

GET YOUR *pink* ON!

French wine importer Craig Underhill puts on his rose-coloured glasses and examines the rise and rise of France's pastel-hued wonder

If you've been lucky enough to travel to France in recent years, and you like your food and wine, you'll have noticed rosé.

It's everywhere.

It seems that, especially over lunch—or anytime the mercury hits the high 20s—it's *de rigueur* to drink rosé

According to recent industry data, rosé sales really are booming.

In 1992, pink wines accounted for just 11 per cent of wine sold in French supermarkets. That figure increased to 28 per cent by 2012, exceeding (remarkably!) sales of white wine, at 17 per cent.

This phenomenon has caught on in the rest of the world, too.

The majority of rosé produced in France comes from Provence or elsewhere in the south. Exports of rosé from Provence to the UK have jumped 82 per cent on volume and 37 per cent on value from 2011 to 2012, according to the latest figures from the Provence Wine Council.

And consumers are willing to pay more and more for pink wine, too, buying more expensive rosé.

In the US, sales of rosé costing more than \$12 increased by over 20 per cent in volume and value in the past year. Large formats, such as magnums, have also become more and more popular.



Craig Underhill, wine aficionado and co-founder of DiscoverVin

Many years of passion for wine and food, a winemaking qualification, and an extended stay in Bordeaux/southwest France led to the birth of DiscoverVin, established by Craig in 2011 along with business partners Helen and Mary. They are passionate about the food, wine and sights of these regions.

WHY IS ROSÉ TAKING OFF?

- It's a natural fit with an al fresco, relaxed lifestyle
- It matches most foods, including spices and BBQs.
- There's no need to cellar it. Drink it fresh! It will still improve after one or two years, but this summer look for 2010, 2011 and 2012 rosé from France.
- Dry rosé just tastes great! Could that be the reason?

In a recent review of rosé in the *NY Times*, sommeliers complained that things had quickly changed from a need to "push" rosé to a situation where rosé is dominating the market during the summer. Consumers were taking the "easy road", apparently, and selecting rosé rather than more "challenging" wines.

Oh puh-lease! Just enjoy!

When we established DiscoverVin in 2011, I was a little sceptical about selling rosé. But, luckily, I was out-voted by the other directors.

Our rosé wines have proven to be amongst our most popular, and it shouldn't really be a surprise. Given our climate, laid-back lifestyle and diverse range of cuisine, rosé is a natural fit.

In Australia, sales of rosé wines over \$15 grew by 29 per cent in 2012—more than double that of red and white wine in the same price bracket. Rosé marketing initiatives like the Rosé Revolution have really helped highlight the image of dry rosé. We no longer think of it as a simple and sweet "lesser wine".

And, given the trends in France, I think we're just at the start of a rosé boom in Australia.

THINK PINK

Rosé comes in many hues: pale pink, pale salmon, deeper reddish-pink. This often depends on how it's made.

Most rosé is made with red wine grapes. The juice is clear, and it's the skin contact for a few hours at the start of the ferment that imparts a slight colour, body and tannin to the wine. The longer the skin contact, the darker the colour. The grapes can be picked younger so with less ripe sugars they make crisper, drier wines that are lower in alcohol.

They are food friendly, matching an array of dishes including pre-dinner nibbles, but they also match spicy dishes and those that are often hard to match, such as dishes with tomato and seafood. 

COMING UP ROSÉ

5 wines to dazzle your friends with this summer



Chateau d'Esclans Garrus 2010

A "super cuvée" rosé from selected parcels of 80-year-old Grenache and Vermantino vines. Considered to be one of the greatest rosé in production. Stone fruits, strawberries and soft mouth-filling acid. Super price too.

Find it here: www.woodswines.com.au



Chateau Miraval 2012 Appellation Cotes de Provence Protégée

Hollywood A-listers Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie bought this chateau and "helped select" the barrels of Cinsault, Grenache, Syrah and white grape Rolle to make the wine. Sexy bottle, elegant wine, red fruits, citrus and mineral notes. A touch less dry than others, but if it's good enough for Brangelina it's good enough for us!

Find it here:

www.vintagecellars.com.au



Chateau La Rayre Bergerac Rosé 2012

If you think you don't like rosé, give this a try. It's darker in colour and with more body than many other styles of rosé. Blackcurrant nose and a satisfying, ample, unctuous palate. Asian dishes, BBQs, pre-dinner nibbles—it goes with everything! Find it here: www.discovervin.com.au/shop/item/chateau-la-rayre-bergerac-ros-2012



Domaine de la Croix Irrésistible Rosé AOC Cotes de Provence 2012

With a view over the Mediterranean Sea on the peninsula of St Tropez, this wine is made from several red wine grapes, each one grown on separate plots according to the most suitable soils. It appeals on many levels: gorgeously packaged; citrus, spicy nose; supple, soft fruit; and a silky balanced finale in the mouth. Also available in magnums.

Find it here: www.discovervin.com.au/shop/category/provence-domaine-de-la-croix



Domaine Templar Bandol Rosé 2012

From one of the best producers in Bandol (one of the eight wine producing regions within Provence), the vineyards overlook the Mediterranean Sea, based on limestone and silica soils. This combination of soil and climate particularly suits Mourvèdre, which is the dominant variety grown here. Guaranteed to be a hit at any summer lunch or dinner party!

Find it here:

[www.oakbarrel.com.au/store/tempier-bandol-rose-magnum-2012-\(151\)-\(provence\)/dp/8509](http://www.oakbarrel.com.au/store/tempier-bandol-rose-magnum-2012-(151)-(provence)/dp/8509)