



Basic Juice Article
Real Men Drink Pink

by: *Beau Jarvis*

OK, I admit it. I used to snicker at people who drank White Zinfandel. My thoughts went something like, “Why drink a wine that more closely resembles iced tea or grape *Kool-Aid* than *real* wine?” Luckily, that was as far as I made it down wine snobbery lane. A very enlightened wine instructor helped me do a U-turn when she shared her cardinal rule of wine enjoyment: “If you happen to like a particular wine, then who cares what anyone else thinks about it? Just drink and enjoy.” Wine is all about enjoyment. If you happen to like White Zin, Hazzah! I must admit, it takes a courageous man in the often übermacho lounge culture to order a glass of rosé wine. I’ve seen an entire table collectively roll its eyes at a courageous (or blissfully naïve) thirtysomething male ordering the lone glass of White Zinfandel amidst a sea of flexing Cabernet Sauvignon. Well, I now proclaim myself to be a rosé drinker and I’m damn proud of it. I still don’t particularly care for White Zinfandel. But I have discovered a nice little world of rosé wines outside the White Zin realm that are perfect for picnic quaffing.

My wife and I recently vacationed on the Caribbean island of Martinique in the French Antilles. Martinique, while not easy to get to (a joyous five-stop string of flights guaranteed to make the most seasoned traveler’s tucus numb), is quite literally a chunk of France in the tropics. After spending one morning lying on the beach making my own skin a nice shade of rosé, we decided to have a light lunch at the nearby café. I needed a nice cool drink. I looked around at my fellow (mostly French) vacationers and noticed small carafes filled with something suspiciously pink in color. Having never visited Paris or the south of France during warm weather months, I didn’t realize this was the same Provençal Rosé that is enjoyed in hundreds of French outdoor cafes when the temperature rises. Feeling a little adventurous and very thirsty, we ordered a carafe of rosé to go along with our seafood and cheese crepes. Wow. What a fantastic warm weather wine. The rosé was nothing like I expected. It was fruity yet dry, light and refreshing. This wine was very easy to drink and went well with our food. I’ve since learned that most rosé wines from Provence are blends of several red grapes including Syrah, Mourvedré,

Grenache and Cinsault. Rosé wines get their color from limited exposure to red grape skins. Basically, this means the grape skins are separated from the fermenting juice before the juice becomes red.

After the vacation, I made my way to the wine store and found two rosé gems – one from France and the other from Spain - and both less than seven dollars! The French rosé is from the Languedoc region. “Les Jamelles Cinsault Rosé,” 2001 (\$6.95) is made from 100% Cinsault grapes. This Cinsault rosé is a pretty pink color and offers up fresh fruit scents of raspberry and strawberry. Drinking a chilled glass of this wine made me think of two words: ‘easy-drinking’ and ‘fresh.’ “Marques de Caceres Rioja Rosado,” 2001 (\$5.95) is from Spain’s Rioja region. At under six bucks, this wine is a *grande* bargain. It’s nearly red with pink highlights. The Caceres Rosé is bursting with bright berry and subtle floral scents. Taste this wine and you’ll see how a wine can be fruity, dry *and* smooth all at the same time. Both rosés go well with nearly any food you usually toss in the picnic basket. Try these wines with cold pasta dishes, olives, chicken, fish and even mom’s potato salad. Like me, you too will soon be a proud pink wine drinker. Cheers!

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