

WINE News

A rosé outlook for summer wines.



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What Bubble? The Continuing Strength of Rosé

By Ryan Woodhouse

A few people have asked me this year about the supposed “rosé bubble” and its reported “bursting.” Well to be honest with you I’ve heard no such *pop!* Perhaps it’s because rosé has long been a staple for us here at K&L—not some fad that comes and goes, not an afterthought, but a fully fledged category encompassing serious wines from all over

the world, made with the same dedication to quality as their red and white counterparts. In fact I don’t think I’ve ever seen such a broad and varied selection of pink wines than the class of 2018 that currently fills our shelves. We don’t drink rosé because it’s cool—we drink it because it’s delicious. And delicious never goes out of style.

2017 Tyler Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir Rosé (\$24.99) A tart, crunchy take on Pinot Noir rosé showing some of the more savory, sultry elements of the varietal, this is made from the free-run juice that collects in the picking bins as the clusters of Pinot get squeezed under their own weight. A patchwork of fruit from across many of the top vineyards in Santa Maria Valley and the Sta. Rita Hills. Very fragrant and floral. Alpine strawberry, bramble, wild thyme and orange peel. The wine also has a distinct saline, mineral quality, maybe from Sta. Rita’s calcareous soils. Super elegant and refreshing rosé.



2017 Brander Los Olivos District Rosé (\$15.99) A bit of an outlier among our rosé selections that are dominated by Pinot Noir and Rhône varietals but nonetheless delicious! This 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon-based rosé comes from Brander’s Los Olivos estate and Mesa Verde vineyards, both in the Los Olivos District of Santa Ynez Valley. The fruit was grown and picked specifically for rosé production and picked early for bright flavors and acid retention. A crunchy, zesty wine with white strawberry, lemon, cranberry and spearmint, this is also a very versatile food wine for alfresco dinners this summer season.



2017 Eisold-Smith “Guilt” El Dorado County Zinfandel Rosé (\$11.99) From 40-year-old Zinfandel vines in the Sierra Foothills. The fruit is hand-picked and direct pressed to keep the color light, gently settled then spontaneously fermented. It spent five months on lees and did not go through malo. As the winery says: “This is not your Aunt Joan’s White Zinfandel!” A lovely Zin rosé—dry, fresh, crunchy, lovely ripe soft red fruits but mouthwatering acidity to keep it super refreshing. Amazing value for everyday drinking. My pick for Fourth of July celebrations for a truly American take on rosé.



(Continued on page 2)

Rosé in a Can: Summer in a Tin!

By Ryan Woodhouse

Cans of wine...love them or hate them, it looks like they're here to stay. This format for packaging wine has taken the world by storm in recent years and the quality and selection of wines available in a can continues to go from strength to strength. I must add the caveat that like with any other format for packaging wine, I implore potential consumers to think about what's in the tin before buying anything. It does seem that the canned wine category has more than its fair share of people and brands trying to make a quick buck and putting pretty insipid juice into a trendy package. Yet even good-quality rosé seems especially well suited for the canning revolution and there are more than a few fun ones out there for your next hiking trip. Here's a handful to consider:

2017 Margerum "Riviera" Central Coast Rosé (500ml \$11.99)

Coming in at less than 12% alcohol by volume, this snappy, refreshing rosé is perfect for daytime drinking. Made from Rhône grapes (mostly Grenache) from some of the best vineyards in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties, this number is racy and mouthwatering with alpine strawberry, cut herbs, citrus peel and stony minerals. Same wine as in the 750-milliliter glass bottle. **92 WE**



2017 Ah-So Rosado Navarra (250ml \$5.99) Free-run juice from a high-elevation Garnacha vineyard in Navarra. Fermented in tank and canned with high CO₂ for just a subtle prickle of effervescence. Fruit forward, aromatic and very quaffable rosé at a bargain price.

2017 Bonny Doon "La Bulle-Moose" Central Coast Sparkling Rosé (375ml \$6.99) Never one to miss a trick, it's not surprising that Randall Graham at Bonny Doon Vineyard has a stake in the canned wine game. This is actually the exact same juice that makes up the perennial favorite Vin Gris de Cigare but given a spritz of carbonation and sealed in a can. The Bulle-Moose gives the winery's very traditional and long-standing Provençal-style rosé a fresh new look, and it seems very comfortable with its extra fizz and new vessel.



