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WINE BY LANCE SPARKS

COMIN' UP ROSIES

Pondering pretty pinks from far and near

If it's July — and it is — and we're getting hot — and we are — then, it must be time for pink wines.

Years ago, when Mole and I launched our investigation of pinks, we were both skeptical. I had tasted too many insipid pinks. He took a kinda Italian view: "Pink wines. Why?"

For one, because they're so pretty, in the glass, in the sun and across the palate.

They come in colors, many colors, from near-transparent to light red and all shades in between. The colors come from the juice's contact with the skins of (mostly) dark grapes. Styles vary, too, from sparkling (for price/value, try **Bo Rivage Brut Rosé** @ \$10) to still, bone-dry to sweet. Note: There's nothing wrong with liking sweetness (aka, residual sugar or RS); we enjoy a touch of RS in our rosés, adding a refreshing quality to the drink. Added note: Style varieties also affect food matches, as do the various grapes used in the wine-making. Paler pinks favor cold foods and salads, while richer pinks match up with good 'Q of meats and veggies. Gonna grill? Try Chilean **Viu Manent 2014 Rosé of Malbec** (\$7), light red, spicy, yummy.

So, more:

First, some backstory: Wine has been around for at least a few thousand years, connected to the arts of pleasure, including wine's peculiar enhancement of food's flavors (and the reverse). And in places where some people have grown accustomed to wines and good eating — and hot weather — there has developed an affection for light red wines — rosés. By general acclaim, the best rosés are made in the toasty region of southern France called Provence (pronounced pro-vahnce, for those who care). The *vignerons* of Provence make rosés deliberately; in fact, rosés are probably Provence's signature wines.

Oh, they make other wines, many quite notable, but their rosies sorta set the world standard among wine-lovers — and they're priced accordingly (all prices approximate); for example, **Chateau D'esclans 2010 "Les Clans"** is pale and dry and laden with flavor, (\$74), see? Another rosé standard, this a Corbières from Languedoc, consistently excellent, is **Domaine de Fontsaïnte 2014 "Gris de Gris"** (\$18), a Kermit Lynch selection; if his name appears on front or back of the bottle, buy with confidence.

Close in color, quality and flavors, **Tranche Cellars 2014 "Pink Pape"** (\$17) derives from Walla Walla and Yakima valleys in Washington: very pale, with zippy citrus tang, food-ready acidity. It's one of those wines that evoke a telling response: "Well, I'll have just a little more of that."

From Oregon, we like **J. K. Carriere 2014 "Glass,"** a "white" pinot noir just a bit pinkish (\$23) but forward in pinot flavors. We also like (Cheshire) **Bennett's** lovely white pinot noir (taste at Art and the Vineyard, July 3-5). And (Elmira) **LaVelle's 2014 White Pinot Noir** (\$26) is just delish, pale pink, whisper of RS. For straight pink pinot, try **The Eyrie Vineyards 2014 Rosé of Pinot Noir** (\$20), as pretty a pink as ever went into a bottle.

Many of these wines are imports, but let's be clear that we cherish many local rosés, especially Capitello's, J. Scott's, King Estate, many others. We've just exhausted our space. Happy Fourth. Be safe and sane. See ya at Art and the Vineyard. ■



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