

GREAT VALUE WINES: OUR FAVORITE ROSÉS UNDER \$20 FOR SUMMER SIPPING

Friday, July 23, 2021

11 Tasting Notes



Every dog has its day, and in the wine world it is now rosé that seems to be barking the loudest. Over the past 10 years (2010-2020), the sale of rosé over \$7 a bottle in the United States alone has increased fifteenfold, according to BW166, a market research company specializing in alcohol beverages. France has seen comparable sales growth.

However, many wine connoisseurs look at rosé as if it were a fleeting summer fling: refreshing and fun but rarely serious enough to hold their interest. Many are reluctant to pour themselves a full glass of such a “pinkish” wine – a color otherwise regarded as fashionable, romantic and arguably feminine by consumers, especially young female drinkers.

For people who treat wine as a lifetime hobby and even have the privilege to work with it, there is a bridge to cross when it comes to rosé. As our understanding about wine deepens and our connection with it becomes more fully entrenched, inevitably we tend to get stuck in our ivory towers, beholden to the appreciation process and believing ours alone to be an acquired, principled taste. Wine is, after all, an enthralling drink, as intellectual and intuitive as it is counterintuitive. We realize palate is essential, and so are education and experience.

But before wine becomes an appreciation, it is a lifestyle. Perhaps the most important thing to remember is that it is just a drink. While wine professionals and aficionados can gush about how unique flavors grow on the palate and strive to find the most precise vocabulary to describe visual, olfactory and gustatory senses, average consumers may have a much lower involvement with liquid in the glass, often viewing it as a commodity.

Although it makes sense to say wine is an acquired taste, the notion that it is a demanding beverage can be very intimidating to new consumers – and this is where rosé comes into play. Its effortless, refreshing style in general gives it an edge up with younger people and new consumers, who increasingly look for wines that are budget-friendly, fun and immediately drinkable. And rosé's blush color, ranging from almost pale copper to deep pomegranate, catches the eye, too. The bold, fearless packaging – rosé comes in everything from cans to sophisticated and unique engraved glass – is an expression of fashion, personality and attitude.

Approachable as rosés are and as much as we would love to find great bottles in this category, we must admit that very few of them that we tasted came close to our threshold for great wines – 95 points. Most rosé wines are indeed made and delivered in a simple, fresh and thirst-quenching manner, which immediately takes our mind to sun-drenched beaches and summer pools.

Their varying color and sweetness, falling between red and white and dry and sweet, arguably compromise their marketability. Far too many are simple, dilute byproducts of red wine; others may be cloyingly commercial drinks designed to conceal their flaws while pleasing the sweet-toothed crowd. While most rosés are great summer sips, few are as serious as those like Lopez de Heredia in Rioja, Spain, or some of the wines from a few producers in Provence, like Chateau d'Esclans, which offer memorable taste with concentration and character.

Below are 11 rosés available on the market for under \$20 that we scored 92 points. They come from distinct parts of the world, each with its own terroir, grape varieties and winemaking know-how but delivering more engaging quality and personality than those rosés that position themselves as easy and good-looking summer refreshments. That said, you could still chill a few bottles, sit back, put on your sunglasses, and enjoy them poolside on a hot and breezy afternoon.

– Zekun Shuai, Associate Editor

[Attems Pinot Grigio Friuli Ramato 2019](#) – JS92

[Wine.com](#): \$12.99

[Vivino](#): \$12.99

[Marietta Cellars California Old Vine Rosé 2020](#) – JS92

[KLWines.com](#): \$14.95

