always. The “wine” we generally see in a “wine” store is just one kind of wine: grape wine. There are others. Sake is a kind of rice wine. Mead is a kind of honey wine. There are also wines made from other things. For legal reasons, any wine that uses any amount of honey are designated as meads. For example our *St. Crimson* black currant mead is made from a starting mixture of black currants and honey, so it is designated as a “black currant mead” not a “black currant wine.”

**So are you a winery or a meadery?**

Both terms are acceptable. The government only gives out permits for wineries. There is no meadery permit, so while we use terms like *:The first meadery in New York City*, on paper we carry a farm “winery” license.

**What is a farm winery license?**

The farm winery license is a relatively new kind of manufacturing license in New York State. Typically wine manufacturers are not allowed to distribute their own product or own a retail space - like a bar. However with a farm winery license one can do both in exchange for making all of its wine from New York State-grown fruits (and honey). At its core, the farm winery seeks to encourage the growth of regional agriculture, and we are fully supportive of this proposition.

**Why are you called Enlightenment Wines?**

The Enlightenment was a philosophical movement that challenged traditionally held views and encouraged first hand experience of trial and error over traditional accepted wisdom. Thinkers refused to accept inherited norms and traditions without personal experimentation.

The word Enlightenment reminds us that mead-making, and in fact all winemaking, is an ancient art based in an individual using their senses to explore tastes for themselves and to decide what brings them pleasure. We don't need authorization or permission from on high to know what we like or even to learn how to make it. Winemaking is firstly an empirical practice of observing the

natural world. It is a world of experimentation and curiosity. That is the world of Enlightenment Wines.

Where do your label images come from?

Enlightenment Wines' labels are designed by Lyon and often silkscreened in house. The imagery is often inspired by his large collection (on view in the winery ) of herbal and occult books, and his long held interest in the aesthetics and philosophy of alchemy. The alchemical tradition is a syncretic tradition, meaning it finds truth by bringing together a multitude of philosophical, geographic, and scientific traditions. As such it is a great resource for thinking through the history of fermentation in its many forms.

**So is mead magic?**

Yes.

**I'm confused about the relationship between Honey's and Enlightenment Wines.**

Enlightenment Wines is the name of the company, and the brand. It appears on the labels of every bottle we make. Honey's is our on site tasting room and cocktail bar. Both are located at 93 Scott avenue, Brooklyn NY.

**What kind of things do you serve at Honey's?**

While we serve a variety of house made meads, including items not available by bottle in stores or online, we also have developed a list of unique cocktails. One for example is *The Floralia Gimlet*- using Material Vodka, our *Floralia* (Juniper, lavender and Marjoram mead), lemon and Yuzu Sake. We also have house made salt brined white carrots, ramps pickled in miso, special house made popcorn and more. The menu is always changing as we are always challenging ourselves to try new things. Ask your bartender, let them be your guide.

**Can I get a regular beer or grape wine at Honey's?**

Honey's has a full bar. This means we offer "regular" beer as well as craft beer, gin and tonics if you please, grape wine and any number of non-mead drinks.

**Can I get non-alcoholic drinks at Honey's?**

Definitely. We are proud to offer a series of unique vinegar based cocktails based on our own house vinegar made from our house mead. Just ask your bartender.

**Do you do private events?**

Between Honey's bar and Enlightenment Wines winery space, we are well suited to host parties as small as 20 to as large as 200. Just get in touch with us and we will find something that fits.

