

Decanter

PASSIONATE ABOUT WINE SINCE 1975

JULY 2023

+
404
wines tasted
in this issue

**Bordeaux
2022**
60 star buys

It's from where?!
Winemaking doesn't come much
more extreme than this...

Longing for Loire
Beautiful Tours & Touraine
- a wine lover's guide
72 Sancerres and
Pouilly-Fumés rated

**Summer
rosé**

OLLY SMITH CELEBRATES
THE MANY SHADES OF
PINK, PLUS 20 TOP BUYS





Summer rosé

Olly's ultimate guide

As garden-party season kicks in, there's no reason why your choice of rosé wines shouldn't be just as varied and energising as your music playlist. Here we look at what makes rosé work so well, along with a handpicked seasonal selection of 20 to try

WORDS & SELECTION OLLY SMITH

'More of this level of playfulness and experimentation in the world of rosé would be a dramatic and delicious development to the canon'

20 | December | July 2023

Rosé is liquid Abba. C
enduringly entertain
appeal and capable
reinterpretations to the de
new. While summer is win
greatest hit, from fizz to
on tour year-round thes
a sunbeam is tough to b
More than any other
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intensely flavoured
laden with garlic
pungent salads,
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20 TOP SUMMER ROSÉ BUYS

If you're already a fan of Tavel or Bandol rosé, pink Greek Mouhtaro should be at the top of your list.

Rosé can even handle a good whack of spice in cooking – curries are well handled by bold, deeply coloured rosé from warmer climates, and I've also found Rioja rosado from northern Spain to be a fantastic all-rounder to match dishes laced with a kick of pimentón, such as a hearty seafood paella.

TASTE SPECTRUM

As the latest vintage of rosé breaks like a welcome summery wave across wine shops and restaurant and bar lists, I'm recommending a fair old spread of styles here, including the odd sparkler and even a non-alcoholic sparkling tea to cover all bases for every shade of weather the season brings.

Technique has a marked impact on style. Rosés from Provence deserve their place here as a key region with a clearly defined specialism in pale, crisp, scented blends, and I've found a number to recommend thanks to their specialised short maceration, which extracts just enough colour to evoke that classic poolside mood.

Elsewhere, red winemakers can bleed off a little juice from their tanks, using the *saignée* method to produce a handy pink wine that's quickly ready to bottle for sale, while also lending concentration to the remaining red as it begins its more leisurely journey to bottling. In Champagne, producers famously blend white with a small percentage of red grapes, giving a lacing of structure which, for a summertime treat, is absolutely sublime with simply prepared lobster or a fresh prawn salad. And these are also bottles to consider ageing, in order to draw out a more ethereal uncoiling of savoury complexity – great fun to experiment with mild gamey flavours or cheeses with moderate intensity and evolution.

LIQUID CREATIVITY

Ageing still rosé is also well worth considering. The tiny, lesser-known French appellation of Palette is one to seek out; Château Simone (pictured, above right), which is stocked by Yapp Bros [at about £48 per bottle], is an occasional treat I pluck from my cellar. Blended from Grenache, Syrah, Carignan and obscure varieties such as Manoscan, it's powerful stuff, unlike any other. My wish is for this adventurous example of unique blends to flourish across the world of rosés – more creativity and invention, with blends delivering every shade of colour, flavour and design, from vineyards that perhaps wouldn't be obvious candidates for rosé. Whistler's Dry as a Bone from Barossa in South Australia (see



Tim Wildman MW

'Rosé can handle a good whack of spice – curries are fine with bold, deeply coloured rosé from warmer climates' Ollie Smith

Below: Mateus rosé – still a great-value option with spicy peri-peri chicken, says Ollie



p25), is one of these, a Mataro-Grenache fusion with fruit purity and a nimble 11.8% alcohol – I love its drinkability.

Considering the success of pink wine from Provence, a hot place which has made rosé its emblematic style, I'd love to see further warm areas such as Barossa having even more fun with developing fresh takes on rosé.

From elsewhere in Australia, perhaps the most adventurous rosé in this line-up is also the most playful. Tim Wildman MW's Piggy Pop Pét-Nat (see p25) is as bonkers as it is brilliant. Blended from white and red from different regions (Mataro and Nero d'Avola from McLaren Vale, Lagrein and Arneis from Adelaide Hills with Zibibbo from the Riverland), it is sustainably sourced and bottled under a crown cap while undergoing its first fermentation with wild yeast. I found it entertaining and wild in the very best sense of the word. Liquid creativity – more of this level of playfulness and experimentation in the world of rosé would be a dramatic as well as delicious development to the canon.

