

## Divine Wine

# Rosè from Provence catching on among American wine drinkers

BY W. PETER HOYNE

For Custom Media Solutions

The popularity of Provençal rosè continues to surge in the U.S., and it may well become the fashionable beverage of choice throughout the year. Americans have an unquenchable thirst for rosè, with young consumers sharing the greatest interest in these visual beauties.

The U.S. imports the largest share of rosè (35.5 percent) from Provence, France, accounting for a 58 percent growth in volume between 2014 and 2015. Rich in history and viticulture, Provence resides in close proximity to the Mediterranean coastline in southeast France.

Benefiting from a moderating temperature influence of the sea and cooling mistral winds from the north, it is adept in producing floral whites and complex reds, yet it is the expression of dry rosè from the region that continues to charm consumers.

Rosè has been misunderstood for decades because of watermelon-pink wines that are tainted with sweetness, but in reality 57 percent of all rosès are dry. The five primary grape varieties used in the production of Provençal rosè are Grenache, Carignane, Syrah, Mourvedre and Tibouren. These grapes are ideally suited for the lean soils of limestone, schist and clay.

Provence AOP rosè is required to have at least two of these grapes in the blend. Most commonly rosè wine is created by gently macerating or direct pressing of the whole berries to impart a pale salmon color to the juice before fermentation.

With 582 producers spread across nine appellations and 65,000 acres, there can be stylistic differences in the aromas and complexity of rosè. In its purist form, rosè from Provence will reveal pale shades of peach skin infused with dried floral aromas. Red currants, passion fruit, citron and orange zest are integrated into the dry flavor profile.

In their youth, these wines have an understated elegance, but over time this can evolve into deep, spicy undertones. The finish is delicate, with a touch of crispness in the background.

After tasting Provençal rosè that dated back 20 vintages, it was evident these wines, contrary to traditional wisdom, gain in complexity over time and are a true cerebral experience.

Our craving for rosè is not a whimsical trend but instead a declaration of our changing lifestyles and interest in straightforward and healthy foods. What is most appealing about Provençal rosè is its affinity to pair well with almost any



cuisine. Provençal rosè has gone beyond casual conversations and outdoor summer entertaining to becoming a serious contender for gastronomic dining.

While it may be ideally suited to accompany a variety of fresh fish, vegetable and Mediterranean preparations, it can also hold its own against the bold flavors of grilled meats and herb-flavored preparations. Our loyalty to Provençal rosè will continue to accelerate as it becomes more than a diversion and evolves into an integral part of our modern lifestyle.

**2015 Whispering Angel Rosè:** Established in 2006 under the direction of Sacha Lichine, this is a blend of Grenache and Cinsault along with some Rolle (Vermintino) white. Light coral with an expansive middle of red currants and citrus, it's well crafted, lively and pleasurable with a long finish. \$18.99

**2015 Perle De Marguïi Rosè:** This wine is 45 percent Cinsault, 35 percent Grenache, 10 percent Syrah and 10 percent Rolle. Pale with more reserved aromatics, it's chalky with a nervy tension and saltiness in the background. It should evolve nicely in the bottle. \$19.99

**2015 Hecht Banner Côtes De Provence Rosè:** This Grenache, Cinsault and Syrah blend is deep crimson with an abundance of juicy red currants and whole yellow cherries. A round and creamy middle leads to a soft mineral finish. \$15.99

**2015 M de Minuty Rosè:** Light orange with nice red fruits and orange rind, it has a nice crispness with some stone fruits. \$15.99

**2015 Chateau Gassier Esprit Rosè:** This wine is pale orange with a hint of salty cream over the top of melon and yellow fruits. \$15.99