2017 Alloy Wine Works "Tin City" Central Coast Rosé (500ml \$6.99) One of the earlier entrants into the canned wine game is still going strong: Alloy from Field Recordings. Yet again this delivers everything you could want in a crushable summer pink wine. Soft, bright fruit, rose petals, white peach and pomegranate all wrapped up in a conveniently large 500ml can!

(Continued from page 1)

2017 Tercero Santa Barbara County Mourvèdre Rosé (\$24.99) If there's one grape that lends itself to making layered, complex, food-friendly rosé wines, then that has to be Mourvèdre. Somehow this mysterious varietal seems to capture both the fruit purity and drinkability rosé can bring but also often has some more savory aspects, soil-driven characters and ageworthy structure. Rhône specialist Larry Schaffer at Tercero makes one of the best domestic examples that, I believe, stands up to the very best Bandol can muster. The fruit is foot stomped and given an hour or so on skins to pick up color, fermented cold in stainless steel to capture bright fresh aromatics, then a portion sees several months in neutral oak to build texture and nuance. **92 RP, 92 W&S, 91 WE**



Rosé Around the World with K&L Wine Buyers

Clyde's Fave from South of France

2017 Les Vignerons de Fontès "Prieuré Saint-Hippolyte" Languedoc Rosé (750ml \$9.99; 1.5L \$21.99) Les Vignerons de Fontès is a cooperative winemaking facility in the hills outside the village of Pézenas in the Languedoc. Oenologist Corinne Pastourel oversees the project, which has a host of growers spread throughout the region over a range of soils including schist, basalt, limestone and clay.

I met Corinne in 2006 when I and Mulan Chan (former French regional buyer for K&L) were attending Vinisud in Montpellier, France. We were taken to the village where the whole town was having a celebration. We met the mayor and his wife (they drank a bottle of this rosé every day) and spent the evening with Corinne. We forged a relationship that would bring us some of our most popular value wines coming from the south of France. The rosé, one of our best sellers every year, is a blend of 70% Syrah and 30% Grenache that is made in the saignée style where a light maceration occurs and the fruit is bled off the skins. It is bright and lively, with aromas of raspberries, red currants and white flowers. The Mediterranean influence is easily felt in this region, and the best cuisine for this wine is just that—Mediterranean! Serve with roasted vegetables, chickpea salad and fresh cheeses. A delight!

This 2017 is so good it is scary. It is not as heavy as the 2016 and better balanced than that vintage. This will blow you away. A very elegant, medium-bodied wine, with strawberry and cassis notes and a fresh, intense, slightly herbal note on the palate. Lovely with southern French cuisine. A must buy—by the case. —*Clyde Beffa Jr.*



The wine looks a little darker, but its color belies its delicacy. An easy-drinking and expressive rosé with richness yet excellent acidity for a perfectly balanced summer sipper. I find this wine extremely versatile in food pairing—while it could easily go with roasted chicken or herbed pork tenderloin it pairs beautifully with grilled salmon as well. Yet I think the best match would be with pasta, a summertime special with burrata mozzarella, fresh tomatoes and basil or something spicier like grilled sausage and peppers.

And I can't not mention one of our Direct Import rosatos that will be coming to the stores in August, the **2017 Tenuta Rovaglia Charetto (\$12.99)**. Our entire staff has been blown away by the quality and drinkability of their Lugana but I didn't know they even made a pink wine until I tasted it at the winery in April. You won't be disappointed and it will be your rosé of the future! —*Greg St. Clair*

Toast Summer Moments with Top Rosé Champagne

Summer always has special occasions: an anniversary, a graduation or a send-off for a big voyage, and whatever that occasion is, I think that rosé Champagne is the best drink for those moments. A sip of great rosé Champagne brings my temperature right down to the cool of the chalk cellars of the region. While the house of Champagne Louis Roederer is most famous for Cristal, it is a little-known fact that each of the vintage wines are estate grown, and come very close to the quality of their tête cuvée. All of the estates within the greater estate of Louis Roederer are managed separately, with the goal growing the best grapes for each of these specific wines. For me, the most exciting of these is the rosé, and in great vintages I feel this is one of the best values in top-notch Champagne. We have one of those great vintages now in the **2012 Louis Roederer Brut Rosé Champagne (750ml \$64.99; 375ml \$39.99)**. It is composed of 63% Pinot Noir and 37% Chardonnay. The Pinot Noir comes from the super steep, amphitheater-like Premier Cru of Cumières, one of the best places in Champagne for the production of red wine. This Pinot Noir is treated to a short maceration, the skins in contact with all the juice to get maximum flavor and aroma, but without the tannin of a longer maceration.

