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# Decanter

## 30 rosés to dine for

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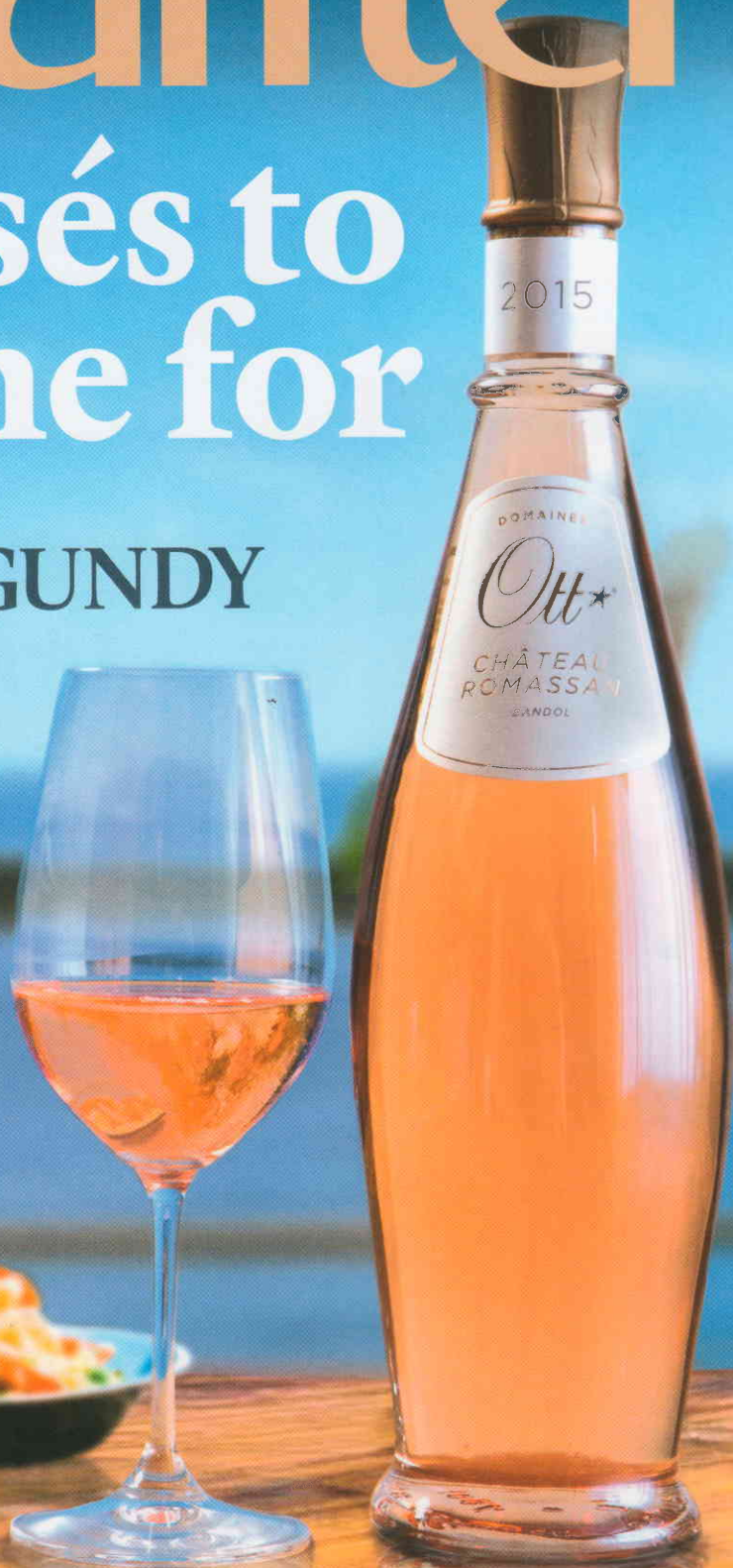
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# Top 30 food-friendly rosés

One of the most versatile wine styles of all, rosé makes a perfect match for a wide range of dishes. Fiona Beckett recommends the best bottles for gastronomy

THERE'S NOTHING NICER on a warm, sunny day than eating alfresco, with a bottle (or two) of well-chilled rosé on the table. Can rosé be any more than a summer wine though?

We still tend to regard rosé as a go-to seasonal drink, picking the style we like and buying on price. But as I discovered from this tasting, there's an extraordinary range of styles to enjoy – and colours, from the merest whisper of pink to rosés that would do duty for a red.

