



Thinking rosés - just in time for the Pink Salmon fest

[Doug Sloan](#) / The Courier-Islander

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Some wine lovers call them Rosés, others - with a little wince, sometimes - just call them pink.

Here in Campbell River -where WineWise originates - next Saturday, July 27, the Campbell River Pink Salmon Festival celebrates the return of the pink salmon to its spawning grounds by serving up delicious pink salmon to the public and promoting pink salmon as a sustainable and delicious seafood choice at Robert Ostler Park along the downtown waterfront.

That little wince -kind of a shrug, sometimes a squirming grin -is often enough almost embarrassed. Serious wine lovers are seldom encouraged to appreciate and enjoy pink wines. Even with pink salmon - or any other salmon, for that matter... Putting the question of the potential quality and downright enjoy-ability of Rosés down Viña Chocolan Syrah Petit Verdot Rosé (553974) \$12.99 is a marvelously "chewy" wine from Chile's Maipo Valley. Blended from 80 per cent Syrah and 20 per cent Petit Verdot, this is a red wine lover's white wine alternative and generously endowed with strawberry and peppery raspberry flavours.

Coho, sockeye and spring salmon are all wonderfully paired with pink wines. As well as their gorgeous colours, these Rosés have underlying cherry berry fruit flavours that give them some serious weight and body.

Relatively new on the Italian shelf Canapi Terre Siciliane Rosé (12377) \$12.99 is 100 per cent Nero d'Avola - the red grape of Sicily. The grapes are destemmed and gently crushed and the juice is drained from the bottom of the fermenter using the "salasso" method, minimizing skin contact, and tannins. Sweet red berry fruit aromas and flavours sizzle on a base of tart and creamy lemon.

Here in British Columbia, we have our own various and devious ways to make Rosés. Four of the five vineyards - Naramata, Osoyoos, Oliver and Kelowna - contribute grapes to Mission Hill Five Vineyards Rosé (601161) \$14.99. A very Okanagan Valley kind of blend with 92 per cent Merlot underpinning three per cent Pinot Noir, three per cent Cabernet Sauvignon and two per cent Gamay this is classic cherry, berry and pomegranate in a boisterously bright robe of vibrant colour.

Besides being perfect pairings with almost any type or style of salmon, all of these Rosés are great with chicken dishes, perfect with pork and sufficiently seriously fruited enough to stand up to steak and other red meats.

Made entirely of Gamay Noir grapes grown at Three Wolves Vineyard on the Mount Boucherie Bench Quails' Gate Rosé (170316) \$15.99 is bright and creamy with strawberry and rhubarb apple pie aromas and flavours. Crushed into stainless tanks and soaked for 24 hours on skins to let the clear juice draw flavour and colour from the skins before pressing and settling. This is kind of a "Beaujolais Light" treatment that is outrageously versatile with food.

Changed with carrying the torch for the credibility of truly "dry" pink wines almost single-handedly all through the halcyon days of sweet White Zinfandel out of California in the 1980s and 1990s, the wines of France's Mediterranean region of Provence still provide models for "New World" winemakers.

Moulin de Rognes Rosé (777789) \$15.99 is made from Grenache, Syrah, Cinsault and Cabernet Sauvignon

grapes grown around the village of Rognes, just north of Aix en Provence. Rough, sun-baked vineyards of hard limestone and clay lend a layer of light, wet, rocky minerality to the raspberry and strawberry fruit flavours. Subtle "bouquet garni" notes of sage and summer thyme hover just beyond the light berry fruit.

From Italy and back from an absence of unavailability just in time for the salmon days of summer Bottega Pink Gold Rosé (223669) \$24.99 is an off-dry sparkling blend of 40 per cent Pinot Noir and 60 per cent Raboso Piave grapes. This is a seductive sipper in an eye-catching pink gold teardrop bottle and lush and fruity with a strawberry apple pie meets lemon meringue kind of intensity.

Back in British Columbia Paradise Ranch Merlot Icewine (106260) \$28.90 (...in a 200 ml bottle just perfect for two) is a seriously sweeter take on that creamy strawberry meets lemon meringue theme. Forego the salmon this time and serve chilled glasses with slivers of simple cheesecake or spoonfuls of French vanilla ice cream.

With or without pink salmon, take a walk on the wilder side of your politically correct wine loving friends and pour a glass of Rosé next time you feel the need for a summer sipper! Doug Sloan is a Campbell River wine enthusiast. Reach WineWise by emailing douglas_sloan@yahoo.com.

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