**What are the hours?**

Honey's is open to the public every day but Monday. We open at 5pm

### Do you do tours?

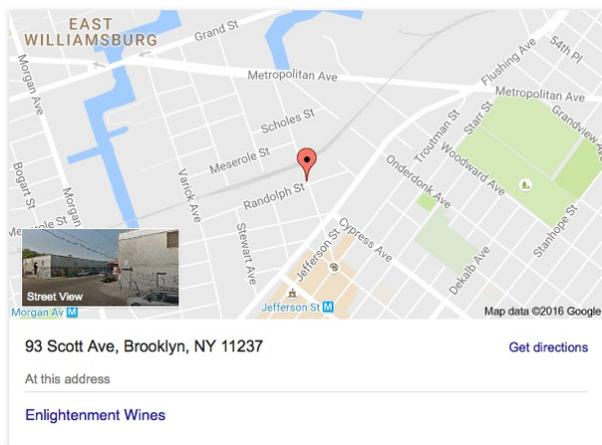
We do a free tour and tasting every Sunday at 6pm. Our “Sunday School classes follow at 7pm” [contact@enlightenmentwines.com](mailto:contact@enlightenmentwines.com) if you want to know when they open up.

Tell me more about your “Sunday School”

We are offering affordable hands-on workshops and free seminars with famed fermenters like Andy Brennan of [Aaron Burr Cidery](#) and Bianca Miraglia of [Uncouth Vermouth](#), covering everything from vinegar making for health care and alcohols made by incarcerated winemakers to herbal potions by local witches and, of course, making natural mead and cocktails. Classes and talks are Sundays at 7pm- upcoming classes need to be RSVP'd for as space is limited. More info can be found here: <http://www.eventbrite.com/o/enlightenment-wines-11376607675> or via [contact@enlightenmentwines.com](mailto:contact@enlightenmentwines.com)

### How do I get there?

93 Scott Ave, 11237 is a short walk from the Jefferson street L stop in Bushwick, Brooklyn.



<https://goo.gl/maps/k1CoT9kB1sq>

### Where else may I have seen Enlightenment Wines mead?

We are proud to have worked with some of the finest retailers, bars and restaurants in the area: Agem, PDT, Booker and Dax, Blanca, UVA, Spuyten Duyvil, Bibber and Bell, Dandelion Wine Chambers St Wine, Frankly Wines, Slope Cellars, The Farm on Adderly, The Drink, Jimmy's 43, Dram (among others)

### Can I order online?

You certainly can. Please check out our online store  
[https://vinoshipper.com/wines/enlightenment\\_wines\\_farm\\_and\\_meadery](https://vinoshipper.com/wines/enlightenment_wines_farm_and_meadery)

### **Can I get bottles to go at the bar?**

Definitely. Your bartender will be happy to help you.  
In addition large orders can be shipped for a nominal price if you don't feel like walking with them home.

### **Who is Raphael Lyon**

Raphael Lyon was raised in rural New Mexico and the Hudson Valley of New York State by an artist and herbalist. After graduating from Brown University with a degree in media and culture he farmed at his family homestead focusing on heirloom crops and subsistence agriculture. There he began his first experiments with making fruit wines and meads from local ingredients, a curiosity that has continued for 15 years. Lyon soon returned to Providence however, developing a career as a touring musician and installation artist, ultimately returning to New York City in 2009 to enroll in Columbia University's MFA program. At this time he also received a permit for wine production and started Enlightenment Wines, New York's smallest winery and the first Wine based CSA \*(Community Supported Alcohol). Enlightenment Wines has been in operation for over 7 years now. When he is not making mead for Enlightenment Wines, he continues to make art.

### **Who is Arley Marks**

Marks also grew up in the country (outside of Alfred, NY), also on a self sufficient homestead and was also raised by artists and herbalists. Arley graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design and continues to have a close relationship with many of the artists and designers he met there. After graduating he traveled on a fellowship to Asia- exploring the sights, sounds, and flavors and sounds of China, Malaysia and Indonesia while making field recordings and videos. On his return he would start a series of large scale (40 or 50 people) pop up dinners in Providence. In the summers he would fish on Block Island in the mornings, serving the recently caught fish at his one man bar on Block Island.

Marks began making cocktails professionally for the fashion company EckhausLatta during their first NY Fashion week show, where his drinks caught the eye of Danny Bowien. Bowien asked him to design and build the bar and cocktail program for would be Mission Chinese Food's first NYC restaurant. Arley was a part of the team when they were voted best restaurant of 2012 by the New York Times. From There he went on to work at Diner in Williamsburg and then to design the cocktail program for Dimes at 49 Canal Street. His unique creations have been featured in national publications such as TIME magazine, Vogue, Vanity Fair, the forthcoming cookbook by Julia Sherman, Salad For President.