What takes a rosé into the gastronomic league? For me it's not the ability to pair with classic French dishes – though many do – but that it can be one of the best partners for a wide range of food and cuisines. Some rosés are pale, dry, crisp and refreshing; others are darker and more intense but typically without the tannic character of red wines that can jar if served with lighter food.

Not many are designed to last more than one season, though the best will gain complexity over two or three years. In this tasting, the rosés that impressed were the ones that had retained their freshness from the previous vintage. Though some wines will have moved on to 2016, there are still a fair few 2015s around.

As you'd expect, France – especially Provence – fielded some of the most

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*For UK stockist details, turn to page 97.*

impressive examples; there's real ambition and determination to make great rosé there. But I was also impressed by how many good wines are now coming out of Spain. There was even an outstanding Swiss rosé that you shouldn't miss.

Rosés from New World regions tend to be riper and sweeter than their European counterparts – not necessarily an off-putting quality when they are paired with spicy food. There were some particularly interesting wines from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Alcohol levels, as with red wines, varied markedly, but lighter wines, while refreshing, didn't necessarily deliver on persistence and flavour.

So far as grape varieties were concerned, there was a striking number of Pinot Noir rosés, while Cinsault, Grenache/Garnacha, Mourvèdre and Syrah produced some of the more characterful examples I tasted. Cinsault, which is used in many southern French rosés, I believe to be an unsung hero of the rosé world, giving the wines that are made from it a mouthwateringly incisive bite.

The final message, as with other wines, is that you will be amply rewarded in terms of character and complexity by paying a little more for your rosé. **D**

- 1 **Domaines Ott, Château Romassan, Coeur de Grain Rosé, Bandol, Provence, France 2015** 96  
£23-£30 Corks Out, Majestic, Millésima, Philgass & Swiggott, TryWines, WoodWinters

Enticingly golden, pink-tinged, Mourvèdre-based rosé that manages to combine freshness with depth and complexity. Savoury, a lovely touch of white peach balancing a gorgeous creamy texture. All you could want from a rosé. Drink with: carpaccio, beef tartare, lobster spaghetti. **Drink** 2017-2019 **Alc** 13%



- 2 **Château Brown, Rosé, Bordeaux, France 2013** 95

£31 Ellis of Richmond

Serious, deeply savoury, barrel-fermented rosé, a 50/50 blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Rich bronze colour, deep flavours of dried apricots and quince. Mature yet surprisingly fresh and elegant, great acidity. Drink with: sweetbreads, rack of lamb. **Drink** 2017-2021 **Alc** 13.5%

- 3 **Château Simone, Rosé, Palette, Provence, France 2015** 95

£40 Millésima, Yapp Bros

One of the iconic rosés. A beautiful, deep pinkish bronze colour with exotic dried cherry and pomegranate fruit. Surprisingly tannic with the texture and mouthfeel of a red wine; it repaid decanting. Drink with: rare pigeon, duck, game terrines, cold game pie. **Drink** 2018-2025 **Alc** 14%



- 4 **Clos Cibonne, Cuvée Spéciale des Vignettes Rosé Cru Classé, Côtes de Provence, France 2014** 94

£32 Red Squirrel, Theatre of Wine, Unwined

Rare and special rosé made from the Tibouren grape. Vinified in large old casks under a layer of flor. It's a beautiful pinkish bronze colour with delicate fruit flavours of wild strawberries and ume plums, and a wonderfully long finish. Drink with: rare lamb, veal. **Drink** 2017-2022 **Alc** 13.5%

- 5 **Domaine de Montmollin, Oeil de Perdrix, Neuchâtel, Trois Lacs, Switzerland 2016** 94

£26.40 Alpine Wines

A stunning Pinot Noir rosé which demonstrates the quality of wine Switzerland can produce. Full, rich, perfumed and crammed with summer berries, yet with an appetisingly savoury edge. Drink with: fish, terrines; easily robust enough for duck or lamb. **Drink** 2017-2019 **Alc** 12%



- 6 **Charles Melton, Rose of Virginia, Barossa Valley, Australia 2015** 93

£16.19-£21.99 Brook & Vine, Eclectic Tastes, Exel, Noel Young

With its striking label and exotic, perfumed cherry and pomegranate fruit, this is truly a statement rosé. Would be great with the generous flavours of an Ottolenghi-style feast. Drink with: lamb with pomegranate seeds. **Drink** 2017-2019 **Alc** 13.5% ➤





