

ROSÉ CHAMPAGNE

by Giles Fallowfield

The rise in the popularity of rosé Champagne has been rapid and consistent over the past decade. Between 1989 and 1997 it declined in importance on Champagne's export markets both in terms of actual volume and as a percentage of total exports, falling from 3.95m bottles, nearly 4.2% of total exports, to 2.68m bottles, just 2.58% of overall Champagne exports in 1997. Pink Champagne then started to find favour again and when exports hit their recent peak of just over 150m bottles in 2007, volume had shot up to 11.2m bottles and share of overall exports to 7.43%.

In the UK market, the largest for Rosé Champagne outside France, shipments rose by more than 20% year on year for six consecutive years. Significantly although total Champagne exports declined in 2008 -- the financial crisis of September 2008 hit sales of all luxury goods -- the volume of pink Champagne shipped outside France actually rose to 11.6m bottles and its share of the market thus increased to 8.2%.

It seems that rosé sales have remained pretty resilient even in times of recession and with the prestige cuvée sector suffering and generally the most expensive styles of Champagne being

much harder to shift over the past 18 months, pink Champagne has assumed even greater importance to the balance sheets of the major players thanks to its relatively high selling prices compared with the rest of non-vintage sector.

MORE GROWTH POTENTIAL

This has not unreasonably encouraged the *Champenois* to believe there is further potential for growth in rosé sales and that it's highly likely to account for more than 10% of all exports well before the end of this decade. Indeed Stéphane Tsassis CEO of Laurent-Perrier suggests that if the current growth in rosé sales of 8% a year continues its share is likely to rise by around 1% a year and he sees that as possible for at least the next decade.

So what is that has led to the change in pink Champagne's fortunes, why are consumers around the world more interested in this style of fizz

than ever before? There are, it seems many different views about this. One



Stéphane Tsassis

explanation is simply that there are more, better made rosé Champagnes on the market today and thus greater availability. Consistency of quality has also greatly improved. It is only fairly recently that the *Champenois* in general started taking production of rosé Champagne seriously. For many years any short-term growth in sales of pink Champagne was treated with suspicion and seen only as a passing phase, a fad of fashion that would quickly pass.

"It's not a fashion any more, it's a trend. Even in 2009 the market went up 8.6%, rosé styles now outsell vintage Champagne," says Tsassis. "Rosé is a very popular style in the emerging markets too, China, Singapore, Dubai are all rosé markets. This is partly because the offer is greater and the marketing better thus helping to stimulate demand for the segment."

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Consumers buying non-vintage Clicquot Rosé Champagne are only just seeing the influence of the impressive red winemaking facility that Clicquot has built in Bouzy -- redolent of a boutique wine producer further south in the Côte d'Or -- in the finished wine. Bollinger and Charles Heidsieck, two of the region's finest producers only started selling a pink non-vintage style even more recently.

THE TOP TEN EXPORT MARKETS FOR ROSÉ CHAMPAGNE IN 2009

Country	Total shipments*	Rosés*	% of total exports
UK	30,523,359	2,372,457	7.8%
USA	12,552,070	1,633,753	13.0%
Japan	5,133,802	769,444	15.0%
Germany	10,947,967	1,047,286	9.6%
Italy	6,803,419	420,984	4.7%
Switzerland	4,846,500	354,734	7.3%
Holland	2,735,858	256,880	9.4%
Belgium	8,168,385	243,230	3.0%
Spain	2,979,997	246,437	8.3%
Australia	2,931,941	65,463	2.2%

Source: CIVC, compiled by Giles Fallowfield
*in bottles

IMPROVED IMAGE

It has taken nearly a decade of solid growth to change that perception in Champagne, but it has now changed. This has been helped by the LVMH machine getting behind the sector, investing significantly in red wine production and marketing the pink hued styles of Moët, Clicquot, and Ruinart, not to mention Krug and Dom Pérignon, with increased vigour. It seems hard to believe but Veuve Clicquot, arguably the success story of the past decade, only started selling non-vintage pink Champagne in the Spring of 2007 and then only in Japan.

