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Pursuits

Bottle Buying Guide

There's More Rosé Wine Than Ever. Here Are the Best to Drink

Our wine critic cuts a path through the ever-widening world of the pink drink to pick 10 bottles—and one box—that are worthy of your lazy days and summer celebrations ahead.



Source: Vendors

By
Elin McCoy

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As the summer season kicked off, I wondered: Has the world finally reached peak rosé?

“Definitely not,” says Jean-Guillaume Prats, the former chief executive officer of Château Lafite Rothschild. In the past three years, his family and two high-profile partners have acquired three châteaux in Provence, and this spring launched a new global rosé brand, Roseblood. They’ll make 1 million bottles in vintage 2023, and even more next year. Though rosé sales have rocketed ever upwards for more than a decade, IWSR Drinks Market Analysis shows a possible slowdown in the US, with the volume of retail sales declining 3% from 2021 to 2022. Adam Rogers, research director for the US market, says, “Quality brands with authenticity and style have continued to increase in demand, while many of the lower quality brand offerings have fallen out of favor.” He adds that the outlook for future declines will be “largely driven by the lower-priced end of the market.”

Sales of rosé in restaurants and bars grew 27% over the same time frame, according to market research firm CGA Strategy.

Prats isn’t worried. After all, pink wine from France, especially Provence, continues to dominate rosé sales on e-commerce platform Drizly.

“New investors are all focusing on Provence,” says Prats. “It has terroir, history and great vineyards, which is why it’s attracting big players like LVMH. We want Roseblood to be one of the major brands, like Whispering Angel.”

How did Roseblood take off?

Media entrepreneur and chairman of Banijay Entertainment Stephane Courbit and the Bordeaux Prats family acquired historic Château d’Estoublon in 2020, then were joined by former French President and First Lady Nicolas Sarkozy and Carla Bruni. Earlier this year the group snapped up Château Beaulieu in Coteaux d’Aix-en-Provence and Château

Cantarelle in the Var. They now own just over 400 hectares of vineyards, and the cream-colored châteaux, with tile roofs, are becoming ever more luxurious hotels.

The partners are banking that rosé will continue to be a symbol of the glam life, a key element in Provence's image as a luxury destination. Prats sees potential for pink drinking among the younger generation in China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam and Africa. Later this year the partners will debut a luxury version of Roseblood, to be labeled 1489.

Rosé has largely shed its girly image in the worlds of culture and fashion and is now featured in a host of products that want some of pink wine's fairy dust. From now until the end of October, for example, Le Meridien hotels are offering a rosé sorbet created by TikTok chef Meredith Hayden that uses the wildly popular Whispering Angel in the recipe. Spanish wine giant Freixenet will be peddling boozy sparkling rosé ice pops at UK Pub in the Park festivals this summer.

The sweet stuff doesn't appeal to me, but I've become a fan of one new pink thing: rosé vinegar, especially a new release from the Ponti brand you can find on Amazon. It's lighter than red and spicier and more flavorful than white—ideal for marinating salmon and chicken for the grill.

Plenty of spirits have jumped on the pink bandwagon, especially gin (up 21% in 2021), according to IWSR, which also reports pink tequila will rise next. Inspiro Tequila even produces its Rosa Reposado, using former rosé wine barrels.

In the wine world, the number of new rosés continues to multiply.

Celebs such as CJ McCollum have joined the action; the basketball star has recently released his third vintage of McCollum Heritage91 rosé of pinot noir made in conjunction with Oregon's Adelsheim Vineyard. New low- and no-alcohol versions I've tried aren't very appealing, but the

latest cabernet-based rosés from such places as Bordeaux and Napa are great with food, especially rare grilled lamb and barbecue, respectively. Global warming is poised to boost rosé’s popularity. During last summer’s heat waves in France, rosé sales in supermarkets from May to July jumped 10% over the same months in the previous year, according to NIQ (formerly Nielsen IQ). Earlier this month, supermarket Aldi Stores Ltd. put up a temperature-sensitive billboard in Manchester, England, that dispenses free rosé (seriously!) when the outdoor temperature hits 19.2 degrees centigrade (67F)—the ideal weather to begin drinking pink according to their survey of customers.

