

Prime Time for Rosé from Provence

It's an encouraging vintage in Provence for rosé at all prices, with wines of real character and balance. Here's to summer and its perfect wine partner.

BY ROGER VOSS



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Another year has passed and prime rosé time, aka a summer, is back. This year, I've reviewed more rosés from Provence than ever before—more than 250. The United States remains the largest export market for these delicious wines, as America continues to open bottles all summer long. Glasses are filled by the pool, on the deck, at the beach or simply while lounging at home, as the wine transports you to the French Riviera no matter where you actually are.

The wines from 2016 are among the best I've tasted. There seems to be even more fruit than usual in these crisp, dry rosés. And, I am delighted to report, there seems to be just a bit more color. While last year it seemed producers were vying to see how near-white their rosés could be, this year I found an attractive pale-pink color dancing through nearly all the wines.

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I've also seen some breathtaking packaging. Square bottles, blue bottles, bulbous bottles, bottles that are so heavy they need two hands to hold, each representing in their own way the beauty of the wine within. And the labels: From clean and classically crafted to strikingly modern and highly designed, there's an aesthetic to please every personal preference.

There continue to be some outstanding rosés from estates that have become famous. What is encouraging this year—maybe it's to do with that extra bit of color—is that at all price points, there are wines of real character, with fruit and acidity happily in balance.

So here's to summer and its perfect wine partner, rosé.

Although Provence is the star, we have hundreds of new, additional reviews from around the globe: red wines, white wines, sparklers and, yes, even more rosés from the Old World and the New. Be sure to check out our complete database, with thousands more reviews at your fingertips [here](#).

Côtes de Provence

Château Sainte-Béatrice 2016 Cuvée Vaussière Rosé (Côtes de Provence); \$20, 91 points. This is the ripest wine in the Béatrice range. With generous red fruits and balanced acidity it has weight and richness alongside the crisp, tangy fruitiness. This is a textured wine with spice and pepper flavors to add complexity to the fruit. Drink the wine from late 2017.

Domaine Saint Andrieu 2016 Rosé (Côtes de Provence); \$20, 91 points. A light and deliciously fruity wine, this is crisp and bone dry. It has great fruitiness with lively acidity and red-fruit flavors. The wine has a zest and lift to it that is irresistible. It comes from an estate owned by the proprietors of Château Talbot in Bordeaux's Saint-Julien. Drink now. *Editors' Choice.*

Château Barbeiranne 2016 Réserve Robert Pascal Rosé (Côtes de Provence); \$20, 90 points. The vineyard is on the slopes of the Massif des Maures, on the way to Saint-Tropez. This special cuvée is ripe and full in the mouth. It has a bone-dry texture, balancing fruit and spice. This serious wine will be ready from late 2017.

Château des Bertrands 2016 L'Élégance Réserve des Bertrands Rosé (Côtes de Provence); \$20, 90 points. In color, this could be a white wine with just the faintest hint of pink when seen against a white surface. Luckily, the fruit is still there, offering flavors of tangy orange and red currant. It has pepper and spice as well as final refreshing acidity. Drink now.

Château Riotor 2016 Rosé (Côtes de Provence); \$17, 90 points. Owned by the Abeille family of Château Mont-Redon in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, this wine is delicious. Crisp and clean with great red currant and citrus fruitiness, it is finely judged with acidity and a light texture balancing the fruit. Drink now. *Editors' Choice.*



Spotlight on Sparkling Rosé

Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence

Château Vignelaure 2016 La Source de Vignelaure Rosé (Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence); \$15, 91 points. In homage to its Bordeaux heritage from a previous owner, the wine has Cabernet Sauvignon in the otherwise typical Provence blend. That gives extra structure, as well as adding some red-currant flavors. This second rosé from the estate is ripe, richly endowed and ready to drink.

Bandol

Les Vignobles Gueissard 2016 Cuvée G Rosé (Bandol); \$21, 91 points. With 45% Mourvèdre and 35% Cinsault this has turned into a highly flavored and aromatic wine. It has great fruits and a rich texture that has a herbal edge. It is certainly a food rosé and with its up-front fruit, it could do with a few months to calm down. Drink from late 2017.

Coteaux Varois en Provence

Domaine la Grand'Vigne 2016 Rosé (Coteaux Varois en Provence); \$14, 90 points. This is a pale colored wine, almost white. With its soft acidity, touch of pepper and bright red-berry fruits, it is exuberant, delicious and immediately ready to drink. The aftertaste gives the wine a further burst of acidity and crispness. *Best Buy.*

Côtes de Provence La Londe

Château des Bormettes 2016 Instinct Parcelleire Rosé (Côtes de Provence La Londe); \$26, 92 points. This is a rich wine, packed with red-berry fruits. Despite its density and ripe fruits, it has a fine streak of acidity that keeps it lively and crisp. It comes from vines close to the Mediterranean, resulting a slightly salty character as well as the warm feel to this food-friendly wine. Drink from late 2017. *Editors' Choice.*

Côtes de Provence Sainte-Victoire

Château Henri Bonnaud 2016 Terre Promise Rosé (Côtes de Provence Sainte-Victoire); \$20, 91 points. This is a ripe, beautifully balanced wine. It has the extra richness and density that comes from a wine produced from vines close to Mont Sainte-Victoire. Full of raspberry and orange fruits, it has a pleasantly tangy, herbal edge on the finish. Drink now. ***Editors' Choice.***

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Roger Voss covers Bordeaux, Burgundy, Champagne, the Loire and South-West France as well as Portugal. His passion is matching food with wine, bringing the pleasures of the table to wine lovers. He has written six books on wine and food, and was previously national correspondent on wine for the London Daily Telegraph. He is based in the Bordeaux region.

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The World in Your Glass