

Pink Wine Season Is Upon Us: The 10 Best New Rosé Bottles, Rated

There's plenty of plonk to go around, so use this guide to buy wisely.



Source: Vendors

By

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When the temperature soars and the sun is shining at 7 p.m., you know rosé days are underway again.

What people call the “happy wine” has always been something to sip without taking it, or yourself, too seriously. Rosé is about embracing fun,

the beach, day-drinking, and personal style, which is surely why we all guzzled it during the doom and gloom of a pandemic that isn't over yet.

Get ready. As more wineries rush to cash in on the popularity of pink, styles are expanding. This year brings a wave of new-spin versions worth sipping; some others are, predictably, more marketing hype than taste.

For example, the number of pricey prestige rosés aged in French oak barrels is growing rapidly, especially in the \$35 to \$50 category. The idea is to create the kind of complexity that repays aging. Keep in mind that few have that thirst-quenching juiciness that makes rosés great aperitifs around the pool. They're best served with food.

New celebrity rosés just keep coming, too, but they rarely distinguish themselves as wines. The latest is from Reese Witherspoon, who's pushing her just-launched \$19 Editor's Collection, made by Sonoma's Simi winery, as the essential sipper while reading one of the picks of her book club.

After overcoming a legal brouhaha, George Clooney finally closed on 425-acre Provence estate Domaine du Canadel, 30 minutes from Brad Pitt's Miraval. Stay tuned for the inevitable rosé launch. Maybe next year?

France's new hot spot for bargain rosé is Languedoc, which sells 25% more pink wine than Provence, though the latter is still the ur-region. Not only is demand for favorites pushing prices up, wine tourism in Provence is also booming, with grand estates wooing enophiles with luxury digs and spas.

The 2021s arriving on shelves survived a challenging year in the south of France, with the first April frosts in 50 years and August wildfires that affected about 70 wineries. Don't worry, there's plenty of wine, quality is good, and 20% of the vineyards are now organic. The big problems for winemakers are obtaining the popular clear bottles and all-too-familiar shipping delays.

The fancy perfume-style rosé bottle fashion that started in Provence has spread to Italy, New Zealand, California, and Spain. At the other end, Julian Fayard's delicious Just Pink California rosé can now be had in a 5.2-gallon keg for \$450. (Canned examples are everywhere, but that's for another column.)

And in a first, Château Galoupet, the neglected Provence cru classé purchased by Moët Hennessy in 2019, has just released its new 2021 Nomade cuvée in a rectangular, eco-friendly flat plastic bottle made from recycled materials salvaged from the ocean. In the UK it fetches £23 (\$29) on website clos19.com, but it's not in the US yet.

The most fascinating pink experiment I've tried is a new California rosé made with a winemaking technique used for Spanish sherry. For my verdict on it and other new examples, see my ratings below (on a scale of 10 points), arranged from least expensive to most expensive.



2021 Sullivan Rutherford Estate Rosé (\$45)

Lively, serious, and complex, the second vintage of this Napa Valley rosé is made from merlot, cabernet franc, and malbec. The historic under-the-radar estate is being brought back to life by Mexican entrepreneur Juan Pablo Torres Padilla, who purchased it in 2018. **9/10**