

# Vacation in a glass

Skip France this summer and drink pink here instead. The West's best rosés are channeling the great styles of Provence.

BY SARA SCHNEIDER | PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANNABELLE BREAEKY | FOOD STYLING BY ROBYN VALARIK

**THERE'S A MOMENT** that happens only in late summer. You have just a few hours of warm, slanting sun left in the day, and only a few of these sun-baked days left in the year. A glass of crisp, cold, dry pink wine on a little bistro table in the late afternoon stops time, ekes out a little more summer.

Until recently, this was an only-in-Provence moment. But put that in the history books now. Winemakers right here in the West are producing more—and ever-better—rosés. In fact, it seems like almost everyone who makes red wine also makes a rosé now. Tart and refreshing,

these are wines capable of transporting you for a spell—and generally for a very small fee considering their quality.

It's possible, of course, to make a rosé out of any red grape. Just crush the fruit, leave the juice on the skins long enough to pick up the color you want, then press it off and make it like a white wine. Or alternately, drain a little juice off your red wine in the making, to concentrate it, and the runoff is instant rosé the *saignée* way, from the French word for “bleeding.” But I have yet to be convinced that every red makes a good rosé—Cabernet, really? I know there's a tradition for it, but even a few

hours on those skins and seeds imparts enough tannin, texture, and dark fruit to be a little heavy-handed.

My favorite Western pinks these days are made from Grenache and Mourvèdre, the main grapes in Southern France's two best-known rosé-producing regions: Tavel and Bandol, respectively. Grenache is bursting with spicy cherry fruit; Mourvèdre, with juicy watermelon. When these varieties lead in blends, delivering crisp citrus and stony minerality along with the fruit, that glass of rosé renders a plane ticket to Aix-en-Provence completely redundant.

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**Bonny Doon 2011 “Vin Gris de Cigare”**  
(Central Coast; \$16; Grenache leads). Refreshingly tart Rainier cherries spiced with cinnamon and spiked with grapefruit and lime.

