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THE WORLD OF

Rosé

Top Rated Rosés of 2018 • Tasting Notes & Ratings • The Grapes & Wines + Much More

The World of Rosé

Introduction



The world of rosé wine is huge. It includes many countries and even more grape varieties made in a wide range of styles, from bone dry to sweet, almost colorless to solid red, still to effervescent, and with fruit aromas and flavors that vary from fresh-picked to ripe and jammy. We've tasted hundreds of them, almost all dry, over the years. In this report, we try to synthesize what we've learned about dry rosé, and we provide tasting notes on 250 wines, most of which were released in 2018. Our listing of the top rated rosés and top value rosés for 2018 follow this introduction.

More and more dry rosés are being produced all over the world. Many of them come from traditional growing regions of France, Italy, and Spain. But increasing numbers are also being produced in North America—Pinot Noir rosé from Oregon, rosés made from Rhone varieties grown in Paso Robles and Lodi, rosés from hybrid grapes, and very high quality sparkling rosés from the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. We examine this amazing variety of rosé wine, from the blends of Provence and the Southern Rhone to the single varietals and blends grown elsewhere.

An important reason why the sales of dry rosé in North America are going through the roof is the improvement in quality over time. Rosé is, like Champagne, a winemaker's wine, and winemaking has improved dramatically over the past quarter century, ever since the first Provence winemakers began making their wines in a fresh, light style. We look at the changes in making rosé over time, from cool fermentation to

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aging in oak and examine the growing trend to make what's called "intentional rosé" as opposed to rosé made as a by-product of making red wine.

In our survey of the principal grape varieties and growing regions of rosé we identify the top producers who make the best rosés year in and year out. With some exceptions, our focus in this survey is on wines available in the North American wine market. Many wine regions and most producers of European rosé never find their way to the shelves of the American wine store.

What do top rosés have in common? In our opinion, good quality rosés are young and fresh, not over-ripe. They have bright, preferably natural, acidity to convey freshness. They should have flavor, either light

or concentrated, but it should be there and be enjoyable. They should not have too much sweetness, acidity or oak flavor. In short, they should be fresh, flavorful, and balanced.

More than most wines, rosé is sipped and enjoyed by itself. But many complex, mineral-like, and more intensely flavored rosés make great companions for food. In our reviews, we note wines that are particularly well suited for sipping or quaffing versus having with meals. We also write about pairing food with rosé and suggest a variety of dishes for enjoying rosé throughout the meal.

American production and consumption of dry rosé continues to grow at exponential rates. With per capita consumption of rosé still less than half that of the UK and less than one-tenth

that of France, there's no reason to expect sales growth will diminish soon. We explore the worldwide and American market for rosé and the stylish ways in which producers are presenting their wines.

Rosé is trending upwards, not just in quantity but also in quality. Winemakers in Southern France have been taking rosé seriously for some time. The results can be seen in the glass. We're encouraged by the number of US winemakers who are also beginning to take rosé seriously, which means planting, farming, harvesting and vinifying specifically to make rosé wine. The industry is still in the early stages of this quality revolution, but it's making clear progress, which we find encouraging.

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