### **Who is Anthony Rock?**

Anthony Rock and Raphael Lyon met through while Lyon was in the MFA program at Columbia University. Though Lyon was in the arts, and Rock an alum of the business school, they both

connected around wine, and food and desire to find a way to bring Enlightenment Wines to the next level. Previously Rock was a financial executive most recently serving as a Managing Director with Credit Industriel et Commercial (“CIC”). Rock is also Co-Manager and Co-owner of Seymour Ranch, a 200 acre family farm growing wine grapes in California.

#### **Who designed and built the new Enlightenment Wines/Honey’s location?**

The production facility and and tasting room was designed by Jonathan Mosca, and hand built with the help of Lyon and Marks. Mosca has designed a variety of interior spaces from well-appointed residential apartments to highly visible sets for film and television, including the Oscar-nominated “Beasts of the Southern Wild.”

In addition to Mosca’s work, a number of artists and craftsmen have contributed, including: Jessica Reaves (sculptor),who designed and built the tap handles, Chen Chen & Kai Williams who designed the light fixtures, Jessie Stead, a video artist currently featured in the waiting area, Matthew Thurber, illustrator and comic artist who produced the hand painted signage, and Andy Onderdonx who is designed the seating.

#### **How do I stay in touch?**

Enlightenment Wines sends out announcements of new wines and special events through a mailing list you can sign up for on the front page of our website:

[www.enlightenmentwines.com](http://www.enlightenmentwines.com)

In addition we use instagram @honeysbrooklyn & @enlightenmentwines and maintain a facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/enlightenmentwines>

General inquiries should be directed to : [contact@enlightenmentwines.com](mailto:contact@enlightenmentwines.com)

text:: 401 481 9205

## Up to date [press links](#) about Enlightenment Wines

#### **Recent:**

BLOOMBERG: Mead: It’s Not Just for Hobbits Anymore

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-08-16/mead-no-mere-saccharine-ren-faire-staple-is-now-a-serious-drink>

NY TIMES: A Brooklyn Cocktail Bar Dedicated to One Unexpected Ingredient

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/16/t-magazine/food/honeys-brooklyn-cocktail-mead.html>

TASTING TABLE: For the Love of Honey

<https://www.tastingtable.com/drinks/national/enlightenment-wines-mead-honey-wine-nyc>

WINE MAGAZINE: Mead Cocktails from the Hive Mind

<http://www.winemag.com/gallery/mead-cocktails-from-the-hive-mind>

BEDFORD AND BOWERY: Hey Honey, a Meadery and Cocktail Bar Just Opened in Bushwick

<http://bedfordandbowery.com/2016/08/enlightenment-wines-brings-mead-to-bushwick/#>

SUPERCALL

<https://www.supercall.com/culture/how-to-drink-mead>

ARTSY: 9 Artist-Run Food Establishments, from Los Angeles to Berlin, you need to know

<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-9-artist-run-restaurants-you-need-to-know>

HERITAGE RADIO NETWORK: Dave Arnold's "Cooking Issues" Podcast: July, 2016

<http://heritageradionetwork.org/podcast/enlightenment-wines-with-raphael-lyon/>

EDIBLE, *CSA Sippin': Enlightenment Wine Opens Up More Shares*

[www.ediblemanhattan.com/topics/wine-drinks/csa-sippin-enlightenment-wine-opens-up-more-shares/](http://www.ediblemanhattan.com/topics/wine-drinks/csa-sippin-enlightenment-wine-opens-up-more-shares/)

FOOD REPUBLIC "Magic in a Bottle"

<http://www.foodrepublic.com/2011/08/18/magic-in-a-bottle/>

NY Times Magazine, *Case Study | Cups of Good Cheer*

<http://tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/14/case-study-cups-of-good-cheer/#more-237797>