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12 Festive Rosés from California New reviews of pink wines perfect for summer sipping

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Tasting Highlights bring the best wines from our editors' most recent tastings to WineSpectator.com members.

Summer is almost here, so go ahead and start counting the days. Just in time for warm weather, the 2012 California rosés are beginning to arrive on store shelves, preparing you for those leisurely sunny afternoons and evenings.

This group of new releases offers a range of styles, from delicate and crisp pinks that would be at home in Provence to the ripe and full-flavored blushes that only California would dare produce.

Rosé can be made from any red grape, but not all rosés are created the same way in California. Rhône-style rosés seem to fare best, with Pinot Noir ranking a far second.

Tablas Creek, in Paso Robles, has been an advocate of rosé for years—no surprise given its association with the Perrin family of Château de Beaucastel in the Southern Rhône, where rosé thrives. The producer has two pinks on our list.

Winemaker Erik Miller demonstrates an affinity for Grenache with his Kokomo Pauline's Vineyard, while Jeff Pisoni shows that Pinot Noir can produce a festive pink from Santa Lucia Highlands, near Monterey. Carroll Kemp follows suit with the Red Car Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Rosé Bybee Vineyard.

The biggest challenge when it comes to these new rosés? Finding them. Except for Tablas Creek, Cline and a few others, they are made in small quantities and sold largely through wineries and the Internet. But rosé lovers should not hesitate to seek them out.

TABLAS CREEK Rosé Patelin de Tablas Paso Robles 2012 Score: 90 | \$20

Zesty yet delicate in style, offering a light peach hue, plus aromas of dried cherry and wild flower, with crisp flavors of apricot, watermelon and loamy spice. Grenache, Mourvèdre and Counoise. Drink now. 1,200 cases made. —*T.F.*

KOKOMO Grenache Dry Creek Valley Rosé Pauline's Vineyard 2012

Score: 89 | \$22

A zesty rosé, offering a delicate pink color, with floral raspberry and spice aromas that lead to lively strawberry and smoky melon flavors. Drink now. 623 cases made. —*T.F.*

PISONI Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Rosé Lucy 2012 Score: 89 | \$18

A lush and supple wine, offering a festive pink hue and floral strawberry and watermelon aromas, with crisp and spicy flavors. Drink now. 850 cases made. —*T.F.*



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Mendocino Pinot Noir Specialist

RED CAR Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Rosé Bybee Vineyard 2012 Score: 89 | \$25

This has a lovely salmon hue, with floral strawberry aromas leading to delicate watermelon flavors that finish with crisp minerality. Drink now. 1,500 cases made. —*T.F.*

SANGLIER Rosé Du Tusque Sonoma County 2012 Score: 89 | \$18

Pretty and floral, with peach and spice aromas and delicate strawberry, melon and mineral flavors. Grenache, Mourvèdre and Cinsault. Drink now. 319 cases made. —*T.F.*

TABLAS CREEK Rosé Dianthus Paso Robles 2012 Score: 89 | \$27

A rosé with a backbone, offering a bright pink color and aromas of strawberry and smoke, with flavors of dried cherry, melon and spice that finish with a touch of tannins. Mourvèdre, Grenache and Counoise. Drink now. 1,230 cases made. —*T.F.*

CLINE Mourvèdre Contra Costa County Rosé 2012 Score: 88 | \$12

A fun and festive rosé, with floral raspberry and vanilla aromas and user-friendly watermelon, cherry and spice flavors. Drink now. 4,800 cases made. —*T.F.*

MARGERUM Rosé Riviera San Luis Obispo County 2012 Score: 88 | \$21

Bold, floral strawberry aromas lead to racy dried cherry and spice flavors in this rosé. Grenache. Drink now. 400 cases made. —*T.F.*

VRAI COTE Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Vin Gris 2012 Score: 88 | \$15

A delicate style, with a slight pink hue and floral cherry and mineral notes. Drink now. 247 cases made. —*T.F.*

LYNMAR Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Rosé 2012 Score: 87 | \$25

A bright pink hue is the sign that this is a fun and zesty wine, showing raspberry and spice notes. Drink now. 589 cases made. —*T.F.*

BIRICHINO Vin Gris California 2012 Score: 86 | \$16

Frivolous and soft, with modest raspberry, cinnamon and spice flavors. Grenache, Cinsault, Mourvèdre and Rolle. Drink now. 1,444 cases made. —*T.F.*

CAROL SHELTON Rendezvous Rosé Mendocino County 2012 Score: 86 | \$15

A vivid pink hue is the cue that this is a fruit bomb full of strawberry and cherry fruit, with spicy, zesty flavors. Carignane, Zinfandel, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petite Sirah. Drink now. 722 cases made. —*T.F.*

Louder vineyards is closing

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