FADS AND FASHIONS

From choosing the *saignée* method to using a light or heavy maceration of grape skins, to blending single varietal wines, blends of different grapes, or even mixing red and white

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Olly Smith's pick: 20 rosés to celebrate summer

① Camel Valley, Pinot Noir Rosé Brut, Cornwall, England 2019 94

£29-£41 Camel Valley, De Burgh, EW Wines, Fortnum & Mason, The English Wine Collection, The Somerset Wine Co, The Wine Society, Waitrose
A pale rose gold with citrus splendour bursting from the glass, summery fruit from peach and cherry to apricot and strawberry and a biscuit framing. From experience ageing in my own cellar, this evolves for a decade and more but is charming to enjoy now, with a silky mousse, citrus vitality, apricot and mint freshness. If you can stretch to a case, enjoy half the bottles proudly displaying the Royal Warrant in this Coronation year and the rest as the years roll by, revealing majestic evolution. **Drink 2023-2034 Alcohol 12.5%**

② Wildman Wine, Piggy Pop Pét-Nat, McLaren Vale, South Australia 2022 93

£25-£28 Bottle Apostle, EW Wines, The Solent Cellar, The Sourcing Table
Visually this is great fun, a bubbling disco for the eyes – as soon as you crack the crown cap, it's alive with effervescence. Aromas of orange peel, pomegranate and cranberry and the palate is a wild sorbet of cranberry with joyful pomegranate depth and plenty of raspberry froth. A little spicy jazz on the finish. I've never tasted a blend like it – Mataro, Nero d'Avola, Lagrein and Zibibbo. For lovers of pét-nat's rugged magic, it's a banger. Tim Wildman MW is producing some unique ideas when it comes to blending informality with excellence. **Drink 2023 Alc 13%**

③ Innocent Bystander, Sparkling Moscato, Yarra Valley, Victoria, Australia 2021 89

£12.75-£14.95 Butlers Wine Cellar, Wine Raks
I list this in my Glass House wine bars on board P&O Cruises ships and it's one of the fruitiest and most approachable styles around – never fails to delight. Sweetly floral with a welcome low level of alcohol, meaning that whatever the time of day, it's sublime. With a bowl of freshly picked strawberries it has to win the award in this selection for 'the most fun' bottle.

Sparkling and exuberant, it's a cool-climate gem that's dangerously drinkable. Serve it as an alternative to pudding at your next barbecue. **Drink 2023 Alc 5.5%**

④ The Real Drinks Co, Peony Blush Alcohol Free Rosé, Naturally Fermented Sparkling Tea, England 89

£13 realdrinks.co
Hold the phone! This is terrific, and a welcome grown-up addition to the ranks of booze-free bubbly. There's a peachy marmalade aroma with a hint of fresh strawberry scent that feels proportionate and classy rather than over the top. Impressive finesse – think raspberry sorbet with a whisper of sharp apple bite. Crisp and sherbet-like, a peachiness weaves through the finish; it's got a dazzling and defined sense of flair as the flavours recede. **Drink 2023 Alc 0.0%**

⑤ Samartzis, Mouhtaros One, Thiva, Central Greece 2022 96

samartziswines.gr
There's an astonishing depth of colour to this PGI rosé, especially considering Panos Samartzis assured me the maceration period was just 30 minutes. This serious wine showcases the tension of the rare Greek Mouhtaros grape as it oscillates between ripe wild strawberry and a shadowy pomegranate. Elegantly

structured and delicious in its first flush, this wine, Samartzis tells me, is all about the place he so deeply reveres. With it, he's safeguarding legend status in the pantheon of global rosé. It is so delicious that, despite the painful import costs, I ordered myself a case from Greece. **Drink 2023 Alc 13%**

⑥ Whistler Wines, Dry as a Bone, Barossa Valley, South Australia 2022 95

£16 The Wine Society
This wine feels like a modern classic, thanks to instantly eye-catching pink vitality and enchanting fruit flavours. Delivering impressive length through strawberry power, there's a discreet savoury twist. Along with a playful tangy finish, this wine keeps things nimble with just 11.8% alcohol. The Grenache comes from Whistler's own organic and biodynamic vineyards. Mataro is from older vines in Greenock. Wild-fermented, sustainable and scrumptious: yet another smash hit from The Wine Society's rising star wine buyer Freddy Bulmer. **Drink 2023-2024 Alc 11.8%**

⑦ MiP, Classic #Les Diables, Côtes de Provence, Southeast France 2021 94

£14.95-£16.95 Burnett & Herbert, Lea & Sandeman
This translucent Cinsault-Syrah-Grenache blend has a gorgeous aroma of nectarine and wild strawberries, the floral finesse ▶



Drink 2023-2034 Alcohol 12.5%

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Pét-Nat, McLaren Vale, South
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