However the availability of more, better quality rosé Champagne is only part of the story, a rosé-hued wine with bubbles in it has further appeal. It looks different in the glass. The extra fruitiness consumers are likely to find in the wine tends to soften Champagne's acidity that some drinkers find tough to cope with. It is extra exclusive too and nearly always more expensive than its white counterpart. Now that rosé table wine has lost its cheap and cheerful image, it's no longer in danger of any negative connotations by association with the likes of Mateus or white Zinfandel either. What's more men don't mind being seen drinking it anymore. Pink Champagne has had a style makeover and now everyone wants a glass.

NEW MARKETS

While the UK, USA and Japan between them accounted for 60% or all rosé exports in 2006, happily it is not just a three-country trend and last year this trio's share had dropped to around half the market and Germany has become the third largest purchaser of pink Champagne with shipments there crossing the 1.1m bottle mark in 2008 and only falling back about 50,000 bottles last year.



ALUMINUM/ALF

"In some countries where rosé [table] wines are understood, like Spain and Italy, rosé Champagne has started to generate a real buzz and a growing interest in the wider Champagne category," says

Frédéric Cuménil, Moët & Chandon President and CEO. As Cuménil notes, any negative connotations by association with the white zinfandel market that may have affected rosé fizz sales adversely in the past have gone now. "It doesn't hurt anymore, even in new markets. In the smaller markets, up to one million bottles, some have jumped straight to the rosé styles," says Cuménil.



Frédéric Cuménil

Thus while the average proportion of rosé in the mix for all Champagne export markets is now just over 8%, in markets like Russia, Mexico and Brazil it's 14.6%, 14.3% and 11.8% respectively. Thailand,



Thibault Jean

ROSÉ CHAMPAGNE AS A % OF TOTAL EXPORTS 2000-2009

Year	Total Export*	Rosés*	% of total exports
2000	103,583,131	3,250,900	3.1%
2001	98,172,497	3,414,843	3.5%
2002	112,671,711	4,024,919	3.6%
2003	119,273,475	4,747,179	4.0%
2004	123,056,432	6,014,795	4.9%
2005	129,391,158	7,276,331	5.6%
2006	140,649,823	10,004,819	7.1%
2007	150,922,092	11,220,267	7.4%
2008	141,244,306	11,579,363	8.2%
2009	111,789,214	9,399,564	8.4%

Source: Compiled by Giles Fallowfield using CIVC statistics
*in bottles

Taiwan, Singapore and India all hover around the 10% mark too while in Africa rosé accounts for 16.42% in Libya and one in three bottles sold in Nigeria.

“It’s a big international trend now. It’s good for Champagne. It provides a great opportunity for some consumers to rediscover Champagne and the chance to find some new pleasures. Hopefully the Champenois will be wise enough to only create good quality rosés and go for the value creating opportunities that rosé champagne offers. One way or another it’s certainly more expensive and more difficult to make,” he says.

The higher prices charged for rosé Champagne are partly accounted for by higher production costs and the shortage of good red wine for blending purposes, especially in the middle of the past decade when the general Champagne market was growing well and the rosé sector expanding really rapidly. In 2006, for example, shipments to Japan rose by a barely believable 85.8%, and this wasn’t from a small base. Making the right quality of red wine requires riper fruit and



Alain Cornu

with Pinot Noir this necessitates lower yields and a different, more time intensive approach in the vineyards both of which have cost implications.

Rosé Champagne is generally made in one of two different ways: by blending some red wine with white Champagne or alternatively by

the saignée method, which involves literally ‘bleeding’ some colour from the pigments in the skins of the black



Pinot Noir

grapes – Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier. This ‘maceration’ process is also used for making the red wines to blend and typically it takes place before alcoholic fermentation as winemakers are not looking for heavy or extracted base wines.

INVESTING IN RED WINE FACILITIES

As we have already noted, the Champenois have invested heavily in better red wine making facilities. In making suitable red wine for blending they are looking for fruit flavours and colour, not tannins. While some smaller producers may now use a variety of methods to make rosé Champagne, blending together the component parts, most of the larger scale producers blend red wine with white, partly because this allows them more flexibility but also

because it gives them greater control in achieving a consistent colour.

Laurent-Perrier, effectively creators of the non-vintage rosé sector back in 1968, remains a notable exception continuing to make its rosé by the maceration method, also ageing it for four years before release. And this as Tsassis readily admits has held back Laurent-Perrier’s ability to expand sales, “we can’t make more even if demand is high but because of the quality differential we have a deserved position at the top level”.