Still, the hotter it gets, the better it is for rosé. When the temperature hit 26 degrees centigrade (79F) this month, Aldi’s sales went up 50% in a day. Proving once again that pink wine is the perfect summer drink.

Here are my picks of 11 new pink wines worth trying, from least to most expensive.

Best Rosé Wines for Summer 2023 – Bottle Buying Guide



2021 Pasqua “11 Minutes” (\$17)

Pasqua’s first vintage of a fresh, delicate and complex blend of organically grown red and white grapes is from Italy’s Veneto region. It may look like a white wine, but it just won the medal for best rosé in the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles competition. The monicker “11 minutes” reflects how long the grapes stayed in contact with the skin to pick up color and flavor.

2021 Roseblood (\$20)

Very crisp, fresh and mineral, this elegant Provence rosé has more complexity than Whispering Angel, at about the same price. It’s from organic grapes, too.

2021 Kylie Minogue Côtes de Provence Rosé (\$29)

I’ve been unimpressed by most celebrity pink wines. But this pale cuvée under the Australian pop singer-songwriter’s label, which debuted in the US last year, is no brand gimmick. Crisp, citrusy, round and silky textured, it’s what to drink while listening to Minogue’s latest hit, Padam Padam.

2021 Acta Rosé of Zinfandel (\$30)

I discovered this sophisticated, complex bottling from a brand-new winery in Sonoma’s Alexander Valley at the Healdsburg Wine and Food Festival’s Grand Tasting. The zinfandel vines are nearly 100-years old, giving the wine a deliciously spicy, savory intensity. It will go on sale on July 1.



2021 Smith-Madrone Rosé (\$30)

This serious rosé with a vibrant dark-pink color is the third vintage of a tart blend of merlot and cabernet franc from Napa's Spring Mountain. It shows bright, bold, cherry and spice flavors and has a surprisingly long finish.

2022 Ashes & Diamonds Rosa No. 3 (\$45)

This juicy, crunchy, light, ruby-colored rosé is a limited-edition blend of mostly sangiovese, cabernet franc, merlot and syrah. It's one of Napa's few zero-zero wines, meaning it's vinified with no additives, including no sulfur. The delicious result, which looks almost like a light red, has floral and herb aromas, a bright red fruit taste, and enough oomph to be great with everything from hamburgers to spicy tacos. You have to join the wine club to get it.

2021 Hirsch Rosé of Pinot Noir (\$45)

This famous vineyard planted on the Sonoma coast has long been noted for its luscious pinot noirs. This is the second vintage of its rich, deep,

salmon-colored rosé from the same grape. It's a serious, complex pink wine with ripe berry fruit flavors.

2022 Fantastique Château Sainte Marguerite Cru Classé Cotes de Provence (\$46)

Last year, Pernod Ricard acquired a majority stake in Château Sainte Marguerite, one of 18 cru classé estates in Provence. My favorite of the two cuvées the company launched in the US this month is the savory, refined and silky Fantastique, from organic grapes. It comes in a pretty, flower-painted bottle.



2022 Frank Family Vineyards Leslie Rosé of Pinot Noir (\$50)

Created in 2020 and named for the wife of winery founder and former Disney executive Rich Frank, this thirst-quenching, strawberry-and-orange blossom-scented wine is perfect for a wedding or for an elegant brunch with veggie crostini or a warm brie and apple tart.

Drink Pink Wine gift box (\$95)

For the first time, New York Korean steakhouse Cote's wine club is offering a box of three different, excellent rosés. The newest cuvée in the bunch is citrusy quaffer 2021 Souleil Vin de Bonte Le Rosé, made from

organically farmed grenache grapes grown on the Mediterranean coastline.

2022 Bedrock Ode to Lulu Bag-in-Box (3-liter, \$100)

One of my favorite California rosés is this rich, layered wine, mostly from old mourvedre vines. This year, for the first time, Bedrock is trialing some of it in a recycled cardboard bag-in-box format for eco-conscious reasons. I'd say it's tops for a party.