



Joanna Simon is one of the UK's leading wine experts and she samples some of the best wines around. This month she explores the freshest rosés for spring and summer. With a huge expansion in choice these days, we look at her top six favourites.

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We're not matching the French yet, who've been drinking more rosé than white wine since 2007, but there's no question that we've acquired the habit. Rosé now accounts for about 11% of all UK wine sales — and it's far more than that in the summer months.

However it is becoming less seasonal, in part because we've all been discovering the joys of drinking rosé with food rather than just as an aperitif. Good dry rosés are wonderfully versatile, especially with the lighter and more Mediterranean-style dishes of summer, and fruitier or slightly off-dry rosés are good partners for spicy cuisine.

The other thing that has changed is the huge expansion in choice. I've picked six favourites from five countries including China, but I could have chosen alternatives from Canada, Turkey, Australia, India or England, among others. So, if you spot a different rosé on a list or shelf, give it a go.

Wine o'clock

Platinum's expert **Joanna Simon** shares her favourite rosé tipples. These are perfect for all manner of events — and a cause of celebration in their own right.



Pairs well
with salade
niçoise,
calamari,
prawns or
scallops

Whispering Angel 2018, Provence

£16.50–£18.95, HENNING'S WINE, MAJESTIC, AMAZON, OCADO, WAITROSE, SLURP

This is not only Provence's most famous rosé — it may well be the most famous globally. And the man behind it, Sacha Lichine, can take the credit for leading the rosé revolution these last dozen years. Despite the volumes now produced, the quality of Whispering Angel hasn't been compromised. It remains a model of pale, dry, supple and elegant Provence rosé with floral, pomegranate, herb, citrus and mineral notes.

★★★★☆

Rosa dei Masi 2018, Trevenezie

£12.95–£15.30, TOSCANACCIO, ALL ABOUT WINE, TANNICO, CORKING WINES, WINE DIRECT

Made in the Trevenezie area of north-east Italy from the traditional, local Refosco grape, this copper-pink rosato is full of cherry, rosehip, spice and tangy cranberry flavours with the texture of cashmere softness. The texture comes from using a small proportion of semi-dried grapes — the same method that is used for the powerful red Amarone wines of Valpolicella, another speciality of the Masi family who produces this.

★★★★☆



A good
match
for mixed
antipasti,
seafood or
light pasta



Ramón Bilbao Rosado 2018, Rioja

**£10.95, GREAT
WESTERN WINE**

A pale, dry, Provence-style rosé made from Garnacha (aka Grenache) grown high up in Rioja. It's the cooler weather at higher elevations that gives the crisp, ultra-refreshing style of redcurrant fruit piqued with orange zest and apricot. It's ideal as an aperitif, but can take on light food such as vegetable or seafood tempura, sashimi or San Daniele ham.

★★★★☆



Château Ksara Sunset Rosé 2017, Lebanon

**£12.15–£13.99, WINEMAN,
WINE POOLE, NOVEL WINES,
WINE DIRECT**

A bright pink, medium-full and fruity, dry rosé with bold, summery red-berry, peach and spice flavours that can handle quite punchy flavours — including southeast Asian spices, Chinese and Persian food, but can equally well be drunk on its own. It's a blend of Cabernet Franc and Syrah grown in the Bekaa Valley, in vineyards lying at around 1000 metres, by Lebanon's oldest winery.

★★★★☆



Château Changyu Moser XV Cabernet Sauvignon Blanc de Noir 2018, China

£17.99, OCADO

A delicious, one-of-a-kind rosé produced from Cabernet Sauvignon grown in Ningxia, China by an Austrian-Chinese partnership. Succulently fruity and smooth, but bone-dry with white pepper spiciness and a crisp grapefruit finish. It's a great match for a Chinese banquet and fusion food, but also for more European flavours. Note that Ocado's website calls it 'white Cabernet Sauvignon'.

★★★★☆



Le Rosé de La Clarière 2018, Bordeaux

£13.99, LAITHWAITES

Very pretty, powder-pink, dry rosé with a nicely rounded texture and fresh, herby redcurrant and blackcurrant fruit with a hint of peach. It's based on Cabernet Sauvignon, with a smidgen of Cabernet Franc to give the herbal lift, and it comes from Tony Laithwaite's own estate in Côtes de Castillon, Bordeaux. A charmer as an aperitif, but it also works well with summery food.

★★★★☆

Quick and easy wine hacks

It's not a hard and fast rule, but pale rosés (excluding cheap, blush-style wines) tend to be dry and lighter bodied — darker rosés tend to be fuller and fruitier.

'Mineral' describes a savoury wet-stone, flinty or saline taste, mostly in dry white wines. It doesn't mean the wine contains minerals from the vineyard soils.

Most rosés come in clear glass that gives no protection from light damage. If you're outside, cover the bottle (an old sock isn't glamorous, but works).

Rosé is made from red grapes or a mix of red and white, but not (in the EU) by mixing red and white wine. The exception is Champagne. ■