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Rosé among best quaffs for summer

WINE GUYS

Rosé's tortured and agonizing path to popularity made us often wonder if it would ever be accepted. But recent sales thankfully have shown steady growth as consumers are enjoying one of summer's best quaffs more than ever.

It wasn't as if rosé was something so new consumers were either cautious or suspicious. The French have enjoyed this summer drink for centuries, so it had a proven track record. However, in this country it was first launched by accident. Sutter Home's founder Bob Trinchero, a fan of French rosé, wanted to make a dry rosé but fermentation got stuck and he couldn't restart it. As a result, residual sugar was left in the wine. With that, "white zinfandel" was born not as Trinchero intended but as many consumers wanted. Anytime a consumer saw a pink wine, they assumed it was sweet. Many still think so.

Sutter Home's accidental sugar bomb (\$6 a bottle) is celebrating its 40th birthday this year — if you like sweet wines, party on. But, for us, if our wine is going to be pink, it's going to be dry.

Rosés are great at this time of the year because they go so well with summer foods. Versatile, they can easily match appetizers, salmon, hamburgers, pizza and chicken. And, they are great just by themselves.

Rosés can be made with just about any red grape variety. Some producers make them as a byproduct of their red wine program. In France, however,

many producers make nothing but rosé.

Here are many rosés we recommend:

- **Domaine du Tariquet Rosé de Presse 2014 (\$11).** From Gascony, this blend of merlot, syrah and tannat is bright and juicy with raspberry notes and a dash of spice.

- **Chateau de la Mordoree Cotes du Rhone Rosé 2014 (\$15).** Citrus and strawberry flavors dominate this luxurious and medium-bodied rosé from the Rhone Valley. Above most others, this one has pedigree.

- **Ponzi Vineyards Pinot Noir Rosé 2014 (\$20).** Made entirely from pinot noir grapes, this Willamette Valley gem has bright strawberry notes with a dash of lavender and pepper aromas. Good acidity.

- **Guigal Cote du Rhone Rosé 2014 (\$19).** Guigal takes pride of making a rosé that is not a byproduct of another red wine. They should. Using the French saignee method to bleed juice of the grape skins, they have created a spectacular rosé true to its history. A blend of grenache, syrah and cinsault, it has excellent structure, rich red berry fruit and nice minerality. This is one to pair with food.

- **Flor del Paramo Prieto Picudo Rosado 2012 (\$15).** From the Castilla y Leon region of Spain, this dark wine is made from prieto picudo grapes. Aromatic and full-bodied with strawberry flavors, it is a sturdy rosé to pair with summer food.

- **Mulderbosch Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé 2014 (\$11).** Made entirely from cabernet sauvignon grapes, this South African rosé has fresh acidity, strawberry and raspberry flavors and a nice mineral thread.

- **Pedrocelli Dry Creek Valley Dry Rosé of Zinfandel 2014 (\$12).** Zinfandel's zesty and fruity profile makes for a good rosé. This dry version is loaded with lively red berry fruit and bright acidity.

- **Vina Real Rosado 2014 (\$14).** We like the unique flavors of this blend of viura (85 percent) and tempranillo grapes. Beautiful coral color, fresh raspberry and strawberry flavors and crisp acidity to ward off summer heat.

- **JUSTIN Vineyards & Winery Rosé 2014 (\$20).** Medium-bodied with generous floral aromas and red fruit flavors. Crisp acidity and mineral notes.

- **Alexander Valley Vineyards Rosé of Sangiovese 2014 (\$14).** Vibrant salmon color, opulent strawberry and watermelon flavors. Always a hit year after year.

- **Moet & Chandon Grand Vintage Rosé 2006 (\$90).** This luxurious blend of pinot noir (47 percent), chardonnay and meunier has cherry and plum notes with a hint of rosemary and floral aromas. It is a powerful champagne that will impress your guests and will add a dose of luxury to a salmon dish.

- **Mumm Napa Brut Rosé (\$24).** Coral in color, this California sparkling wine can add a dash of color to the table at a reasonable cost. It is dominated by black cherry and raspberry flavors with good acidity.

Wine Picks

- **Priest Ranch Cabernet Sauvignon 2012 (\$48).** This blockbuster cabernet from Napa Valley is a monster. Lots of body with nearly 15 percent alcohol and serious tannins. Assertive dark fruit and spice aromas with delicious black berry flavors and long finish. Decant or even better, put away for a few years.

- **Biltmore Wines Vanderbilt Reserve Cabernet Franc 2012 (\$27).** Although based in North Carolina, Biltmore makes sev-