WIDE RANGE OF STYLES

The rosé Champagne market has become increasingly complicated as further new styles are launched and more players are involved. This is partly because there are widespread differences in what wines are blended together, how much red wine is used, and whether the cuvees are just black grape based as quite a few have a significant proportion of Chardonnay in their blends. Today there are a huge range in styles of rosé Champagne on the market. You can find everything from light, elegant lifted, sometimes Chardonnay led wines that are more appropriate for the aperitif slot to much more vinous Burgundy like offerings that are not only food friendly, they can match quite gamey meaty dishes, if not rare beef. Like rosé table wine, pink Champagne can also work very well with quite spicy food.

So for buyers looking to find the right rosé Champagne for their particular audience and outlet it’s important to source a style and blend that’s appropriate. You probably don’t want something savoury, weighty and vinous to serve by the glass in a wine bar where a lighter more aperitif style would work better and the big selling point of the Champagne is the pretty colour and not much else. So where do you start? The make-up of the blend and how youthful it is should help and we have put together a guide to the styles of rosé made by 16 different producers that also looks at drinking occasions and matching rosé with food.

TASTING CHAMPAGNE ROSÉ



Jim Boudi

Giles Fallowfield tastes a selection of rosé Champagnes – vintage and non-vintage – from 16 of the best known négociant houses. He looks at the large variety in colour and style that are currently available with details of the composition of the blends, where the grapes are sourced and suggestions on when to drink them and the different foods they could be matched with.

BOLLINGER

www.champagne-bollinger.fr

Name of the wine: Bollinger Rosé NV
Method and blend: 60% Pinot Noir, 25% Chardonnay, 16% Pinot Meunier plus reserve wine. Blended with around 5% red wine, Pinot Noir from Bollinger’s own vineyard in Ay and Verzenay.

Sources of grapes: Cote d’Ay, Verzenay, Louvois, Le Mesnil-sur-Oger and Cuis.

Colour: Deep dusky pink.

Style: Designed to be ‘very Bollinger’ in style in other words it is a rich, soft, Pinot Noir dominated blend. Only 3,000 cases were made of the first release launched in April 2008.

Drinking occasion: Aperitif but also food friendly.

Food and wine matching: Has enough weight to match savoury, lighter meat dishes and a range of cheeses. Also works well with Asian food.



Name of the wine: Bollinger Grande Année Rosé 2002

Method and blend: 62% Pinot Noir, 38% Chardonnay made by adding between 5 and 6% still red from the Côte aux Enfants vineyard in Ay wine to the white Grande Année blend.

Sources of grapes: Côte d’Ay, Bouzy, Verzenay, Louvois, Mareuil-sur-Ay, Le Mesnil-sur-Oger, Oger, Cuis, Cramant and Chouilly, 73% grands crus and 27% premier crus.

Colour: Delicate coppery pink/opal.

Style: A powerful, structured wine made in a Burgundian style, already showing an attractive creamy intensity but like other wines from the generally superb 2002 vintage, a wine that will develop well for years to come. The previous ’99 vintage has only recently opened up to reveal its true complexity.

Drinking occasion: Delicious on its own as a luxurious aperitif but also very food friendly.

Food and wine matching: Has enough weight to match quite substantial meat dishes of duck or lamb, even something quite spicy as well as flavoursome mature cheese.



BILLECART-SALMON

www.champagne-billecart.fr

Name of the wine: Billecart-Salmon Brut NV Rosé

Method and blend: 40% Chardonnay, 30% Pinot Noir, 30% Pinot Meunier. Harvest base is 2006 with around 20% reserve wines. Made by blending with around 7% Pinot Noir vinified as red wine from the family’s vineyards in Mareuil-sur-Ay.

Colour: Pale and bright pink.

Style: Delicate aroma of red fruits, with a citrus lift and a fresh clean raspberry finish.

Drinking occasion: Ideal as an aperitif but also works with food.

Food and wine matching: Wild salmon, sushi or a dessert like a red fruit tart.



DEUTZ

www.champagnedeutz.com

Name of the wine: Deutz Brut Rosé NV

Method and blend: 38% Pinot Noir, 32% Pinot Meunier, 30% Chardonnay, made by blending in some 8-9% Aÿ Pinot Noir vinified as red wine. Portion of reserve wine varies up to around 40%.

Sources of grapes: Aÿ, Mareuil-sur-Aÿ, Verzenay, Verzy, Bouzy, Avize, Le Mesnil-sur-Oger.