Chardonnay from north-facing sites in Chouilly Grand Cru is added to give the wine lift, minerality and length, bringing exquisite balance to the bottle. It is then aged five years on the lees in cool caves under Reims to ensure the finest bead and texture in the finished wine. While the color of this Champagne is nearly coppery, there is beautiful dark cherry fruit, complex savor and depth to this rosé on the mid-palate. The finish is chalky, dry and bright, enough so that one might guess that there is more than just 37% Chardonnay in the blend. This is a wine that needs no accompaniment besides a good glass, but will go very well with cold smoked salmon, or even caviar. A toast to you! —*Gary Westby*



Italy's First Rosé

Italy is not the first place many think of when we talk rosé—or rosato! Yet slowly over the last decade Italian rosé is making inroads into the US market. The Leone de Castris family's winery is in Puglia, the heel of Italy's boot peninsula, and they have a long history of making pink wine in Italy. In fact, Leone de Castris was the first producer to bottle rosé in Italy, in 1943—interestingly enough it was for the US Army! **2017 Leone de Castris "Five Roses" Rosato (\$14.99)** is made from an indigenous grape called Negroamaro that makes powerful red wines but is well suited for pink wines as well. This has a beautiful nose that gives you a sense of fresh strawberries and cream. On the palate the wine has good richness, showing a supple smoothness but accented by a crisp acidity, making this wine exceedingly well balanced.





Greatness from the Smaller Parts of Provence

By Keith Mabry

It's no secret that Provençal rosé ranks as our best seller, having increased in overall sales almost 10% every year for the last decade.

There are some other sub-appellations of Provence, though, that have historical significance and produce wines of pure pleasure and in some instances downright ageability. The regions of Bandol, Cassis and Bellet are tiny by comparison in the scheme of Provence but they often rank among my top wines in the category every year.

Many are familiar with the rosés of Bandol, put firmly on the map by Domaine Tempier. Many other great producers exist, however, like Château Pradeaux. Making classic, full-bodied leathery reds with a long capacity for aging, they also produce Mourvèdre-based rosé that is also capable of some longevity.

2017 Château Pradeaux Bandol Rosé (\$29.99) is pristine, with red fruit qualities and a slightly darker hue. Rich and textured, this is a sinewy wine with a frame that says, "I'm good with some grilled skirt steak now but you can drink me during the winter with heartier fare as well." Perfumed with red cherry and mineral tones, this is a generous and dry style with a long finish.

One of the most beautiful regions in the entire south is the village of Cassis. This amphitheater-shaped village captures the Mediterranean sea breeze and gives the grapes an incredible view of



the sparkling blue waters. It is primarily known for white wine production, but a small amount of rosé is produced and we received one of the biggest allocations this year of one of the region's greats: **Domaine du Bagnol! 2017 Domaine du Bagnol Cassis Rosé (\$29.99)** is a clean wine with notes of pamplemousse, white strawberries, melon rind and sea breeze. It has wonderful acidity and is the classic foil for the region's fish stews and grilled mussels à la plancha.

One of the greatest rosés from any region comes from the tiniest appellation on the east side of Provence. Weighing in at a just 150 acres under vine is the region of Bellet. The top winery is Château de Bellet and we recently struck up a direct import relationship with them. They make gorgeous whites and a tiny bit of rosé that is one of the cultiest wines of the region. Recently converted to all organic production, the **2017 Chateau de Bellet Bellet Rosé (\$29.99)** is a breath of fresh air composed of 90% Braquet and 10% Rolle. It is loaded with succulent raspberry, citron oil, dried violets and mineral tones. It is full-bodied for rosé but almost ethereal in its balance. It is a perfect foil for roast duck, rabbit or squab. *Very Limited!* (Due to arrive mid-July).



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