



Don't wait for summer to start drinking roses. (Ringo H.W. Chiu / For The Times)

By S. IRENE VIRBILA

APRIL 1, 2015
3:09 PM



Handed a glass of rosé on a warm afternoon, even diehard red wine fanciers are prone to succumb to the charms of a pink wine. Rosé has traditionally been relegated to the summer months, but forget the rules. If any place on earth has the climate for year-round rosé drinking, that would be Southern California.

Until recently, though, if you loved dry rosé, you pretty much had to stick with French and especially Provençal examples. Domaine Tempier's Bandol rosé has been served at the Berkeley restaurant Chez Panisse from the beginning — it's Alice Waters'

favorite wine. Back then there was no contest: California rosés tended to be sticky sweet, modeled after popular White Zinfandel.

But now California vintners are getting with the program in a big way. More and more beautiful dry rosés are coming onto the market from some of our best winemakers. And the 2014s are arriving at wine shops now. Enjoy them with spring's asparagus, peas and favas, with light pasta dishes, grilled salmon, even a simple roast chicken.

Here are three limited-production rosés to try before they're scooped off the shelves. And if you miss out, keep an eye out for them on restaurant wine lists.

2014 Tercero Mourvèdre Rosé “Vogelzang Vineyard” (\$22)

Larry Tercero has a fanatical allegiance to Rhone varietal wines and delves into Syrah, Grenache and Mourvèdre at his namesake winery in Santa Barbara County. He was pouring his wines at Solvang's Garagiste festival last month, including a graceful Viognier and Grenache Blanc, and his Mourvèdre rosé.

This one may be his best yet, made from grapes grown at the renowned Vogelzang Vineyard in Santa Barbara County's Happy Canyon. The rosé has a bright, red fruit-forward character, with a silky texture and a clean finish that brings you back to the glass for more. Available from Tercero Wines [online](#), a few retailers and at the Tercero tasting room in Los Olivos.

2014 Matthiasson Napa Valley Rosé (About \$23)

Steve Matthiasson is one of Napa's top vineyard consultants by day, but makes his

own wines under the [Matthiasson](#) label, mostly from small vineyards he seeks out in obscure corners of Napa and California. The 2014 rosé is a lush blend of Grenache, Syrah, Mourvedre and Counoise (now that's one for the wine trivia contest) from the Windmill Vineyard in Dunnigan Hills AVA of Yolo County and Syrah grown at the tiny Hurley Vineyard at the base of the Silverado Trail in Napa Valley.

If you're into percentages, the blend is 44% Syrah, 31% Grenache, 21% Mourvedre and 4% Counoise. The pale peachy-pink wine carries the scent of rose petals and white peaches. It's dry, but not austere, with enough structure and body to come to the dinner table. The rosé should be just showing up in shops now, including [Lou's Wine Shop & Tastings](#) in Los Feliz. It's also available [online](#) from the winery.

2014 Tatomer Spätburgunder Rosé Santa Barbara County (About \$27)

Graham Tatomer [<https://www.tatomerwines.com>] is something of a specialist in Austrian varietals grown in Santa Barbara County. He worked with one of the world's top Riesling producers, Emmerich Knoll, in Austria's Wachau region for several years off and on until he started his own project in 2008. Under the Tatomer label, he makes sterling Riesling and Grüner Veltliner — and now this coppery rosé from 100% Spätburgunder (German Pinot Noir) grown at the highest elevation of John Sebastiano Vineyard.

It's a bigger wine than some, very structured, yet easy to drink with a light scent of wild strawberries. It works as an apéritif with olives or tapenade, and at the table, with grilled seafood. In 2014, Tatomer made a limited quantity of this rosé, so it may be difficult to track down a bottle or two, but definitely worth the effort. (Try [K & L Wine Merchants](#) in Hollywood, [Lincoln Fine Wines](#) in Venice, and [Lou's Wine Shop & Tastings](#) in Los Feliz.) Let's hope he makes more next year.