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Wine of the Week: Lasseters' Enjoué Rosé



BY PEG MELNIK

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John and Nancy Lasseter went on a buying spree of sorts back in 2009. Their loot? Three dozen bottles of rosé from the south of France.

Our wine-of-the-week winner is the Lasseters' rosé, the wine painstakingly crafted after sipping through those 36 imported bottles.

The Enjoué, 2015 Sonoma Valley Estate Rosé at \$28 is striking because it has an incredible range. The salmon-colored rosé has aromas and flavors of mango, strawberry, grapefruit and mineral. It's nice and dry, and finishes crisp, leaving you wanting another sip.

The name Enjoué is French for "joyful, playful and lighthearted."

"Our goal is to produce a wine that is evocative of the wines from the southern Rhone, particularly Provence and Bandol," said winemaker Julia lantosca. "Fortunately we have the varieties traditionally used to create these wines planted in our vineyards, and our site on the Glen Ellen Bench is one where these varieties flourish."

The most important element is to use high quality grapes, lantosca said, since lower quality fruit is unlikely to result in a top quality wine.

The uninitiated may not know that rosé is versatile, she said.

"While it works wonderfully as an aperitif, most people's association, it also pairs beautifully with a wide range of food."

lantosca said she's good at making rosé because she has been making it for decades, but she is quick to call the Enjoué a team effort. The Lasseters are involved in tastings to craft the blend, and she gives kudos to the farmers behind the fruit — grower Phil Coturri and the entire team at Enterprise Vineyard Management.

The 59-year-old lantosca said she never expected to find herself

immersed in the world of wine. She belonged to the 4-H Club and wanted to be a veterinarian. But after a wine tasting class at UC Davis, her fascination with four-legged creatures waned.

"I started taking more courses in Viticulture and Enology," lantosca said. "Then I took off the fall of 1978 to do an internship at Dry Creek Vineyards. After that I was hooked."

lantosca said meeting her future husband, Bob lantosca, made winemaking even more intriguing. He was cellar master at Dry Creek Vineyards at the time.

In 1979, lantosca graduated from UC Davis with a Bachelor's Degree in Fermentation Science.

"I love the process of blending wines, and I feel I have a flair for creating blends," she said.

THIS WEEK'S BLIND TASTING

Rose

TOP PICK Lasseters' Enjoué

Lasseters' Enjoué, 2015 Sonoma Valley Estate Rose, 13.5% alcohol, \$28. ★★★★★

This rose is striking because it has an incredible range. The salmon-colored rose has aromas and flavors of mango, strawberry, grapefruit and mineral. It's nice and dry, and finishes crisp, leaving you wanting another sip.

Tasty ALTERNATIVES

Carol Shelton, 2015 Rendezvous Rose, 13%, \$15. ★★★★★1/2: This is a dry rose with notes of strawberry, watermelon, and mineral. Bright acidity. Great lift. Lovely.

Chateau Routas, 2015 Coteaux Varois en Provence, France Rose, 13.5%, \$11. ★★★★★1/2: In this dry rose, full on watermelon dominates, and it finishes with a crisp mineral note. Balanced. Impressive. (45% cinsault, 35% grenache, 20% syrah.)

Benessere Vineyards, 2015 Napa Valley Vineyards, Rosato di Sangiovese, 13.5%, \$18. ★★★★★: This rose is flush with red, tangy fruit. Bing cherry takes the lead, with strawberry and red currant playing back up. Great minerality. Crisp finish.

Chateau de Brigue, 2012 Cotes de Provence Rose, 12.5%, \$8. ★★★★★: This is a delicate rose, with notes of raspberry, strawberry and watermelon on the finish. Bright acidity. Great balance. Tasty. (50% grenache, 25% cinsault and 25% cabernet.)