# 7 Chivite, Las Fincas Rosado, 3 Riberas, Navarra, Spain 2015 93

£13.50-£14.95 **Booths, Exel, Great Western**

Dedicated to legendary Spanish chef Juan Mari Arzak, this should be a gastronomic rosé and it is. Clean, crisp and incisive with mouthwatering acidity, it could almost be a white. Drink with: prawns, fresh crab, langoustines, sashimi. The 2016 vintage is also available in magnums. **Drink** 2017-2018 **Alc** 13.5%



# 8 Marqués de Murrieta, Primer Rosé, Rioja, Spain 2015 93

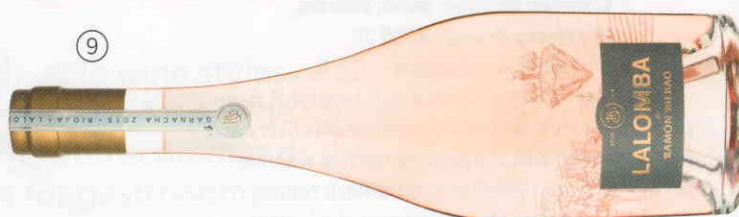
£34.99 **Handford, Harvey Nichols**

Super-premium, handsomely bottled Rioja rosado from the Ygay estate, made from 100% Mazuelo. Complex, elegant, savoury and creamy textured, though surprisingly without any oak influence. Drink with: grilled lamb chops, roast veal, partridge. **Drink** 2017-2020 **Alc** 13%

# 9 Ramón Bilbao, LaLomba Rosado, Rioja Alta, Spain 2016 92

£16.32-£20 **Exel, Great Western, Sommelier's Choice**

Pale, Provence-like in appearance, this mainly Garnacha-based rosado tastes more like an oaked white Rioja than a rosé, though it hasn't seen oak. Full, savoury, creamy and appetising. Drink with: Spanish fish dishes such as hake, gambas and paella. **Drink** 2017-2019 **Alc** 13%



# 10 Château Miraval, Rosé, Côtes de Provence, France 2016 92

£16-£19.99 **Berry Bros & Rudd, Booths, Exel, Handford, Harvey Nichols, Hedonism, Jeroboams,**

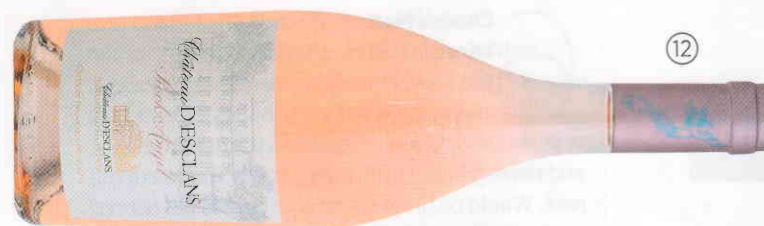
**Majestic, Millésima, Sainsbury's, WoodWinters**

Still owned by Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, and no doubt about its quality: fresh, elegant, wild strawberry-scented. Drink with: lobster, seabass. **Drink** 2017-2019 **Alc** 13%

# 11 Res Fortes, Rosé, Côtes du Roussillon, Southwest France 2015 92

£11.99 **Evington's**

A striking blend of three different Grenaches and Syrah. Pale but fuller than a Provence rosé with subtle red plum fruit. Appetisingly rich, structured and savoury. Could easily handle meat dishes. Drink with: garlicky sausages, couscous. **Drink** 2017-2018 **Alc** 13.5%



# 12 Château d'Esclans, Rock Angel, Côtes de Provence, France 2015 91

£21.95 **Exel, From Vineyards Direct, Harrods, Hedonism, Jeroboams, Millésima**

One of four top-end rosés from Sacha Lichine and I think the most beguiling. Provençal pale but with real character and refreshingly tart redcurrant fruit. Drink with: bouillabaisse, lobster linguine. **Drink** 2017-2018 **Alc** 14%

# 13

**Domaine Jean Teiller, Rosé, Menetou-Salon, Loire, France 2016** 91

£15.75 Yapp Bros

Exceptionally pretty Pinot Noir rosé from the Loire. Deep pink, bursting with fresh raspberry fruit, but with lovely fresh acidity to balance. Perfect summer aperitif. Drink with: smoked duck salad, fresh crab. **Drink** 2017-2018 **Alc** 13%



# 14

**Domaine Maby, La Forcadière, Tavel, Rhône, France 2016** 91

£13.50 Harvey Nichols, Yapp Bros

Strikingly strong and dark, and blended from nine different grape varieties: a typical Tavel. A deep cherry flavour but dry and powerful, it would happily do the job of a red. Drink with: grillades, but could also handle a fair bit of spice. **Drink** 2017-2019 **Alc** 14%

