

**Have a Bouquet of Rosé**

At this time of the year, the best rosés wines are fragrant and fresh with full delicate aromas of spring, refreshing to sip and highly versatile companions to food.

It might be quiche or egg Benedicte at lunch or for dinner grilled chicken Caesar salad or salmon with grilled asparagus, I would not rule out lamb, rosés, in other words, pair well with any number of dishes.

The best rosé offer the essence of the red grapes from which they are made combined with crisp underlying acidity and hopefully, some minerals to round out their complexity.

Another attractive thing about them is their price. You don't have to spend much to enjoy them. There are lots of good rosés between £4.00 and £10.00, including three that I really enjoyed in recent weeks, 2 of them from France, one from Spain.

Paul Jaboulet AINE 2008, Côte du Rhône « Parallèle 45 » rosé, is one of the season hits and rises above other recent vintages of this wine from France's Southern Rhône Valley. At £8.00, it is light pink in color and nuanced with pretty raspberry notes and touches of orange and cinnamon on the finish. It is a blend of 50% Grenache, 40% Cinsault and 10% syrah.

The other Southern French wine is from Côteaux d'Aix en Provence, "Sabine" rosé 2008, light copper in color, this £8.75 wine has a zesty underlying acidity that frames notes of strawberry, yellow peach and lemon. There is a nice soft creamy finish. It is a Blend of 60% Cabernet sauvignon, 25% Grenache and 15% Syrah.

From Spain's Rioja region, "EL COTO" 2008 rosé, £8.50 is elegant and fruity, offering notes of cherry, raspberry and a touch of spice. Deeper pink in color, the overall impression is full flavoured and lively. It is made of 50% Tempranillo and 50% Grenache.

In case you were wondering, rosé's are made by giving the wine only minimum contact between the juice and the skin of the red grapes, sometimes only hours. This is done by either quickly "bleeding off" juice destined to become rosé from the fermentation tank (know as the saignée method), or after harvest, crushing the grapes and pressing out the juice before fermentation, as is done with white wine.

The thing to remember about these wines is that they offer a delightful and festive accompaniment to a range of food and just may be as memorable as a bouquet of roses.

They are in excess of 100 different rosé wines available in the UK, so my recommendation is to buy a few and enjoy.

Cheers,

Xavier Le-Bellégo  
Forbury's restaurant & Wine Bar