



The last of the summer rosés

Don't let summer slip away without a final glass of rosé. Given that quality is at an all-time high this summer, there has never been a better time to drink an easy-quaffing pink wine.

France, as usual, is the principal source of top-end rosés, with the Loire (see star buys) and the Rhône increasingly worthwhile regions. Yet Provence hogs the limelight, accounting for about a third of the country's rosés, with dozens of souped-up cuvées, or blends, with silly names and heavy bottles that fetch crazy prices. For me the finest, savoury, herby Provençal pinks benefit from being fermented and aged in barrels, and from a dab of zingy, lime-zest rolle, a grape better known in Italy as vermentino. Splash out on the 2018 Les Clans, with its oaky-smoky scent and intense, beguilingly spicy, stone fruit (Slurp, 01295 672290, £54.95). Or another Côtes de Provence, the herb and hibiscus-scented 2018 Miraval, made by Marc Perrin, down to its lowest price this summer (£14 at Morrisons and £14.25 at Booths).

Languedoc, Provence's neighbour, makes tasty pinks from the usual mix of grenache and cinsault, often with a dash of syrah and mourvèdre. Majestic's 2018 Definition Rosé, IGP Pays d'Oc, £10.99, is a pleasing pale ballet-slipper pink, with a light herby scent and lots of zingy, herby, lemon-zest fruit, plus a long finish.

If the sun has gone behind the clouds, plump for a richer, darker, more full-bodied pink that also works well with barbecued meats. The New World is the chief source of these fruity rosés with a touch of sweetness. While California's white zinfandel is vile, Australia, Chile and South Africa have some brilliant bottles. I am a big fan of South Africa's Rustenberg estate and its glorious sweet red cherry and cranberry-stacked 2018 Petit Verdot (Waitrose, £8.99).



From left:

MY TOP ROSÉS

2018 La Rosaline Rosé, Pays d'Oc, France, 12.5 per cent

Morrisons, £5.50, down from £6.50

A stylish, syrah-spiced and strawberry-stashed Languedoc pink from a savvy wine team.

2018 Roche Bellemont, Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence, France, 12.5 per cent

Sunday Times Wine Club, £14.99

Robust, peppery grenache, perked up with syrah and mourvèdre.

2018 Sancerre Rosé, Chavignol, Domaine Delaporte, France, 13.5 per cent

Lea & Sandeman, 020 7244 0522, £21.75

A top pink sancerre that is all heady herbaceous rosehip elegance.

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THIS WEEK'S BEST BUYS

2018 Co-op Fairtrade Carmenère, Chile, 12 per cent

Co-op, £6

Round off summer with this dusky, verdant, chocolatey carmenère. It's great with barbecued bangers.

2017 Bodacious, Vinho Regional Tejo, Portugal, 13.5 per cent

Asda, £8

Ignore the terrible Bodacious name and label, within is a sweet, juicy, cassis and blackberry jam red.

2018 Jim Barry: The Lodge Hill Riesling, Clare Valley, Australia, 12 per cent

Co-op, £11

Jim Barry's mouthwatering citrus zest riesling from the Clare Valley is a winner.