

## The thorny issue of the best rosé

Jane Parkinson leads a panel of tasters on the hunt for the best pink Champagne

It's something of a phenomenon, the rise in popularity of rosé. And Champagne is no exception. Something which was once regarded as a mere fad in the Champagne world has now turned into a serious addition to the portfolio of Champagne styles.

For this reason, W&S set itself the task of finding the best rosé Champagne in the UK. Nearly 60 bottles were sent in – a mixture of entry level, special cuvées, vintage and non-vintage. There were few boundaries in the quest to find the best, the only requirements being it had to be rosé Champagne available in the UK.

The tasting itself, as always conducted blind, was a difficult task. Not content with the

copious degrees of acidity each of us had to contend with (one taster was even braving the dentist after the tasting), it was generally agreed there was a lesser degree of variation in taste profile between this style of Champagne and that of say, white NVs.

With this in mind, the wines that shone through in the tasting showed a density of flavour and a complexity beyond the usual

strawberries and cream description so often associated with rosé Champagne.

We discovered it can be both sweet and savoury, ripe and austere and, more importantly, both cheap and expensive.

No matter what you're looking for, there's definitely a rosé Champagne style for everyone out there, and this should be a useful guide.

### The tasters

*Andrea Briccarello*, head sommelier, Bentley's Champagne and Oyster Bar; *Jamie Goode*, author, *Wine Science*; *Claire Hu*, Wine & Spirit; *Jane Parkinson*, Wine & Spirit; *Gary Werner*, Wine & Spirit; *David Williams*, Wine & Spirit

### How they scored (from highest to lowest using IWC's points system)

1<sup>st</sup>

#### Brut Rosé, Boizel NV

£19.99, *The Wine Society*

Mineral and fruity nose. Dry with the minerality really coming through. Good balance and good as an aperitif. AB



#### 2= Premier Cru Brut Rosé, Brugnion NV

£23.95, *The Oxford Wine Company*

Bag-loads of fizz. Beautiful, lifted powdery, floral characters with a hint of minerality and depth. Great chewy texture with a savoury quality to the ripe fruit and well-balanced acidity. JP



#### 2= Blason Rosé, Perrier-Jouët NV

£39.49+ *Majestic, Selfridges, Harrods, Harvey Nichols, Vintage House*

Cherry and plum nose. Very ripe and charming warm finish. Mineral and elegant. AB



#### 4 Brut Rosé, Cattier NV

£27+ *Nickolls & Perks, Magnum Wines, Wine World, everywine.co.uk*

Amber hints in colour. Lovely, complex nose. Strawberries, citrus, sherbet and mineral. Delicious palate with lovely, fresh fruit, some spice and vanillin. CH



#### 5= Brut Rosé de Saignée, Duval-Leroy NV

£25.99, *Waitrose*

Very foamy head. Biscuit nose with a rich and fruity, long, finish. CH



#### 5= Les Traditions Brut Rosé, Pierrel NV

£26.50, *champagneparexcellence.com*

Floral, red fruits with touches of bread. Rich and ripe red berry and herbs with a touch of cola. Lots of depth. GW



# Tasting

## 7 Rosé, Jacquart NV

£26.99+ *Majestic, Wheeler Cellars*  
Salmon-pink colour. Great fruity nose and depth. This has a bit of power with a good finish of tinned red fruit. DW



## 8= Brut Rosé, GH Mumm NV

£33.99, *Oddbins*  
Delicate strawberry with good, focused, mineral depth. A good wine. DW



## 8= Brut Rosé, Charles de Cazanove NV

£23.99, *Co-op*  
Intense tropical fruit nose with hints of butterscotch and caramel. Good attack on the mid-palate of jammy fruits and vanilla. AB



## 8= Brut Rosé, L'Avenue NV

£20.99, *Marks & Spencer*  
Pale salmon pink. Warm and rounded with herbs and a hint of coconut. Soft and rounded palate. Quite stylish and balanced. JG



