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LIVING

MAY 2011

GOING PLACES & DOING THINGS

KAYAKING IN LAKE TAHOE, GARDEN HOPPING IN
SAN LUIS OBISPO, DINING IN LOS ANGELES,
AND FOLLOWING THE AMGEN TOUR OF
CALIFORNIA FROM START TO FINISH



HURRAY FOR ROSÉ IN MAY

When the weather turns summery, chill out with blush wines.

Rosé is consumed these days with great eagerness because winemakers approach blush wines more seriously than in the past. What used to be refreshing but one-note lunchtime wines are now engaging enough for the dinner crowd, too. Today's rosés are often fruity but dry (or off-dry). They remain refreshing, but they're also ever-changing in the glass. Plus, they have serious culinary range and pair with nearly anything that a crisp beer would go well with.

The term "rosé" is often conveyed as if it were its own varietal, but it's just a term for any light red wine that is meant to be served chilled. Rosés can be made from any red grape, which means a spectrum of flavors and other characteristics are available.

These six Central Coast rosés demonstrate how broad and wonderful that spectrum is. Before serving, chill the wine in the refrigerator for at least an hour; then let it warm for 10 to 15 minutes at room temperature.



Derby Wine Estates

2007 Mosaic Rosé, Paso Robles (\$14)
derbywineestates.com

The appropriately named Mosaic is made up of more than one varietal: Grenache, mourvèdre, syrah, counoise, and a bit of petite sirah produce an enchanting ruby color and a rich profile of cherry and summer melon. A delightful pizza wine that would also pair nicely with roast turkey and tostadas.



Zaca Mesa

2010 Z Gris, Santa Ynez Valley (\$16)
zacamesa.com

With its fetching pink hue, Z Gris looks like spring in a glass. This grenache rosé tastes of melon and mineral, and it is dry as a bone. Pair this with crab cakes, bacon and Gruyère quiche, or huevos rancheros.



Eberle

2009 Syrah Rosé, Paso Robles (\$17)
eberlewinery.com

There is the faintest bit of floral aroma that endears itself to the soft flavors of raspberry and other summer fruit. These flavors concentrate at the finish. A reliable choice with just about whatever is being served, be that pad thai, fish tacos, or any tacos.



Pomar Junction

2009 Syrah Rosé, Paso Robles (\$18)
pomarjunction.com

This Templeton winery produces rosé with earthy, Rhône-varietal flavors and enough minerality to give it some backbone. With only 90 cases produced, it'll go quickly when summer heats up, especially if grilled sausage or goat cheese or cheese enchiladas are around.



Loma Linda Vineyards

2008 "Always" Rosé Petite Rosé
Paso Robles (\$20)

lomalindavineyards.com

Made from petite sirah, a bold grape that produces robust reds, this vibrant rosé begins with floral aromas, then deep strawberry notes, a tinge of warmth, and a crisp finish. Great on its own or sip it with thin slices of serrano ham, barbecued chicken, or fajitas.



Alma Rosa

2009 Pinot Noir Vin Gris
El Jabali Vineyard, Sta. Rita Hills (\$20)

almarosawinery.com

Dry and bright with good acidity that balances with the 14.5 percent alcohol. There are hints of citrus and spice around the ripe strawberry flavors. Hamburgers would be good with this. So would Greek salad. And so would burritos.



Head's Up: Return of the King

THE KING—that is, Semler 2008 King of the Mountains Cuvée—never actually went away. It was an official wine for last year's Amgen Tour of California, and Malibu Family Wines has enough in its library for May's race. This Bordeaux and Rhône blend has had an additional year in the bottle to relax and unwind. So why not buy a few bottles at last year's price?

"It is typical for wine to soften a little bit and then become a little more fleshed out after its first year in bottle," says Ted Vance, a wine consultant for Malibu Family Wines. "I think that the 2008 KOM is now deeper, more round, and even easier to drink."

Semler

2008 King of the Mountains Cuvée
Saddle Rock-Malibu (\$32)

malibufamilywines.com ■



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