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Summer the perfect time to get reacquainted with rosé



UNCORKED

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With the official arrival of summer, it's the perfect time to get reacquainted with rosé. While the fresh-fruit flavors, crispy acidity and lighter body – a few characteristics that seem to run through all rosés – are something that can be enjoyed all year with a variety of cheeses and foods, their refreshing nature make for easy sippers on a warm, sunny summer day.

Made from juice that has had minimal contact with the grape skins, a rosé doesn't have the tannins or robust mouth feel of a red wine. It's a wine I enjoy year round, but can really hit the spot in summer. Reviewed are three rosés perfect for summer and a classic Pinot Noir for all seasons.

Winemaker spotlight

What looks like a supermodel's face painted with bright colors, vivid confetti-like designs and tangled collection of leaves seemingly inspired by metal-like artwork make Honoro Vera Rosado 2014 (\$9.99) a candidate for most impressive wine label of the year.

There's more than a tribute to art with the Spanish rosé, however. A blush of pink in the glass; it's a dry wine with flavors of watermelon and strawberry. A

blend of Tempranillo and Syrah were used and the Saignée method, a process where some pink juice from the initial press is removed from the must. Because there is less volume in the must during maceration the wine becomes more concentrated.

The French carry a lofty reputation when it comes to rosé. The Domaine du Tariquet 2014 (\$11.99) from Gascony is 40 percent Merlot, 40 percent Syrah and 20 percent Tannat and lives up to the stellar reputation. Winemaker Armin Grassa has crafted a bold rosé that is a darker shade of pink. Flavors of raspberry, ripe strawberries, lime zest are omnipresent while a hint of gardenia flower adds intrigue to a rosé made with the same process as a white wine.

The Mulderbosch Cabernet Sauvignon rosé (\$11.99) continued its impressive trend of being loaded with distinct flavors in 2014. Winemaker Adam Mason used Cabernet grown only for rosé and an early harvest helps to maintain acidity. A salmon pink color in the glass, tart grapefruit flavor mixes with a zesty strawberry finish. There's a snap of minerality and a hint of green herb on the finish on the South African rosé.

For a brunch, a lunch on the patio or a glass on a warm night, these three rosés, from three very

different parts of the world, are widely available, value-driven wines that should be a part of every summer.

What to buy

Roar Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 2013 (\$42)

Vineyards owned and managed by Gary Francioni have always impressed. Everything seems to be just right at his Soledad, California, vineyards in the Santa Lucia Highlands Appellation. The soil, climate, influence of Monterey Bay and elevation combined with Francioni's years of experience are ideal conditions.

Winemaker Scott Shapley turned out a perfectly balanced Pinot Noir for Francioni's Roar label. Cherry cola comes across initially. It's a dark fruit experience, but full flavors of tobacco and clove further entice. There's a eucalyptus hint on the finish and an underlying string of minerality that keep the wine balanced and from being too fruity or plush. The mouth feel is a little brooding as the flavors really announce their presence distinctly but meld together for an expertly integrated finish.

• James Nokes writes a bi-weekly wine column for the Daily Chronicle. He's been tasting, touring and collecting in the wine world for several years. Contact him at news@daily-chronicle.com.