## 8= Rosé, Pol Roger 2000

£54+ *Harvey Nichols, Harrods, Fortnum & Mason, The Wine Society*  
Fruity nose with rich, strawberry characters. Hints of caramel and butter. Well balanced and a very pleasant finish. AB



## 12 Premier Cru Rosé, Veuve Fourny et Fils NV

£22.99+ *Christopher Piper Wines, David Roberts Domaine*  
Bright, lively and clean. Some redcurrant fruit with persistent mousse and a good touch of austerity. A good wine. DW



## 13 Brut Rosé, GH Martel & Co NV

£29.99+ *Asda, Tesco*  
Butterscotch nose with plenty of wild berries. Very floral and delicate. AB



## 14 Brut Rosé Roseanne, Ruffin & Fils NV

£17.50, *Kendrick Champagnes & Fine Wines*  
Ripe and rich red fruits with a hint of white pepper spice. Very bitter with a sour palate that's very fresh. JP



## 15= Brut Rosé, H Blin & Co NV

£19.99, *Julian Baker Fine Wines*  
Lifted, floral, leesy, red apple and raspberry nose. Frothy and lively palate if crisp, red fruit and biscuit notes. Hint of blueberry fruit too. GW



## 15= Jeeper Brut Rosé, Christian Goutorbe

£16.90, *Kendrick Champagnes & Fine Wines*  
Summer fruit cocktail with a hint of tangerine. Spicy rich fruit and a good balance. AB



## 17= Grand Cru Brut Rosé, Mailly NV

£24.89, *Ellis of Richmond*  
Pale orange-pink colour. Pronounced, earthy and herbal nose. Lifted floral notes come through – a complex wine. Very fragrant and with good acidity. JP



## 17= Grand Rosé Brut, Gosset NV

£38+ *Berry Bros & Rudd, Harrods, Selfridges, Fortnum & Mason, Cellar Door Wines, Wadebridge Wines, Direct Wines, House of Fraser*  
Gentle, boiled sweets nose. Attractively textured palate with a clean, fruity finish. DW



**17= La Grande Année Brut Rosé, Bollinger 1999**

£100+ *Berry Bros & Rudd, Harvey Nichols, Selfridges, Waitrose*  
Salmon pink colour. Slightly cider edge to the nose. Rich and herbal and slightly sweet. Palate is boldly fruited with a strong herbal tang. A bit funky. Nice. JG



**20= Brut Rosé d'Assemblage, René Jolly, NV**

£23.99, *Roberts & Speight, yumyumwine.com*  
Rich nose of spicy wild berries, dry flowers and herbs. Elegant palate and feminine, well balanced, with an orange, zesty acidity. AB



**20= Charles VII Rosé, Canard-Duchêne NV**

£32.26+ *Asda, Wine Schoppen, Henderson Wines*  
Elegant, fruity nose with hints of nuts and spices. Palate is rich and complex, well balanced and with a dry finish. AB



**22 Noble Cuvée Brut Rosé, Lanson NV**

£59.99+ *Bibendum, World Duty Free*  
Very heavy bottle and very pale in colour. Depth of mineral concentration here and a lot of fizz. Good earthy, toasty character. JP



**23 De Saint Gall Brut Rosé, Union Champagne NV**

£22.99, *Marks & Spencer*  
Intense, sweet-fruited nose but not overpowering. Well balanced and a good toasty finish. AB



**24 Brut Rosé Majeur, Ayala NV**

£26.99, *Marks & Spencer*  
Clear, clean and mineral. Focused well and together. Lovely delicate nose. DW



**25= Prestige Rosé, Taittinger NV**

£39.99+ *Waitrose, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Threshers, Oddbins. Majestic, everywine.co.uk*  
Smoky, pomegranates and plummy nose. Mineral palate that's dry and well balanced. Restrained and elegant too. AB



**25= Rosé, Devaux NV**

£22.95+ *Roberson Wine, Stainton Wines, Corks of Cotham, Villeneuve Wines, Andrew Chapman*  
Lifted floral, red fruit notes with citrus. Very crisp and frothy with citrus red fruit. GW



