

RING AROUND THE ROSÉS

Pretty pink wines go well with summer

In our lab, Mole was vigorously pulling corks and polishing rimless glasses: time for our annual “Rosé Report.”

In the last few years, rosés have really come out of the closet. Well, they never actually went into the deep closet; they just got buried (in U.S. markets anyway) under the flood of white zinfandels, sweet pink (“blush”) wines mass-produced and marketed by Cali vintners.

Let’s be clear: In matters of taste, personal preference rules. If you like it, no apology is needed. And some white zin lovers really dig their drink of choice. Too, some Cali vintners are fairly careful in their winemaking. **Beringer NV White Zinfandel**, “semi-dry,” (\$6), for example, is quite friendly, served cold and sweet at the backyard BBQ during the hot months of summer. And as noted: If you dig it, ’nuff said.

Mole sez, “Summatime, ev’body should be drinkin’ rosies. Dey can be so pretty ‘n’ dey goes wit’ lotsa summa chow, li’ cold meats, noodle salads, good grub li’ dat. Dey gots moah flava dan whities ‘n’ dey can be pretty cool ‘n’ still taste great.” Mole likes “rosies” year-round.

Without getting too technical, we should explain that rosés can come in various styles, sweet or bone-dry, sparkling or still. Colors vary, too, from nearly transparent to real pink to light red, depending on the color of the red grapes used (and time given in contact with skins) and the vintner’s own intentions.

But there’s also *saignée* — French for a “bleed,” usually from the first pressing of a “big” red wine, concentrating flavors of the more valuable red while yielding a cheaper, sell-able pink — and what some wine-folk call “intentional” rosés, meaning the vintner intended to make a “rosie” from the harvest, typical of rosies from the Provence region of France, where rosés are regarded as quite serious wines.

The seriousness shows. While some *saignée* rosies can be enjoyable — it depends on the vintner — serious rosés can be special. And, we’re sad to say, the French still set the standard. For one

example, **Domaine de Fontaine 2014 Gris de Gris** (\$18), from the Corbieres region, is pale in color, crisply dry but displaying a full range of flavors on the palate, from red fruits and berries, of course, to leafy greens to accents of tangerine, just delicious and versatile. (Label notes “Imported by Kermit Lynch”; Mole: “Trust Kermie.”)

Oregon’s vintners are making some yummy rosies. A saignée, **Stanton 2015 Rosé of Pinot Noir** (\$14.50) is very pretty, with distinct rose petal notes and balanced acidity. **King Estate’s Acrobat 2015 Rosé of Pinot Noir** (\$13) is a saignée, light red, but quite quaffable, lotsa red-berry fruit, good balance.

A rosé surprise: **Marché Provisions** recently held (and sold out) its second (annual) Drink Pink Party and the crowd faves were — wait for it — German (!), including **Villa Wolf 2015 Pinot Noir Rosé** (\$13). Suddenly, lotsa folk are gettin’ serious ’bout rosies. Cool.

Along with many other outtowners (besides France and Germany), we like **Seven Hills 2015 Dry Rosé** (\$16) deftly blended of “mostly” cabernet franc, with portions of petite Verdot and Malbec, but pale copper in color, flavors of red berries, herbs, citrus, food-ready acidity. Walla Walla (Washington) winemaker Casey McClellan is skilled and intends to make classic rosé. **King Estate’s North by Northwest 2015 Rosé** (\$11) is an exciting blend of Columbia Valley grapes, 94 percent riesling (!) but dosed and colored by merlot and syrah — just delicious flavors of white-flowers, red currants, herbs. From Salem, **Upper Five 2015 Rosé of Grenache** (\$17.50), grapes from Rogue Valley, is terrific, pale salmon color, round, ripe red-fruit flavors.

Local winemakers have produced barrels of delish rosies (hope you tasted many at this year’s Art & the Vineyard). Among our top picks (there are sooo many deserving our attention) is **Territorial 2015 Rosé of Pinot Gris** (\$15), an “intentional” rosé, classically pale but delightfully complex in flavors and acutely balanced.

Pinks are stylin’. Trust your favorite makers/labels and add cool pinks to your summer pleasures. ■



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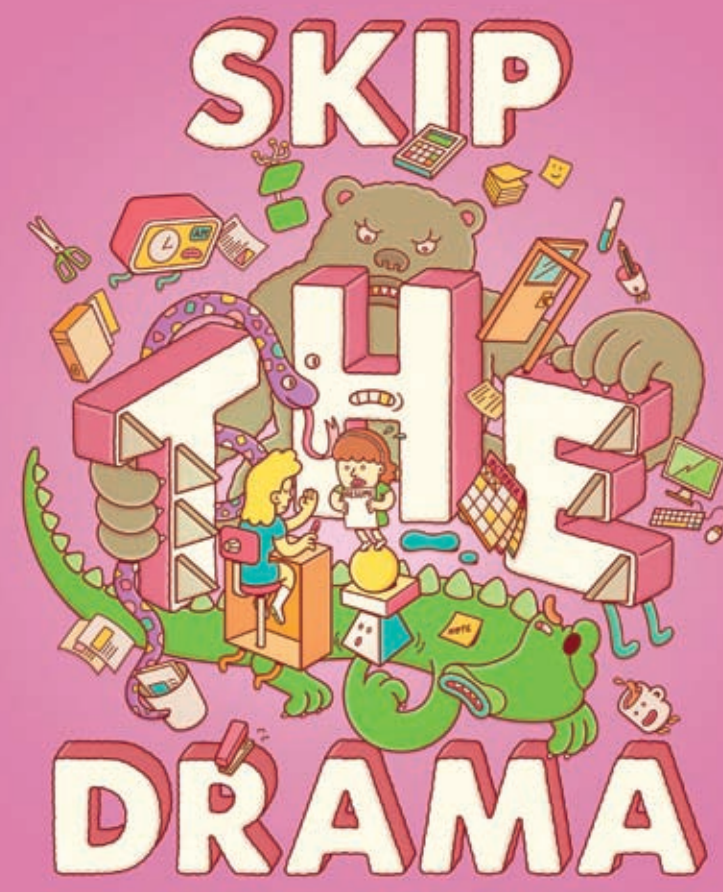
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