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FT Weekend Magazine

Summer Food Special

Jancis Robinson tastes
the Queen's wine
Nicholas Lander meets
Sweden's new hot chef
Heston Blumenthal
gives away his secrets

FALLING STARS?

The food fight at
the Michelin Guide

ction with Rowley Leigh, Jason Atherton, Jacob Kenedy + Ice creams to make at home

Jancis Robinson



'A particularly pale salmon colour is a good but not infallible clue to quality'

Tickled pink



The growth in popularity of pink wines has been one of the few success stories for wine retailers in the UK recently. That growth has apparently slowed down but rosé has firmly established its position as a valid, non-wimpy wine style.

I have been tasting as many different examples as possible. Yapp Bros has a particularly interesting selection and I have come to the – admittedly hardly devastating – conclusion that Provence does pink better than anywhere else. Or, rather, Provence produces more great rosés than any other wine region. There may be other candidates but their wines rarely manage to combine the delicacy and subtle, dry herbiness of a really fine Provençal pink.

While there were some excellent practitioners before his advent from Bordeaux, newcomer Sacha Lichine did the rosé market a great service by showing just how fine (and expensive) his Château d'Esclans pink wines could be. The Provençal estate of the couple behind JCB and Daylesford Organics, Château Léoube, has been catching up fast, however.

There has been a determined effort to increase the number of fine Provençal rosés on offer in the UK and I have certainly seen a big difference in what's available. Tourists beware, however. It is still horribly easy, even in Provence, to find very ordinary, sticky pink. A particularly pale salmon colour is a good but not infallible clue to quality.

Navarra in Spain, to the north-east of Rioja, is another great source of dry rosé, or Rosado, but this time much beefier and more

obviously fruity. Although there are few other regions with a long tradition of making really successful rosés (most Tavel seems so heavy to me), there are individuals all over the wine world making exciting examples.

The standard commercial rosé is a lurid pink colour, which starts sweet and ends very tart with a distinct lack of fruit in the middle. Below are the most impressive wines among the scores of rosés I have been sampling, all of them with something positive to offer.

JANCIS'S ROSÉ PICKS

Innocent Bystander, Nine Tails Rosé Moscato 2010 Victoria
Bumptious, crown-capped Australian answer to Moscato d'Asti. Great for the end of a meal in the garden. Fun! 5.5%
£7.99 *Laithwaites*

Dom de Chinière 2010 St-Pourçain
Well-priced light, dry Gamay from this outer Loire co-op. No shortage of acidity but there is fruit here too. 12.5%
£8.50 *Yapp Bros*

'Other wine regions rarely combine the delicacy and dry herbiness of a really fine Provençal pink'

Les Clos Perdus, Le Rosé 2009 Corbières
Mainly Mourvèdre with a bit of Cinsault. Some barrel fermentation. Interesting, substantial and full-bodied dry wine. To be drunk at a table outside with some aioli, please. Or perhaps with mackerel and fennel? 13%
€149 a dozen, *www.lesclosperdus.com*

Ste-Lucie, Made in Provence! Premium Rosé 2010 Côtes de Provence
Syrah, Grenache, Vermentino. Easy and gentle and with more tingle and herbiness than the regular bottling. Neat and lively. Esclans at half the price? 12.5%
£11.75 *Lea & Sandeman*

Jean Teiller, Rosé 2010 Menetou-Salon
Very pale yellowy salmon pink Pinot Noir. Very fresh and perfumed. Not intense but pretty and worthwhile for fans of pink Sancerre. Bring on the poached salmon. 13%
£12.95 *Yapp Bros*

Saparale, Rosé 2010 Corse Sartène
Sciacarello, Nielluccio and Vermentino. Very pale orange. Big and busty with masses of slightly sweet fruit. Serve this with something garlicky. Much more interesting than most rosés. 13.5%
£12.95 *Yapp Bros*

Ch Léoube 2010 Côtes de Provence
A definite marine tang. Bone dry, just the right amount of slightly herby fruit and very succulent. Mildly smoky. Finer than their more expensive Le Secret bottling. 12.5%
£13.99 *Corney & Barrow, James Nicholson*



Mas de la Rouvière 2010 Bandol Tempier's may be the archetype here but this is both opulent and dry. Sensual. Lovely polished texture. Should ring a bell for anyone who has enjoyed a lazy holiday in Provence. 13.5%
£15.75 *Yapp Bros*

Ch d'Esclans, Esclans 2009 Côtes de Provence
Beautifully pale salmon colour and no shortage of personality. Lots of herbal top notes. Bone dry and with a certain smokiness. Very smooth texture. Benefits from bottle age.
£16.25 *Vin Est, Glos*

Clos Ste-Magdeleine 2010 Cassis
Another wine with a lovely saline whiff of the sea. Cinsault, Grenache and Mourvèdre. Quite sophisticated and delicate. Lovely texture and playful. Just 12.5%
£17.50 *Yapp Bros (pictured top left)*

Massa Vecchia Fabrizio Niccolaini, Rosato 2006 IGT Maremma Toscana
Malvasia Nera, Merlot, Aleatico. Pale red. Persistent, fresh and rewarding. I'd suggest drinking it as (fairly) dry *vino da meditazione* rather than with food. A luscious cross between rose petals and cabbage. 14%
£31.49 *Caves de Pyrène*

Ch Simone 2009 Palette
Smells really meaty and substantial. Very distinctive – almost more like a claret in build than a rosé. Interesting, intellectual wine – quite different from most rosés. 14%
£31.50 *Yapp Bros*

MORE INFORMATION

Full tasting notes on 120 rosés on the Purple pages of www.jancisrobinson.com