Colour: Strong salmon pink.

Style: Attractive mix of softness and freshness.

Drinking occasion: Aperitif or with food.

Food and wine matching: Perfect foil for salmon cooked with mushrooms, beef carpaccio, duck with red berry sauce, roast lamb chops or certain fresh and creamy cheeses like Chaource or Brillat-Savarin.



Name of the wine: Deutz Brut Rosé Vintage

Current vintage if appropriate: 2005

Method and blend: 100% Pinot Noir, 80% from Montagne de Reims crus and 20% from Vallée de la Marne, made by blending in around 10% Pinot Noir vinified as red wine from parcels of old vines in the Côte d'Aÿ, (La Pelle, Froide Terre and Le Clos).

Sources of grapes: Aÿ, Bouzy and Verzenay, Mareuil-sur-Aÿ, Ambonnay,

Colour: Antique pink colour with hints of orange.

Style: A full and ample style coming from top class Pinot Noir with yellow fruit, strawberry, raspberry, griotte cherries.

Drinking occasion: More of a food wine.

Food and wine matching: The winemaking team suggest duck in cranberry sauce, rack of lamb, pigeon stuffed with cherries, even beef Wellington as well as Asian dishes like Yakitori (savory skewers of grilled meat and vegetables).

DE CASTELLANE

www.castellane.com

Name of the wine: De Castellane Brut Rosé NV

Method and blend: The white component is a blend of 40% Pinot Noir, 30% Pinot meunier and 30% Chardonnay blended with between 13 and 17% red wine that is sourced in Aÿ, Bouzy and Cumières, three villages noted for their rich and powerful red wines. Bottled after five months in tanks and then aged 24 to 30 months before disgorgement, then given a further three months rest.

Colour: A delicate salmon pink.

Style: Fresh and fruity with a floral nose and aromas of strawberry and gooseberry.

Drinking occasion: Essentially an aperitif but could also work with food.

Food and wine matching: Salmon or red summer fruit puddings.



DEVAUX (VEUVE)

www.champagne-devaux.fr

Name of the wine: Veuve A. Devaux Cuvée Rosé Brut

Method and blend: 70% Pinot Noir (including 15% vinified as red wine for blending), 30% Chardonnay. Between 10 and 20% reserve wine depending on the year, which is aged in large oak barrels.

Sources of grapes: Pinot Noir from the Côtes des Bar, Chardonnay from Côtes des Bar, Côtes des Blancs and Vitry.

Colour: Pretty coppery pink.

Style: Red fruits on the nose, supple with a hint of the oak and notes of spice.

Drinking occasion: Aperitif or with food.

Food and wine matching: Veal in white sauce, mussels in a wine and cream sauce, veal sweetbreads.

Name of the wine: Veuve A. Devaux Rosé Intense NV

Method and blend: 100% Pinot Noir and made by the saignée method (three days maceration) the current blend in the market is based on the 2002 harvest.

Sources of grapes: The majority from Les Riceys in the Côtes des Bar from the best vineyards all 15 years old at least.

Colour: Bright ruby red.

Style: Powerful strawberry fruited and very Pinot Noir aromas with a marked spiciness.

Drinking occasion: Really best with food.

Food and wine matching: Blanquette de veau, Jambon de Parme, Bœuf aux Carottes.



GOSSET

www.champagne-gosset.com

Name of the wine: Gosset Grand Rosé Brut NV

Method and blend: 56% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Noir, with 9% Pinot Noir vinified as red wine from the grands crus of Bouzy and Ambonnay.

Sources of grapes: Chardonnay from Avize, Chouilly, Cramant, Le Mesnil-sur-Oger (all grands crus) and premiers crus Trépail, Vertus and Villers Marmery. Pinot Noir from Aÿ, Ambonnay, Bouzy and Verzenay (all grands crus) and premier cru Rilly la Montagne.

Colour: A strong, bright and clear salmon-pink.

Style: Aromas of fresh summer fruits and wild red berries, spices like cinnamon and nutmeg and freshly baked bread. Rich and full bodied.

Drinking occasion: Essentially a food wine.