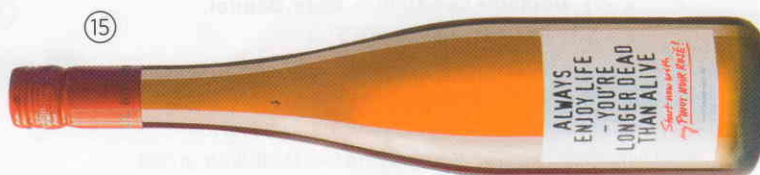
# 15

**Emil Bauer & Söhne, Always Enjoy Life... Pinot Noir Rosé, Pfalz, Germany 2015** 91

£18 Red Squirrel, The Good Spirits Co, Wolf Wine

The Emil Bauer estate is noted for its crazy wine names and this hedonistic, rose-scented, bronze-coloured rosé is no exception. Crammed with plums, mulberries and wild cherries, but still appetisingly savoury on the palate. Drink with: seared duck breast, pluma Ibérico.

**Drink** 2017-2018 **Alc** 12.5%



# 16

**Sono Montenidoli, Canaiuolo Rosato, Tuscany, Italy 2016** 91

£17.15-£19.90 Exel, Les Caves de Pyrene

Deeply vinous but ethereal rosé; pale, fresh and creamy with an intense, lingering finish and a refreshing touch of bitterness. Drink with: antipasti, seafood or spring vegetable risotto, vitello tonnato. **Drink** 2017-2019 **Alc** 13%

# 17

**Buil & Giné, Giné Rosat, Priorat, Spain 2016** 90

£18 Highbury Vintners

'A sexy way to learn about Priorat,' says the back label. Fair enough. A dark, dry Grenache-and-Merlot-based rosé that tastes like eating cherries off the tree. Blithe and summery. Drink with: punchily seasoned salads, Chinese food. **Drink** 2017-2019 **Alc** 14.5%



# 18

**Château Maris, Rose de Nympe Emue, Minervois, Languedoc, France 2016** 90

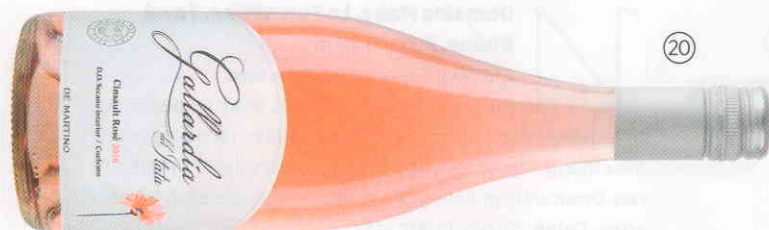
£13.50-£13.61 Exel, Just in Cases

Elegantly bottled biodynamic Grenache wine from the Minervois region. Quite full, weighty and savoury with a long, persistent finish. A good top-end picnic bottle. Drink with: charcuterie, paté en croute, cold roast chicken. **Drink** 2017-2018 **Alc** 12.5% ➤



19 **Château Ollieux Romanis, Cuvée Classique Rosé, Corbières, Languedoc, France 2016** 90  
£9.25-£11.99 Exel, Joseph Barnes, Les Caves de Pyrene, The Wine Society

Strong, clean, full-flavoured rosé at a very good price. Mainly Carignan, which gives heft and structure, but there's some attractive red berry fruit too. Drink with: seared tuna, grilled calamari, bourride (fish stew). **Drink** 2017-2018 **Alc** 13%



20 **De Martino, Gallardía Cinsault Rosé, Itata Valley, Chile 2016** 90

£12.99 Les Caves de Pyrene

A bold and characterful rosé made from dry-farmed, old-vine Cinsault by one of Chile's most interesting and innovative producers. Drink with: grilled or barbecued chicken or pork. **Drink** 2017-2018 **Alc** 13%

21 **Domaine Le Galantin, Rosé, Bandol, Provence, France 2016** 90  
£14.50 Tanners

Pale with glints of gold; creamy and fresh, with a lovely strawberries-and-cream fruitiness, but with the appealing savoury notes of Mourvèdre too. Drink with: grilled fish such as swordfish or tuna. **Drink** 2017-2018 **Alc** 14%