**27= Dolores Brut Rosé, Baron-Fuente NV**

£18.50+ *Medina Wines, Satchells Wine Merchants, Bottle & Basket*  
Lovely pink. Deep fruity core. Fresh fruit on the palate, well-balanced acidity and a dense, creamy softness. JP



**27= Premier Cru Brut Rosé, Lallier NV**

£23.50, *Barrels & Bottles*  
Pale-salmon colour. Lovely, toasty and tight with a focused palate that's savoury with nice spiciness on the finish. Lovely wine. JG



**29= Les Floressences Brut Rosé, Mignon & Pierrel NV**

£31.50, *champagneparexcellence.com*  
Macerated strawberries and very juicy, adventurous fruit. Cherry palate, very dry and mineral. AB



**29= Rosé, Charles Heidsieck 1999**

£42, *Soho Wine*  
Slightly orange end of salmon pink. High dosage, but good, fresh, cleansing acidity. Slightly peppery and herby finish. Rustic and curious. DW



# Tasting

## 31= Brut Rosé Reserve, Philipponnat NV

£28 (approx), *Les Caves de Pyrene*

Very pale salmon colour. Lovely complex nose. Warm sweet-fruited with creamy, toasty notes. The palate is assertive and bright with some tannic structure. A serious and savoury style. JG



## 36 Brut Rosé, Alexandre Bonnet NV

£18.99, *Waitrose*

Pale salmon colour. Very attractive and fruity. Slightly herby nose. Bit of strawberry. Assertive with nice broad fruit. JG



## 41 Brut Rosé, Pierre Vaudon, NV

£22.70, *Haynes Hanson & Clark*

Salmon pink colour. Nicely balanced notes of citrus and toast. Palate is broad and quite rich with nice, savoury complexity. JG



## 31= Vintage Rosé, Veuve Clicquot 2002

£39.99+ *Fortnum & Mason, Harvey Nichols*

Salmon pink in colour. Warm strawberry fruit nose with vanilla. A warm style. JG



## 37 Rosé, Marguet Père et Fils NV

£21.14 *Barrels & Bottles*

Lots of cherries and apples in character on the nose. Spicy palate, intense wine. AB



## 42= Brut Rosé, Oudinot NV

£21.99, *Marks & Spencer*

Nutty, mineral nose that's slightly damp, but also has some raspberry tones at the back with a touch of minerality. But characters fall away quickly. JP



## 31= Brut Rosé, Louis Roederer 2002

£55.60+ *Harrods, Harvey Nichols, Fortnum & Mason, Majestic*

Ripe but elegant, zesty tropical nose. Crisp, citrus character. Refreshing acidity and a good balance between the fruit and acidity. AB



## 38 Cuvée Royal Brut Rosé, Joseph Perrier NV

£32.95+ *Henderson Wines, Luvians Bottleshop, Great Western Wine, Cambridge Wine Merchants, Jeroboams*

Pale salmon colour. Lovely creamy, slightly toasty, nose with good balance. The palate has a good focus of fruit with a bright, herby quality. JG



## 42= Rosé, Veuve Clicquot NV

£34.99+, *Waitrose, Selfridges, Harrods, Harvey Nichols*

Bright with slightly mineral and red berry fruit. Fruity and crisp mineral red berry fruit on the palate, too. GW



## 34= Brut Rosé, Pommery NV

£29.95+ *Sainsbury's, winedirect.co.uk*

Mostly yellow in colour, with faintest hint of pink. Lovely pear nose. Complex, broad and rich. Palate is warm and quite rich with nice fruit. Good stuff, but only just a rosé. JG



## 39 Marks & Spencer Fleury Organic Brut Rosé, Fleury Père et Fils, NV

£26.99, *Marks & Spencer*

Salmon pink in colour. Sweet toast, with vanilla and strawberry nose. Crisp, toasty palate and quite complex. Nice. JG



