

BC GUILD OF WINE JUDGES

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CLASS D: ROSÉ

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AFTER READING THESE NOTES YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- Technical characteristics of Rose
- Winemaking Techniques
- History
- What to pair

BCAWA DEFINITION CLASS D - ROSÉ

Light, refreshing, transparent pink to very pale red wines. Wines that are unmistakably red are not acceptable. Sweetness ranges from dry to off-dry. The most interesting rosés tend to be made from the juice of black grapes fermented with little or no skin contact but small amounts of red wine may also be added to a white wine. Slight spritz is permissible. As with any table wine, the sugar-acid balance must convey the impact of dry table wine style. Non-grape rosés belong in either this class or J1 (Country Table) and qualifying provincial entries will be placed in the more appropriate of those classes for the AWC Competition by the Provincial Director, usually after discussion with the winemaker. Blends of grape and less than 95% non-grape may also be entered here. Non-vinifera rosés are acceptable in this class.

Technical Characteristics:

Ingredients:	Red and black grapes with colourless juice are most successful but blends of red and white wines are permitted.
Alcohol:	9% - 13.5%
Colour:	Pink: pale to deep. An orange tinge is permissible. Red or purple are undesirable. Amber is unacceptable.
Sugar:	0% - 2%
Specific Gravity:	0.990 - 0.998
Acid:	6.0 g/L - 7.5 g/L
pH:	3.1 - 3.4

WINEMAKING TECHNIQUES:

Press red grapes with limited maceration:

This is the method used in Tavel, the only French AOC exclusively rose. The grapes are grown specifically for rose, picked and pressed after a short, and very closely calculated maceration period, usually 12–24 hours. During maceration, phenolics such as the anthocyanins and tannins that contribute to color as well as many flavor components are leached from the skins, seeds and any stems left in contact with the must. In addition to adding color and flavor, these phenolics also serve as antioxidants, protecting the wine from degradation of oxygen exposure. The skins are discarded rather than left in contact throughout fermentation (as with red wine making). The longer that the skins are left in contact with the juice, the more intense the color of the final wine.

Saignée:

French for bleeding, Saignee is where the grapes are picked, maceration is allowed for a carefully calculated time, then a percentage of the juice is bled off, typically 20% to 25% and made into rose. This originally was used to intensify the remaining must and the juice bled off was discarded. That

seemed a waste so winemakers started making rosé with it. As expected in France, the Rhone winemakers who press specific grapes look down on this method. For home winemakers this provides two distinct but related wines from the same batch of grapes.

Blending:

Blending, the simple mixing of red wine to a white to impart color can produce a rosé and is a common mistaken belief in the general public. This method is discouraged in most wine growing regions, especially in France, where it is forbidden by law, except for Champagne. Even in Champagne, several high-end producers do not use this method but rather the saignée method. The danger for home winemakers is if your red wine has undergone ML fermentation and your white wine has sorbate, you get a fault that smells of geraniums.

GRAPES USED:

Any red grape varietal can be used. Grenache and Cinsault are used in Tavel, the only rosé AOC in France. Local producers use Pinot Noir, Syrah, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec. Malbec is a favourite in South America. Spanish winemakers use Grenache, Tempranillo and others. Basically, just about any red grape. Some winemakers are macerating Pinot Gris to give it a pink tinge like a rosé.

COLOUR:

Depending on winemaking techniques, skin contact time will give the wine a range in colour from pale salmon pink to a dark pink. The colour also depends on the type of grape used. For example, Pinot Noir can make a pale to medium pink wine while Grenache tends to make pale to orange coloured wine. The Tavel rosés from Grenache and Cinsault are typically quite dark.

HISTORY

Rosé is having a moment right now. The BCL lists 322, Everything Wine lists 462. Almost all the Okanagan producers have a rosé. Winemakers and wine drinkers are discovering a rosé can be as complex and satisfying as any other wine. The most expensive rosés are the pink Champagnes that retail for over \$1,000 per bottle and are a blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

Rosé is probably the oldest wine type, having its roots in ancient Greece. To make a palatable rosé takes little time compared with red wine which need time to mature and soften, during which time it could easily spoil. The rosé of Tavel was said to be a favourite of Louis XIV, and Philip IV (1268 – 1314) is supposed to have travelled through Tavel on one of his tours of the kingdom. He was reportedly offered a glass, which he emptied without getting off his horse and afterwards proclaimed Tavel the only good wine in the world. When Bordeaux was ruled by England from the mid-1100's, it developed an extensive export market for Clairnet which is Bordeaux's version of rosé. This became anglicized to Claret and eventually referred to all red wines from Bordeaux.

Modern rosé is made all over the world and from all varieties of grapes. It is very popular in Provence in France and through Portugal and Spain where hot weather makes a chilled rosé a perfect accompaniment to a long lunch on a patio.

Unfortunately, in North America, in 1972 Sutter Home Winery had a stuck fermentation. They bottled it and called the pink coloured wine "White Zinfandel". It was low alcohol and sweet and has painted

rosé with a reputation as a training wine or for unsophisticated drinkers. Even today, the majority of Zinfandel in the US is made into white Zinfandel.

In France, the best rosé wines are found in the south. Good examples are found in the AOC's of Cotes de Provence, Bandol, Cassis, Palette, Coteaux d' Aix en Provence, Tavel and Cotes du Rhône. Tavel, located to the west side of the Loire River opposite Chateauneuf du Pape, produces very good wines, mainly from grenache with the addition of cinsault and 7 other varieties. Tavel can be high in alcohol with the appellation stipulating a maximum alcohol level of 13.5% and minimum 11%. Tavel rosé has enough tannin and acid to age well whereas most rosé should be drunk young.

FOOD PAIRING:

Because rosé is so varied, from light and sweet to complex and dark, it can be paired with just about anything. Most rosé is served chilled. The lighter, sweeter ones are often drunk as social wines, chilled and on the patio. They are a great accompaniment to a charcuterie and cheese board as a summer lunch or a starter. The darker ones such as Syrah based or a Tavel can stand up to most foods any time of the year.

SUMMARY:

In this tasting we have tried to highlight the differences in rosé from different grapes. The majority of the wines are from the Okanagan to give the judges experience in the grapes that are available to our winemakers.

SOURCES:

- Lawrence Matthews 2017 BCGWJ Tasting Notes
- Wikipedia
- BCLiquorstores.com
- EverythingWine.ca