

BEER, WINE & SPIRITS

DRINK

Summer in a Bottle

Rosés reining in respect

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I am so pleased to see rosé wines inhabiting larger and larger sections of our local (and national) wine stores. I've been singing the praises of well-made rosé for at least 15 years now, and it finally seems to be getting some of the attention and respect it deserves. At the very least, most wine drinkers now know that it isn't just White Zinfandel with a French name.

For those not on the bandwagon yet, let's just review the basics. Technically a red wine, rosé drinks more like a white. It's made from red grapes—often Grenache, Mourvedre or Cinsault—but during production, the grape skins, which give color and tannins to wine, are left in contact with the grape juice for only a matter of hours (as opposed to days or even weeks as is the case for most red wine). That limited skin contact results in the wine having a pinkish hue, but very little in the way of tannins. This makes it an easy-drinking, lower alcohol wine, and one that can (and should) be served lightly chilled, like its white counterpart.

While rosés used to be almost exclusively from the Provence region of France, today you'll find them made around the world, including here in the United States, as well as countries like Spain, Italy, Argentina, Australia and Chile. In general, these wines just keep getting better and better now that winemakers are treating it with the seriousness it deserves. Having said that, I still think of them as wines to *enjoy*—especially in the summertime—rather than ponder. For me, rosé is synonymous with summer. Here are some interesting examples that I'll be sipping this summer.

One of my dependable, go-to summer rosés is **Carol Shelton Wild Thing Rendezvous Rosé 2014** (\$11.99). Hailing from

Mendocino County, it's made from sustainably grown Carignane grapes in a crisp, dry style with watermelon and strawberry notes, plus a great mineral backbone. It's an excellent picnic and cookout wine.

Also from Mendocino comes **Atrea Skid Rosé 2015** (\$15.99). I'm told that Atrea winemaker Alex MacGregor—one of the most knowledgeable and talented people in the wine world I know of—is particularly proud of this wine. It's an "irreverent tribute," according to MacGregor, to the Malbec "Skid Row" vineyard where its grapes were grown. To give you an idea of how little time the skins for some rosés are in contact with the juice, the fruit for Skid Rosé was destemmed and pressed for a mere two-hour soak. It's fabulous with a fresh Caprese salad.

France's Minervois region is home to **Le Grand Noir Rosé 2014** (\$11.99). This Grenache/Syrah blend is pale pink with spicy pepper notes to compliment red currant, raspberry and strawberry flavors. It's a versatile food wine that can pair with everything from pizza to potstickers.

Tenuta Sant'Antonio Scaia Rosato 2015 (\$12.99) from Italy's Veneto region reminds me—in a good way—of my Hawaiian Punch days. It's a whole lot of party in a bottle: passion fruit, strawberry, Cavaillon melon and raspberry. Those are just some of the fab flavors in this fruit-packed drink.

Cariñena and Garnacha go into making **Torres de Casta Rosado 2015** (\$13.99) from Catalunya, Spain. It's a bigger, more intense

rosé than most, and one that will fit in well at your next barbecue.

Some other great summer rosés to be on the lookout for include **Bucklin Old Hill Ranch Rosé 2015** (\$16.99), **Matthiasson Rosé 2015** (\$18.99), **Lorenza Rosé 2015** (\$17.99), **Cline Mourvedre Rosé 2015** (\$11.95) and **Le Cirque Rosé 2014** (\$13.99). Those should get your sweaty summer started. **CW**