## 42= Brut Rosé D de Devaux, Devaux NV

£32.50+ *Stainton Wines, Villeneuve Wines, Vinology, The Sampler*

Soft, fragrant, floral nose. Very upfront acidity with mineral focus and a white pepper spice on the palate with the summery, red fruits. JP



## 34= Brut Rosé, Tesco NV

£15.93, *Tesco*

Medium intensity nose of roses. Quite opulent with a full texture. Nice pink fruit with some spice, but could do with more acidity. CH



## 40 Brut Rosé, De Venoge, NV

£30.50+ *everywine.co.uk, Cellar Twelve, Momentum Wines, Deakin Fine Wines, Lemon Sole & Crofts*

Ripe, plump, sweet berry-ish nose. The palate has nicely focused fresh cherry-berry fruit with some savoury characters. JG



## 45 Brut Rosé, Canard-Duchêne NV

£26.25+ *Oddbins, Majestic, Asda, Bon Coeur Fine Wines, Bretby Wine, Edencroft Fine Wines*

Delicate floral nose of strawberry and blueberry. Light, delicate palate that's floral and ripe. GW



**46 Rosé, Dumangin NV**

£22.75, *Yapp Brothers*

Very earthy, nutty and savoury nose at first with lifted floral nose behind. Pear-drop sweetness, good, persistent fizz and ripe fruit that's rounded, not austere. JP



**47 Grand Vintage Rosé, Moët & Chandon 2000**

£34.99+ *Duty-free outlets*

Yellow with a hint of orange. Rich and generous nose. Sweet and herby. Warm and aromatic. Palate is rich with sweet, appley fruit and a delicious toasty, herby richness. Unusual but nice. JG



**48 Brut Rosé, Lanson NV**

£27.98+ *Morrisons, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Waitrose, Bibendum, Partridges, Just Champagne*

Bright but light and lively red fruit and brioche nose. Slightly bitter with mineral and red fruit. GW



**49 The Society's Rosé, Alfred Gratien NV**

£25, *The Wine Society*

Bread and fruit nose with bright and chewy palate. Fine bubbles with a great finish. DW



**50 Rosé Top, Heidsieck & Co Monopole NV**

£24.99, *Morrisons*

Very salmon pink colour. Floral and fragrant at first with a chalky nose that quickly turns into farmyard rusticity. Ripe and fresh with good acidity on the palate. JP



**51= Cuvée Rosé, Moutardier NV**

£22.50+ *Great Western Wine, Talking Wines*

Pronounced, ripe, red apple, red berry and biscuit tones. Lots of life on the nose. Rich red fruit characters with hints of herbs and oak. Big and broad but appealing. GW



**51= Rosé, Beaumont de Crayères NV**

£168.97 (*Case of 12*) *Armit*

Pale colour, almost amber. Slightly oxidative. Very dry and austere. Savoury, with a refreshing finish. Good quality. DW



**51= Rosé, Jacquart 2000**

*Contact The Wine Treasury*

Yellow/orange colour. Aromatic, appley, herby nose with a hint of cider. Intense palate that's broad and herby citrus fruit. Dense and flavourful. Bold style. JG



**54 Petrot-Bonnet Brut Rosé, Alexandre Bonnet NV**

£21.99, *Marks & Spencer*

Sweet. Boiled sweets resting on a bed of aggressive acidity with a cloying finish. DW



**55 Brut Rosé, AR Lenoble NV**

£21.77, *Ellis of Richmond*

Lots of fizz. Beautiful fragrance at first that's lifted and sweet. Fresh with decent earthy tones and a nice texture, but lacking fruit on the palate. JP



**56 Brut Rosé Sauvage, Piper-Heidsieck NV**

£28.99+ *Harvey Nichols, Tesco, Waitrose*

Deep red cherry-berry nose, but a stale palate. GW



**Footnotes**

\* Wines were scored according to IWC scores \* Prices may have altered post-budget