



The *Versatile* New Rosé

The days of cotton candy-sweet pinks are over;
today, rosés are dry and refreshing



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You may have noticed the plethora of pink wines coming from Ontario and, believe it or not, that's a good thing. Usually pink, or how it is more lovingly called "rosé," was a sign of a bad vintage. It was made when things didn't quite ripen properly and grapes had to be used in other ways, besides the ones they were originally intended. Allow me to briefly explain that concept before moving on.

The average grape needs approximately 1,500 heat units (read: hours of sunlight) to ripen — some more, some less, but that's the average. A rule of thumb is that most white or green grapes take less time

than red. For example, Sauvignon Blanc and Riesling ripen earlier in the season than, say, Syrah or Cabernet Sauvignon. In a cool climate region, like Ontario (and New Zealand, Bordeaux, New York, Oregon, Germany), we can struggle to get all our grapes ripe due to lack of enough sunlight during the growing season, or a cooler-than-usual summer or even a very wet summer. In those "bad years," the only thing you could do with the grapes that do not reach their full maturity is to make something pink and sweeten it up (because lack of maturity also means a lack of sugar in the grapes). Now back to our regularly

scheduled topic ...

The new plethora of pink wines has nothing to do with bad vintages or burning off your unuseable or unsellable grapes; it's a choice wineries are making long before the summer sun starts shining on the vineyard. Rosé is in once again, but this time, it's for all the right reasons.

Yup, pink wine has had its day in the sun before, but back then it was fuelled by white Zinfandel — a sweet, confected wine out of California made from Zinfandel. This once proud grape had suddenly been turned into liquefied cotton candy (thanks to Sutter Home Winery, the first makers of the wine). Although white Zinfandel is still made to this day, and some still swear by its greatness for the summer sipper, the wine itself has lost its lustre. People have moved on, though the memories still remain and pink wines often get a bad

Wines to Buy:

Rosés you'll want to get sooner rather than later — because once they're gone, they're gone ...

Château des Charmes 2015 Cuvée D'Andrée (\$15.95 - #333260) — winery and LCBO

Peninsula Ridge 2015 Cabernet Rosé, Beal Vineyard (\$13.95 - #177840) — winery and LCBO

Creekside 2015 Cabernet Rosé (\$14.95 - #48819) — winery and LCBO

Flat Rock 2015 Pink Twisted Rosé (\$16.95 - #39974) — winery and LCBO

Niagara College Teaching Winery 2015 College Rosé (\$12.15) — winery only

Leaning Post 2015 Rosé (\$20) — winery only

Featherstone 2015 Rosé (\$15.95 - #117861) — winery and LCBO

Henry of Pelham 2015 Rosé (\$14.95 - #613471)

Kacaba 2015 Rebecca Rosé (\$17.95) — winery only

Honsberger 2015 Rosé (\$19.95) — winery only



rap for being confected, concocted and over-manipulated sweetness bombs that most people tend to avoid. Fast forward some 30 years and everything old is new again (as the song goes). Pink and summer are friends again, sweetness is out, dry, refreshing and flavourful is in. Out with confected, in with food-friendly summer sippers that make any lengthy sit near the pool or lake, or lounge on the deck, dock or patio, a real pleasure — and all with no sugar-induced headache.

Today, rosés are intended wines, made purposely dry, and offer up great value. Sure, they can be a red berry bowl of fruit aromas and flavours but with the acidity to keep the sweetness level at an apparent level, not a candied one. And that's also what makes these so versatile and more than just a summertime sipper. Rosé has become a complete 365-day wine, perfect for poultry, scintillating with salad, fresh

with fish and even boffo with beef (yup, I just used the word “boffo” — meaning “highly effective or successful”).

Rosés are also attractive around the dinner table, and not just for lounging or hot-weather refreshers. Makers are now keeping the acidity high, making it an ideal food-pairing wine — and because sweetness is low, the dryness of the wine makes it a wonderful addition to meal time. Ever been the only one drinking wine at a dinner that cried out for red? Believe it or not, rosé is the answer. Not sure you are going to enjoy red? Rosé is the gateway wine to start liking reds. Too proud to put pink in your glass? Hold it right there, buster, rosés are the wine of choice of many celebrities and the cool kids at the party. Will you be the only one in your crowd drinking rosé? Maybe at first, but once one person sees you with a rosé in your hand, you'll see many more

people jumping on the bandwagon and, quickly, you'll be seen as a leader, not a follower, and everyone will thank you. See how helpful and versatile rosé can be?

If you've always wanted to get into (or get back into) pink wines, but were afraid of the sugar levels you'd find, I can without a doubt tell you it's (once again) safe to go into those waters. I've included a list of really good local rosés that you'll want to have on hand for the upcoming holidays and, best of all, they won't rot your teeth out and won't break the bank. The best news of all is that good rosé can be found between \$13 and \$20 and will make all the difference in the world to your table from now till Christmas. Keep in mind that rosés are seasonal — most are good for about two years tops. After that, they lose that freshness and liveliness that makes them such a wonderful and refreshing drink and perfect food pairing. 🍷

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