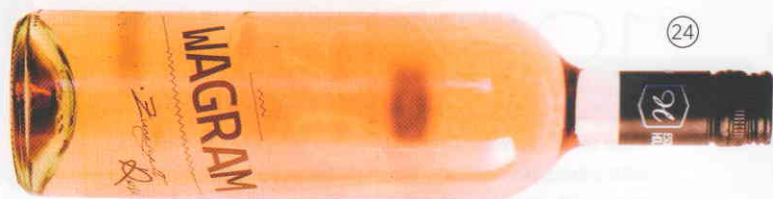
22 **Château de Berne, Rosé, Côtes de Provence, France 2015** 89

£10.49 Waitrose Cellar

Classic pale, crisp, dry Provençal rosé. Clean and fresh; a good match for fresh seafood. Strikingly expensive-looking bottle looks twice the price. Drink with: seafood, fresh crab. **Drink** 2017 **Alc** 13%

23 **Domaine Saporale, Cuvée Saporale Rosé, Sartène, Corsica, France 2016** 89  
£16.25 Yapp Bros

Shut your eyes and you could be drinking a white wine. This blend of Sciacarello and Vermentino with a dash of Nielluccio is as pure and delicate as rosé gets – which makes it perfect to go with raw seafood. Drink with: carpaccio, sashimi or lobster salad. **Drink** 2017-2018 **Alc** 13%



24 **Eschenhof Holzer, Wagram Zweigelt Rosé, Wagram, Austria 2015** 89

£14 D Vine Cellars, Ham & Friends,

Park & Bridge, Red Squirrel, The Rural Vintner,

Unwined, Vagabond, Vino Vero, Wild & Lees

A light, floral and scented rosé made from Austria's native Zweigelt – though it has Pinot-like character. Rather sexy frosted bottle. Ideal for warm summer evenings on the lawn. Drink with: seafood salads and burrata. **Drink** 2017 **Alc** 12%

## 25 **Jean Leon, 3055 Rosé, Penedès, Spain 2015** 89

£14.99 **Pallant of Arundel, TB Watson, The Grape to Glass, The Whalley Wine**

**Shop, Woburn Wine Cellar**

Pale but full-flavoured, with pretty redcurrant and raspberry fruit and an appetising, savoury bite. Pinot Noir organically grown, and good value for money. Drink with: tapas, grilled fish, squid, prawns, barbecues. **Drink 2017-2018 Alc 13%**



## 26 **Massaya, Rosé, Bekaa Valley, Lebanon 2016** 89

£14.50-£16.95 **Caviste, Christopher Piper, Highbury Vintners, JN Wine, Richard Granger, Tanners, WoodWinters**

Appealingly pale, clean and crisp rosé made from high-altitude Cinsault and Syrah vines. Delicate strawberry flavours with a nice touch of creaminess. Drink with Lebanese or other mezze, or grilled meat. **Drink 2017-2018 Alc 13.5%**

## 27 **Triennes, Rosé, Provence, France 2016** 89

£12.50-£14.50 **Fine & Rare, Honest Grapes, Master of Malt, The Wright Wine Co, OW Loeb, WoodWinters**

Almost certainly the hippest rosé in London right now, on tap in many of the most talked-about restaurants. Cinsault-dominated, refreshingly quaffable, freshly picked strawberry fruit with a nice touch of citrus. Drink with: fresh radishes, 'grand aioli' feast. **Drink 2017 Alc 12.5%**



## 28 **Xavier Goodridge, Shirley Rose, Yarra Valley, Victoria, Australia 2016** 89

£20.37-£23.99 **Exel, Les Caves de Pyrene, Noble Fine Liquor**

Almost more an orange wine than a pink. Quite tannic, but perfumed with roses and quince. Lovely lifted lemony acidity. Unfiltered and unfinned, no added sulphur. Drink with: spiced quail, grilled aubergines. **Drink 2017-2019 Alc 13.5%**

## 29 **Black Cottage, Rosé, Marlborough, New Zealand 2016** 88

£12.99 **Majestic**

Despite its pale colour, this Pinot Gris-Pinot Noir has all the vivid red berry fruit you'd expect from New Zealand: crushed, freshly picked strawberries and raspberries. Simple but deliciously summery; a perfect wedding rosé. Drink with: canapés. **Drink 2017 Alc 12.5%**



## 30 **Lemberg, Blanc de Noir, Tulbagh, South Africa 2016** 88

£10.35 **Frontier Fine Wines, Great Grog, The Leamington Wine Co**

Coming from a hot region, this is a surprisingly delicate, pale and elegant rosé; to taste, it could easily have come from Provence. Syrah-Grenache blend; impressively light in alcohol for the depth of flavour. Drink with: fresh seafood, especially crab. **Drink 2017 Alc 12%**