Food and wine matching: Saltwater fish, such as angler, sea bream, bass, red scorpion fish, red rock mullet or John Dory, garnished with rich spices, even quite elaborate sauces. Game, such as pheasant, woodpigeon, partridge, teal, young rabbit or



LANSON INTERNATIONAL

www.lanson.fr

Name of the wine: Lanson Brut Rosé NV

Method and blend: This is a similar blend to Black Label made up of 53% Pinot Noir, 32% Chardonnay and 15% Pinot Meunier with between 25-30% reserve wines in the blend and a proportion of the Pinot Noir vinified as red wine.

Sources of grapes: From between 50 and 60 different crus.

Colour: A pretty and elegant pale pink.

Style: Importantly and helpfully Lanson now puts the disgorgement date on every bottle of its NV rosé, so you can drink it while its freshest or age it a little more to find a rounder, mellower style. Becomes more obviously Pinot Noir dominated, even Burgundy-like as it warms in the glass.

Drinking occasion: Has enough freshness to work well as an aperitif but has weight and intensity too so works with food.

Food and wine matching: Perhaps surprisingly it's very good with quite spicy foods not just lighter meats.



LAURENT-PERRIER

www.laurent-perrier.fr

Name of the wine: Laurent-Perrier Cuvée Rosé Brut

Current vintage or typical ageing wine receives: aged for a minimum of 48 months before release.

Method and blend: made by skin contact/maceration from 100% Pinot Noir, typically from around ten highly rated crus.

Colour: Red amber-pink.

Style: Basket of fruit aromas, fairly light, nothing heavy, but some creaminess, red fruits and lively acidity.

Drinking occasion: Apéritif or with food particularly fruit puddings.

Food and wine matching: Not only makes a good aperitif but also matches a number of dishes especially fruit puddings and tarts that aren't too sweet.

MOËT & CHANDON

www.moet.com

Name of the wine: Moët & Chandon Brut Impérial NV Rosé

Typical ageing wine receives: At least 36 months.

Method and blend: Rosé Impérial's assemblage is built on the intensity of Pinot Noir (40 to 50%, 10% of which are red wine), the fruitiness of Pinot Meunier (30 to 40%, 10% of which are red wine) and the finesse of Chardonnay (10 to 20%). The use of 20 to 30% of carefully selected reserve wines complete the assemblage and enhance its intensity, subtlety and consistency.

Colour: A glowing pink with dominant red tones and purple highlights.

Style: Benoît Gouez, Moët & Chandon Chef de Cave describes Rosé Impérial as the most extrovert and seductive

expression of the Moët & Chandon style. It has a lively bouquet of fresh red summer berries (strawberry, raspberry and red currant) with floral nuances and a spicy note. It's round with a fleshy and juicy palate.

Drinking occasion: As an aperitif, on its own but particularly with food.

Food and wine matching: "In a Mediterranean spirit," says Gouez, "food pairings should be simple and intense in aroma, flavor and color. We particularly recommend grilled shellfish, red-fleshed fish in a thin-sliced carpaccio, grilled or pan-seared, red meat (raw to lightly cooked) in a light sauce, delicious, sun-ripened vegetables and fresh red berries."

Name of the wine: Moët & Chandon Grand Vintage Brut Rosé, Current vintage: 2003

Method and blend: Pinot Noir 48 % -- of which 19% is vinified as red wine, Pinot Meunier 30 %, Chardonnay 22%. It has a light dosage of just 5 g/l, reflecting the rich and concentrated harvest.

Colour: Quite a deep pink.

Style: Mature, rich and expressive of the hottest and earliest vintage on record in Champagne.

Drinking occasion: Good on its own but arguably better with food. The fruit is more in the black cherry, blackberry vein and there is a warm spiciness on the finish. It's likely to age well too. For Gouez it's "passionate, dense and gourmand, a wine with an elegant structure and a sunny personality".

Food and wine matching: Essentially a food wine capable of accompanying quite challenging spicy dishes, think of red Burgundy.



PHILIPPONNAT

www.philipponnat.com



Name of the wine: Philipponnat Royale Réserve Rosé Brut

Current vintage if appropriate or typical ageing wine receives: Aged for 36 months plus another three months resting between disgorgement and shipping, every bottle carries the date of disgorgement on the back label.

Method and blend: Made from only pure cuvée the majority of the blend is Pinot Noir (50-60% depending on the harvest) plus between 25 and 30% Chardonnay and 15-20% Pinot Meunier with 20-35% reserve wines coming from the 'solera' type system Philipponnat employs. The red wine element in the blend is Pinot Noir around 7-8% which generally comes from Philipponnat's famous south-facing Clos des Goisses site in Mareuil. Dosage is a fairly low 9g/l.

