

ROSIES

Summertime heat is perfect for sipping ice-cold rosés

On the 17th floor of Eugene’s creakiest high-rise, behind the pebbled-glass door marked “Wine Investigations,” my pal and partner, Mole, set out a display of polished glasses and opened bottles of pink-ish wines.

If it’s summer — it is — and we’re gonna get hot — and we surely have been — we’re gonna want some cool wines. Time, then, for our annual rosie column.

No easy task, this. When we launched this tradition a decade or so ago, there were fewer than a dozen good rosés on market shelves. The rest were mostly syrupy-sweet pinks — aka “blushes” — very popular “white” zinfandels, often bought by the gallon.

Now, rosés have surged in consumer affections; even “blushes” have improved (mostly). A good wine shop might offer over 50 rosies, some sparkling, some not. We all benefit, but choosing among them can be onerous. For this column, Mole selected just some of our faves: “S’all I could do, Sleut” — he calls me Sleuth, an honor coming from the master of stealth. We went to work.

Before we list our choices, we have to note that there are two kinds of rosé. First, the “saignée,” French term for “bleeds,” wines drawn off first-run juice of “big” reds whose flavors winemakers want to concentrate; saignée rosés can be very good, but “intentional” rosés tend to be better.

Second, the standards for rosés are still set in the south of France, in Provence, where rosés garner deep respect. Top-shelf rosés come from **Chateau d’Esclans**; their best, called Garrus, can fetch \$100 a bottle; rich folk, they brag, load cases of **Garrus** onto their yachts and drink it year-round. OK. They also sell loads of d’Esclans **Whispering Angel** (\$30), a blend of *grenache* and *rolle* (aka Vermentino).

Almost all fine rosés from Provence tend to be very pale in color (pressed juice is given little time in contact with grape skins, hence little color). No yacht? Try **Pere Anselme 2016 Cotes de Provence** (\$14.50), or **Miradou 2016 Cotes de Provence** (\$12.50), both very pale, lovely rosé, red berry flavors, zippy acidity. Like all good rosés, these are versatile, ready for a wide variety of foods cooked outdoors, on grills and such.

Local winemakers have enjoyed success with rosés made from our pinot grapes, gris and noir. Among the best, **Territorial 2016 Rosé of Pinot Gris** (\$15) offers pale color and near-perfect balance of fruit flavors and food-friend-

ly acid. Mark Nicholl’s **William Rose 2016 Prohibition Rose** is made from 85 percent pinot gris with 15 percent pinot noir and is terrific — red fruit flavors, good acidity, spicy, excellent with food.

Many Oregon brands seem to be experimenting with rosés of pinot noir — carving, as Mole says, “a piece of da rosie pie” — and are discovering that, like other pinot noirs, rosés made from those grapes can develop greater depth of flavor and character over time (a year or so) in the bottle. For example, **King Estate** just produced **2016 Estate Rosé of Pinot Noir** (NA) their first rosé from estate (Mountain Blocks) grapes; it could be called a light red, it has so much color, and, like many young pinot noirs, it delivers deep flavors of cherries and raspberries, but is still rather awkward. We predict that in a year it’ll be dynamic and delish. Meanwhile, their **KE 2016 Acrobat Rosé of Pinot Noir** (\$15), a saignée, is brightly charming.

“D’ere’s lots moah, Sleut’,” Mole pleads.

“Understood, pal,” I respond, “but we’re outta time and space. Got just enough to wish readers a super summer.”



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