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FUTURE

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 The Victorian cook making a comeback
 The top 10 rosé wines to drink this summer

A rosé glow

For many, a perfectly chilled glass of the pink stuff is the taste of summer. Harry Eyres rounds up the rosé wines you should be drinking

IF one swallow doesn't make a summer, then perhaps the same is true for one glass of rosé. This is certainly the case at my tennis club, where heroic quantities of it are consumed throughout the year. However, two glasses of rosé... even those quite frequent grey or rainy days of what is meant to be the British season of outdoor jollity will appear more estival—and if the sun really is shining, all the better.

Rosé needs no special pleading, as the consumption of this category of wine in the UK has been growing rapidly in recent years. Exports to the UK from Provence—the best-known and most fashionable source of the pink stuff—rose by 51% in both volume and value between 2019 and 2020. The point isn't only about numbers. Where once rosé was considered frivolous, its image has become both more sophisticated and, in wine terms, more serious. Rosés that cost £20 or even £50 a bottle aren't uncommon and their versatility and ability to partner a wide range of dishes are increasingly appreciated.

“It's something you drink because you want to feel happy.”
Who could disagree?

If, to quote the notorious advertising slogan for Soberano brandy, rosé was once considered not exactly *'cosa de hombres'*, now, it is endorsed by a figure as defiantly testosterone-fuelled as Jeremy Clarkson. 'It's something you drink because you want to feel happy,' says the tousled terror of the roads. Who could disagree?

What follows is a round-up of some of the best pink wines to drink this summer. I've cast the net quite wide, not only geographically (from cool southern England to the torrid uplands of Castile), but also stylistically. Provence has its place, of course, but it seems worth drawing attention to the variety of styles rosé can come in, from achingly pale and sophisticated to hearty and robust—and, of course, it can be still or sparkling, too. My impression is that the quality of

these sparkling wines has increased markedly in the past few years. Pink fizz might once have been considered a Valentine's Day phenomenon, but top Champagne houses and the best English producers now take rosé very seriously indeed.



Château Minuty Prestige 2020
Côtes de Provence, £119.94
per six (020-7228 2431;
www.northandsouthwines.co.uk)
Minuty, which styles itself the leading Provence rosé drunk in St Tropez, has established itself, with Whispering Angel, as the benchmark Provence rosé of our times. That is to say, very pale in colour, sophisticated in aroma and flavour with hints (nothing too strong) of red berries and herbs and, above all, a satisfying, voluptuous texture, which somehow plays against the 'supermodel' minimalism.



Páramos de Nicasia Clarete 2019
Màquina & Tabla, £16.95 or £14.95
if you buy 12 (020-7244 0522;
www.leaandsandeman.co.uk)
Now for something completely different—this is a biodynamic rosé from a single vineyard of old, bush-cultivated Tinta del País, Garnacha and Malvasía vines in Toro, north-west Spain, made by defiantly unmodern methods. The result is truly exciting, a positive, orangey-pink in colour, with a fascinating complex nose, quite full and very pleasurable on the palate. It's a proper wine, in other words, good on its own, but robust enough to partner quite spicy food.



Babylonstoren Mourvèdre Rosé 2021, £14.90 (www.rakq.com)
The surprise sensation of my summer rosé tasting. The inspiration may be Provençal—a mixture of St Tropez sophistication and Bandol garrigue and body—but this beautiful wine from Franschhoek in South Africa, made from the Mourvèdre grape, sings its own distinctive song. The colour is very pale, slightly orangey, there's an enticing bouquet of flowers, wild herbs and red and black fruit and a satisfying



fullness of body. As good as several Provence rosés that cost considerably more.



Lady A La Coste Rosé 2020 IGP
Méditerranée, £14.95 (0333 900
3131; www.31dover.com)
Here, we're back in more familiar territory, in Provence (but outside the Côtes de Provence appellation), with a rosé made from Syrah, Grenache, Cinsault and Merlot. The style of this wine, developed by master sommelier Vincent Gasnier in honour of Soho House's



6 The damp-hedgerow bouquet is followed by red fruit and flowers on the palate 9

Markus Anderson, is distinctively light and fresh—qualities well conveyed by the Damien Hirst-designed butterfly label (although, apparently, the latter refers more to Mr Anderson’s social-butterfly qualities).



Sancerre Rosé 2019 André Dezat et Fils, £17.90 (01743 234455; www.tanners-wines.co.uk)

I have a special fondness for rosés made from the Pinot Noir grape and also for the wines of Sancerre (which come in all three colours). This, from a 50-acre family estate, has all the lightness and freshness you expect from Sancerre in its white incarnation, with the extra body and sappiness of Pinot. Works very well both as an aperitif and as an accompaniment to fish dishes.



Le Rosé de Vertheuil 2019, Claire Villars-Lurton, Bordeaux, £19.99 (0800 188 881; www.waitrosecellar.com)

From the grape of red Burgundy to one of the two main grapes of red Bordeaux: this 100% Merlot rosé has impressive pedigree, hailing from the Pauillac Fifth Growth Château Haut-Bages Libéral. The colour is Provence-pale, but there’s a distinctive and very attractive freshness and more acidity than you tend to find further south. Fine, elegant and stylish.



Tavel Cuvée de la Reine des Bois Domaine de la Mordorée 2020, £26.50 or £23.95 for 12 (020-7244 0522; www.leaandsandeman.co.uk)

This is a magnificent, deep-coloured, raspberry-scented and voluptuous rosé from the Rhône appellation, which has always been famed for the most serious pink wines and the ones that benefit most from ageing. Utterly un-Provence-like, this biodynamically farmed blend of five grape varieties is thrillingly precise and sensuous. Worth every penny.



Chilworth Manor Vineyard Rosé 2020, £21.95 or £20.95 for 12 (020-7244 0522; www.leaandsandeman.co.uk)

At the other extreme in style is this exhilaratingly fresh blend of 51% Pinot Meunier and 49% Pinot Noir from the Surrey Hills. The damp-hedgerow bouquet is followed by red fruit (redcurrant) and flowers on the palate—all in a light-weight frame and coming in at 12% alcohol, perhaps a relief after the 14% powerhouses.



Nyetimber Sparkling Rosé NV, £35.99 (0121-704 3415; www.frazierswine.co.uk)

Quite bright pink in colour. The nose shows enticing red fruit (strawberry, raspberry) with warm brioche notes. This is a very accomplished English pink fizz, on the dry side, crisp and firm. It bears comparison with big names from Champagne, at a similar price.



Billecart-Salmon Brut Rosé, £310 per six (020-7793 7900; www.goedhuis.com)

I have long been an admirer of the medium-sized family house of Billecart-Salmon and especially of its rosés, which are as good as any in Champagne. The Brut rosé is perfectly poised between citrus freshness and the red fruit and even meaty body imparted by Pinot Noir. 🐛