Sources of grapes: The majority of the grapes come from Montagne de Reims crus Aÿ and Mareuil-sur-Aÿ.

Colour: A light salmon pink becoming more coppery over time.

Style: A wine of character and distinctive taste, with hints of cherry and wild strawberry. Aromas become very Pinot Noir dominant as it opens up in the glass. Designed to be consumed in its fruity youth it will however age attractively.

Drinking occasion: Good as an aperitif it also combines well with food.

Food and wine matching: A lovely accompaniment for smoked meats and fish, pork butchery, as well as desserts made with red berries, or simply on its own. Avoid very sweet desserts.



Name of the wine: Philipponnat Cuvée 1522, 2003 Vintage premier cru rosé

Current vintage: 2003, every bottle carries the date of disgorgement on the back label.

Method and blend: Made with only grand and premier cru fruit from Philipponnat's best situated vineyards the blend is 55% Pinot Noir from Aÿ, 5% still red Pinot Noir from the Clos des Goisses vineyard in Mareuil-sur-Aÿ, 40% Chardonnay from the Côte des Blancs, mostly Le Mesnil-sur-Oger and Cramant. Made in an 'Extra Brut' style with a dosage of between 4 and 5g/l, partly to offset the intensity of the 2003 vintage.

Colour: A strong deep pink thanks to the powerful red wine element.

Style: Disgorged after around five years ageing on its lees at this point freshness is still there, while the time on the lees gives interesting complexity. Further nuances are added by ageing and fermenting a small portion in wood. Balanced and complex, it's fresh with real purity, depth and intensity, plus a long finish, becomes rounder with further age.

Drinking occasion: Serve cool at around 8-9 °C for the aperitif, and at 10-12° C with food.

Food and wine matching: A great match with many different dishes from lobster through to fruit puddings – like strawberry or raspberry tarts -- that are not overly sweet. Combine with pates or pink meats (veal or lamb), has the depth to handle even slow-cooked red meat.

POMMERY

www.pommery.fr

Name of the wine: Pommery Brut Rosé NV

Current vintage if appropriate or typical ageing wine receives: Aged for 3 years before shipping.

Method and blend: Around a third of each of the main grape varieties is used in this blend with the colour coming from about 8% Bouzy Rouge vinified as red wine.

Colour: Delicate pale salmon pink.

Style: Small red berry fruits on the nose, supple and soft with an appealing freshness.

Drinking occasion: Aperitif or with lighter foods and canapés.

Food and wine matching: With poultry, shellfish and red fruit desserts.



Name of the wine: Pommery 'Springtime' Rosé NV

Current vintage if appropriate or typical ageing wine receives: Aged for a minimum of 30 months.

Method and blend: A similar three way blend of the three main varieties but with a slightly higher proportion of Pinot Noir.

Colour: A stronger shade of pink than the Brut rosé.

Style: One of four 'seasonal' champagnes in the vast Pommery range this is a more obvious up-front fruity style with immediate appeal.

Drinking occasion: Aperitif or just on its own on a lazy summer's afternoon.

Food and wine matching: Light starters and savouries.



Name of the wine: Pommery Brut Rosé Apanage NV

Current vintage if appropriate or typical ageing wine receives: Like the Brut Apanage style that is aimed mainly at the on trade this wine gets extra ageing.

Method and blend: It has 42% Chardonnay in the blend plus 40% of Pinot Noir and 18% Pinot Meunier.

Colour: Very pale, onion-skin pink.

Style: As the classier looking packaging suggests this is a step up in class from its two non-vintage pink partners. With significantly more Chardonnay in the blend it's delicately fruity and made very much in a fresh, elegant aperitif style. It has light dosage of 9g/l.

Drinking occasion: Aperitif or with lighter food.

Food and wine matching: Shellfish and light meats or charcuterie. Red fruit based flans and tarts or summer pudding.



PIPER-HEIDSIECK

www.piper-heidsieck.com

Name of the wine: Piper Heidsieck Brut Sauvage Brut Rosé NV

Current vintage if appropriate or typical ageing wine receives: Aged for 36 months before release, the current blend is based on the 2006 harvest.

