



A Red, White and Rosé Summer

as seen on...*People's Palate* by Rich Mauro

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In the Pink

With all the attention showered on red and white wines, it is easy for consumers to forget that there are many tasty pink wines worth their attention. This is especially true now when cool, refreshing wines are most in demand.

I like to think of pink wines as “bridge” wines. They are versatile enough to make an excellent aperitif or to accompany most foods. They also can substitute for the acidity of a white wine or the darker fruit of a red wine.

Ironically pink wines are under appreciated in this country while the popularity of blush wines has reinforced the perception that these aren't real wines. Europeans, on the other hand, have known for a long time the joy of drinking a good pink wine.

I'm talking about wines that are dry or occasionally only slightly sweet. Expect bright, fresh fruit aromas and flavors of strawberry, cherry, raspberry, and cranberry. Some even exhibit a red-like level of intensity, body and complexity. Expect fresh fruit flavors that approximate the flavor profile of its red siblings but drinks more like a white wine. Because of their freshness and lively fruit, pinks are always best drunk young, so look for the most recent vintages available.

There are essentially three ways to make a pink wine. The most common method is to crush red grapes and leave the juice in contact with the grape skins (the source of a wine's color) only briefly. The second technique is a process called “saignée” in which a certain amount of juice is “bled off” shortly after red grapes are crushed. The third approach involves blending white and red wines to the desired effect.

In the U.S., West Coast producers finally have gotten on the quality bandwagon. Here are four favorites I've tasted recently.

2007 Red Côte Rosé Suisun Valley (cabernet sauvignon/petite sirah, \$13)

2008 Pali Sunset Rose (pinot noir/grenache, \$15)

2008 Van Duzer Pinot Noir Rosé Willamette Valley (\$16)

2008 Etude Rosé of Pinot Noir Carneros (\$20)