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Rosés to Tickle You Pink

Nine rosés that beat the heat

by Ted Loos

tasting notes



Here's the thing about rosé: It can be whatever you want it to be. It can be made from any red grape, in a couple of different primary methods. Some rosés are such a deep raspberry color that they barely skirt red wine territory; others come in a reassuring Barbie pink; still others, the palest hue of an orange sunset in the fog. They range from the tart 'n' tangy to the luscious, round, and fruity.

So project your deepest fantasy onto the rosé, and then go find the wine that fulfills it perfectly. It's an easy way to get exactly what you want, especially during a muggy and torpid month when a rosé is most called for. When was the last time someone offered you that?

Reader, I tasted 60 rosés from around the world on your behalf, and did it blind, because I didn't really care what variety they were made from or from whence they hailed or even how old they were. I just wanted pure pink satisfaction. I know what you're thinking: My job is hard.

The first rule of rosé is that it must be charming. Charm implies a slyness, the wine equivalent of a sideways glance, a light-on-its-feet quality. Heaviness, seriousness, and definitiveness are not part of the game here. **Mas de la Dame Rosé du Mas 2010** (\$15) meets those expectations perfectly with its subtle honeysuckle and blood orange aspects. Well-made and classy, this wine from Provence—a rosé-specializing region of France—would work perfectly as an aperitif as well as on its own. Probably my favorite wine of the five dozen was also from the area: **Château Riotor Côtes de Provence 2010** (\$15) uses its prodigious acidity to drive home notes of pink grapefruit and peach, making them part of a complex taste story with a beginning, middle, and end.

Strawberry is perhaps the most common fruit note in rosés, and it comes through marvelously in the **Vivanco Rosado 2010** (\$15), made of Tempranillo and Garnacha in Rioja. (It also comes in an unusually shaped bottle based on an 18th-century design—the original can be found in the Dinastía Vivanco Museum of the Culture of Wine.) **Oveja Negra Rosé** (\$13) blends a strawberry edge with a more unusual red fruit—tomato, or more specifically, a taste I'd call "tomato plant"—giving a nice earthiness to this rosé made of Cabernet Sauvignon. The Chilean charmer is the ultimate match for a glistening hunk of bruschetta. If raspberry is more your thing, the **Azur Rosé 2010** (\$26), made in Napa from Syrah, is simultaneously curvy and fresh, with great citrus character, to boot.

California rosés tend to be better with food than without. **Bella Vineyards Rosé 2010** (\$22) is a touch more definitive than I usually go for—but let's call it confident in this case, what with its rich strawberry backbone. The **Pali Sunset Rosé 2010** (\$17) has a nose of wild roses, then kicks in with a vein of spice and cherry that makes me want to eat a [duck confit salad](#). I like **Lasseter Family Winery Enjoué 2010** (\$24) because it veers away from red fruit and offers a fresh apricot character that's unique, not to mention the scent of honeysuckle. The winery is owned by John and Nancy Lasseter. He's also the chief creative brain at Pixar, so maybe pair with [Ratatouille](#)?

With rare exceptions, you should be able to find a rosé under \$25. So I salute the value found in the **Niner Wine Estates Sangiovese Rosato 2010** (\$14). It has a pure deep pink color that makes you stare at your glass in awe, then it offers up generous pomegranate and cherry flavors on the palate. It's aged in oak, not too common for rosé—helping to give it a uniquely solid foundation, but not so solid that it fails to charm.

What wine puts you in the pink? Let me know your favorite rosé by following me on Twitter, [@LoosLips](#), and sending me a message about it. Or let us know on [Epicurious' Facebook page](#) or [Twitter feed: @epicurious](#). • Prices and availability subject to change.



Ted Loos, a former editor of *Wine Spectator*, has written about wine for *Bon Appétit*, *Decanter*, *Town & Country*, and many other publications. He also covers design and the arts for *The New York Times*, *Vogue*, and *Architectural Digest*, among others. Follow him on Twitter: [@LoosLips](#)