Method and blend: A three-way blend of mostly black grapes, between 50-60% Pinot Noir, 15-25% Pinot Meunier, 15-25% Chardonnay with around 10% reserve wine from the three or four previous harvests before the base (2006). Made with the addition of between 24 and 26% red wine, one of the highest amounts used by any of the négociant houses. Dosage between 10 and 12g/l.

Sources of grapes: Montagne de Reims for Pinot Noir, Côte des Blancs for Chardonnay, Vallée de la Marne for Pinot Meunier.

Colour: Intense deep pink/light ruby red, one of the darkest strongest coloured non-vintage rosés on the market.

Style: Fresh and lifted in much the same way as the straight Brut non-vintage it has plummy, cherry-like red fruit, a note of mandarin and a hint of spice on the finish. Becomes more Burgundian in style as it opens up.

Drinking occasion: Good as an aperitif, it works well with food as its strong colour suggests it will.

Food and wine matching: Light meats and charcuterie, smoked fish, a variety of cheeses and tart red berry fruit puddings.



TAITTINGER

www.taittinger.fr

Name of the wine: Taittinger Brut Prestige Rosé NV

Current vintage if appropriate or typical ageing wine receives: Aged for three years before release.

Method and blend: It mainly a blend of Pinot Noir and Pinot meunier (70%) with around 30% Chardonnay. There is quite a large portion of red wine in the blend as the colour reveals.

Colour: Light ruby red, like a Marsannay.

Style: While it doesn't lack initial freshness as it opens in the glass it becomes more and more Pinot like with time, especially if you don't serve it too cold.

Drinking occasion: Better suited to drinking with food as it's quiet a muscular winery style.

Food and wine matching: Think light red Burgundy and you are on the right lines. Pierre Emmanuel Taittinger sees it as a wine for both "early and late evening". He also likes to match it with fruit tarts but it could work well with cheese too.



ALAIN THIÉNOT

www.thienot.com

Name of the wine: Alain Thienot Brut Rosé NV

Current vintage if appropriate or typical ageing wine receives: Aged for three years before release.

Method and blend: It is a three way blend of Champagne's varieties with Chardonnay from Avize and Le Mesnil-sur-Oger accounting for the largest portion some 45%, Pinot Noir from Aÿ, Rilly la Montagne and Hautvillers (28%) plus Pinot Meunier (20%) from Cumières and Damery. The red wine in the blend makes up 7% and comes from one of the oldest vineyards in Aÿ.

Colour: A pretty, slightly coppery pink.

Style: Such good provenance gives plenty of elegance, class and finesse with attractive raspberry fruit and a nice refreshing grip of acidity and black fruit on the middle palate.

Drinking occasion: A lovely aperitif or wine for contemplation, it would also work well with starters.

Food and wine matching: Lighter style starters like smoked salmon.



RUINART

www.ruinart.com

Name of the wine: Ruinart Brut Rosé NV

Current vintage if appropriate or typical ageing wine receives: The current blend is based on the 2006 harvest with some 2005 and 2004 reserve wines.

Method and blend: It is a blend of 55% Pinot Noir, plus 45% Chardonnay.

The red wine component, which is high at between 18 and 19% of the finished blend, is all made from Pinot Noir and comes mostly from the Montagne de Reims and Vallée de la Marne premier crus of Pargny-les-Reims and Mareuil-sur-Aÿ.

Colour: Fairly light red given the quite substantial proportion of red wine used.

Style: Chef de Cave Frédéric Panaiotis describes the style as: "very aromatic, leaning towards berries, often morello cherry and raspberry on the nose, and pink grapefruit on the palate. The high percentage of Chardonnay in the blend brings a lot of freshness and a touch of minerality as well. As for all non vintage Ruinart Champagne, the style is more on elegance, freshness and purity making it a very palatable and easy to drink rosé Champagne. Dosage is fairly light at 9g/l which helps the freshness.

Drinking occasion: Best drunk within two or three years of release while fresh fruit flavours still dominate. With food essentially.

Food and wine matching: Panaiotis suggests: "It could be drunk right through a meal if you choose lighter dishes. We often serve it with desserts like fraîcheur de framboises et mousse aux biscuits roses de Reims; tiramisù aux biscuits roses de Reims, à l'eau de rose; or gelée de fraises à la vanille, financier aux framboises, partly because its freshness makes it a very pleasant and clean end to a meal."

