

# Rosie Daze

Sparkles for high summer eves

**A**t last we're getting hot. Well, not actually hot, at least not here in the moisty Willamette Valley. Elsewhere, all across the country (and wider world), people are baking in drought conditions, crops drying and dying, herds starving, swarms of locusts consuming every green leaf and shoot. "This is what global warming looks like," said one climatologist. Meanwhile, paid mouthpieces deny the problems (getting harder to do) and the perfectly apparent causes, doing their forked-tongue best to enable those who profit from destructive actions to continue reaping obscene levels of profit while, simultaneously, ensuring that the looming agonies will morph to nearly total disaster.

The deniers have friends in Oregon (thanks, Art, checks are in the mail), and our balmy conditions make it easier for sensitives among us to express our regrets for the sufferers while roaming our green fields and sipping sweet, clean air. And who can blame us? Certainly not I.

My grandchildren are healthy and beautiful, lean, brown and strong. They dash through our garden, laughing, shouting, singing silly songs, stopping at the blueberry bushes to gobble handfuls of ripe fruit. Brian, the 5-year-old we call Little Bear, ravages the plants, and that's OK, better than OK. Meagan,

our precocious 7-year-old, practices handstands until her grandparents are exhausted. The sun is mildly warm. A fine mist watered us this morning. Tonight, we'll barbeque with friends and nip cool wines and cherish these golden days.

The wines we'll sip will be rosés, but not those schlocky-pink "blush" wines. Nope, these're the real deal: dry, crisp, slightly chilled wines with complex flavors — but not so complex we have to talk about them — complements to summer's simpler foods, cold meats, fresh fish and salads.

Those wily French folk, especially those in the sweltering southern valleys of the Provence region, are masters of these pinkish beauties, but Oregonians have been quite successfully experimenting with rosies made from pinot noir (and others). Note: all rosés start with black/red grapes; contact with the red skins impart the colors, ranging from very pale, even colorless, to pink/salmon to intensely pink, actually light red. They can also be vinified as still wines or sparkling, with tasty results. Herewith, some of our faves:

Sparkles for the summer eve: **Jaillance Cremant de Bordeaux Cuvée d'Abbaye Brut Rose** (\$15) is just terrific. Cremant means this sparkler is under less pressure than usual, tending toward smooth and



creamy. Flavors here touch on raspberries and strawberries with notes of vanilla.

Crowd pleaser: **Bergstrom 2011 Rosé Oregon Pinot Noir** (\$19) is very pale but very pretty across the palate with delicate flavors of roses and red berries. Try with cold salmon — yum!

Picnic packer: **Spindrift Cellars Pinot Noir Rosé 2011** (\$14.50) is pale pink, but gold-medal quality. Taste for red berries, watermelon, whiff of peaches, tang of tangerine, well balanced to match with white cheeses, picnic fare. Screwcap adds portability — and plain good sense.

Traditional charm: **Clos Cibonne 2010 Tibouren Cotes de Provence** (\$26): The ticket may be a bit steep, but this is Provencal rosé as it's always been: pale in color, complex in flavors, distinguished by that hint of orange zest. I'm thinkin' cold pasta salad with mussels (if available) or salmon.

Classic: Lovers of rosés hit the heights with **Bandol Domaine du Gros Noré 2010** (\$34), a blend of Rhone-valley powerhouse grapes — mourvedre, syrah, Grenache — to deliver complex flavors suitable to a wide range of summer grub — surf, turf or coop — served cold or hot. It's just the standard by which others are measured, a benchmark wine.

Let's take our pleasures while we may, friends. These are the wines that ease the pains. And send some love to our neighbors who are struggling in drying climes. **EW**



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