



# Ep 47 What is rosé wine, really?

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## SPEAKERS

Janina Doyle

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Janina Doyle 00:07

Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me just cannot get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle, your host, Brand Ambassador, Wine Educator, and Sommelier. So stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever evolving wonderful world of wine. And wherever you are listening to this, cheers to you.



Janina Doyle 00:30

Hello, and how are you all? Now this episode is my Q&A episode. So I have to say thank you to lyzddoesjazz, love that name on Instagram who contacted me and was asking me about darker rosés and the sweetness levels. And then also had a good conversation with magda.in.wineland, shout out to you who's asking about the different styles of rosé. So hopefully, I should cover them all sufficiently in this episode. And rosé certainly has seen such a surge in popularity over the last few years or so. But it really has an incredibly long history, which we're going to touch on. Now, pretty much the first wines ever made would have been rosés. So this is going back 1000s of years ago when it was normal to water down wines and to mix red grapes with white grapes. However, they wouldn't have tasted anything like the roses that we drink now. They would have been way more tannic as there would have been no gentle pressing, taking into account the grape skins, the seeds and the stems. Also, it's likely that they would have had some sweetness as well. They would have fermented the wines in open tanks and this would have led to a much more oxidative style. Certainly the wine style of red wine would have changed as the knowledge of how to macerate and ferment in different ways, enabled the winemakers to make much deeper darker red wines. Now it was the Phoenicians, who brought over the vines from Greece to France in the sixth century BC, and Provence was in fact the first place that they came to. Marseille to be specific. Now the pink wines here became the talk of the town and so by the time the Romans arrived, they love this type of wine and did a great job of travelling all over Europe and selling these wines which raised the popularity further. Provence is certainly seen as the epicentre of rosé production and to be fair, they have dedicated nearly 90% of their production to rosé wine and have a dedicated rosé research centre which is something that no other wine region in the world could say regarding rosé. But now of course rosé can be made all over the world. In terms of France, Provence certainly accounts for over 40% of all the rosé. In Provence, a region called Bandol certainly deserves a mention as they produce some really serious roses with

amazing complexity and intensity and that's also with a higher percentage of Mourvèdre. Now talking of those grapes, Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, and Cinsault, which you'll find in the Provence region, you can also find in the regions to the west, which is the Languedoc-Roussillon region and just slightly north, which is the Rhone Valley. Now in the Rhone Valley look out for the Tavel AOC which you can tend to find rosés which are slightly darker colour but very, very delicious. Now in the Bordeaux region, typically they make rosés from Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot. The Loire Valley is really exciting for rosés, as there is actually so many different styles to choose from. You have your pink Sancerres made from Pinot Noir, the Rosé de Loire appellation extends across the Anjou and Touraine AOC areas, and it's made from Cabernet Franc and Grolleau. And they're typically made in a dry style. Then they have Cabernet d'Anjou, which is an off dry style made from Cabernet Franc and, or Cabernet Sauvignon. And then they have Rosé d'Anjou, which tends to be just off dry. So a little bit drier than Cabernet d'Anjou. And so keep these last two in mind if you don't like a completely dry pink wine. Now, as I said, rosé can be made all over the world. So I want to take a moment out now to talk about my winery of the week, which I picked for the fact that seeing as Rosé is basically the oldest wine style out there, I should pick a winery from one of the oldest wine producing countries of the world. I shall of course allow you now to have a guess where I'm going. But whilst you're guessing, I can also tell you this is also by far the top winery of this country. But, you may not realise that they do produce Rosé, so let's see if you have guessed right.



#### Janina Doyle 04:57

My winery of the week is Chateau Musar, named by many as the Lafite of Lebanon. Now Lebanon as a country has been making wine for over 6000 years. It's also pretty far away from Provence. And I really wanted to be able to show you guys an excellent example of rosé wine from a place that you probably wouldn't naturally just think off the top of your head. Now Serge Gaston Hochar is the man known for single handedly putting Lebanon on the wine map. He started working in the winery in the 1950s and it was his father Gaston who started Chateau Musar in the 1930s. Now Serge studied in Bordeaux, France with one of the greatest French oenologists Émile Peynaud, you will have heard me talk about Émile Peynaud before in several other podcasts because many of the greatest winemakers and wineries have worked with this man, a winemaking legend. And so it is no surprise that Serge himself became a legend of winemaking in Lebanon. He showed this not just because of the specific style of wines he created, but with his perseverance to make wine during the Civil War, which lasted from 1975 to 1990. Now apparently, never did he stop. Even when gunshots were going off and shells flying above the vineyards. He was always dedicated no matter the danger. Now the winery is in Ghazir which is about 70 kilometres from the vineyards. Now, the reason for the distance was actually back in the

1930s when Serge's father was setting up the winery, and they hadn't actually demarcated Lebanon's boundaries. And so it was literally he wanted to make sure that he would be inside the country when they did. Now, during the Civil War in 1990, as an example, they had to take a 250 kilometre detour to get the grapes to the winery. And in 1984, they even had to travel by sea, which sadly resulted in no wine actually being made as he actually started a fermentation on the way. But no matter what happened, Serge continued to make wine. He was also adamant during this war, that as sales in Lebanon were not possible, that he would travel near and far to make sure his wines were sold all around the world. He was certainly a man with real spirit. Now for this reason he was in fact the first person ever to be named Decanter Man of the Year in 1984. Now he has sadly passed away in 2014, and has been incredibly missed in the wine industry, but his sons, they now continue his legacy with these delicious wines. Now just so you can understand the wines of Chateau Musar, they do not have the fruit of the new world and nor do they have this earthy savoury complexity of the old world. They are wines that are truly different. And ones all wine lovers must try. Now they're also known to have higher levels of VA. So volatile acidity, which to some people really adds character, to others can be considered a flaw, but either way, these wines are remarkable. They are 100% organic. And in fact, the first winery to be certified back in 2006. And all the wines are made naturally and this was way back when before natural winemaking became so fashionable. Now talking of the wines, they have the Chateau wines, and then the Jeune, the younger wines. I have the Musar Jeune Rosé 2019 to try. Now the vines come from Bekaa Valley, which is the home to many of the top wines of Lebanon. About 90% of the wines of Lebanon come from this valley. So, in fact, let's do a quick geography lesson. So Lebanon has Syria wrapping around it to the east and to the north. Below is Israel. And then the West is the Mediterranean Sea. The Bekaa Valley is the region that you do need to know about. It's got loads of sunshine. It is in fact further down south than Italy just to give you a better idea. It is long and thin. It runs about 65 kilometres from the north to the south, and it's high altitude with most vines planted at about 1000 metres above sea level. Now, it has the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon mountains running in parallel with the valley. In fact, probably I should do a dedicated Lebanon podcast I think it's very interesting. Let me know if that's something you may want to know more about. So, back to the wine the grapes for this rosé. They come from low yielding vines grown at 1000 metres above sea level. 80% Cinsault and 20% Mourvèdre. Now this rosé was produced by direct pressing. We will go into more details about the different ways to produce rosé after this, but in terms of direct pressing, this tends to lend itself to the lightest coloured rosés. They're made very much like white wine, the grapes are sent to the press immediately without giving the juice any time to macerate on the skins. Now the juice for this specific wine then ferments at temperatures of 18 to 21 degrees Celsius and does go through malolactic fermentation, so let's see how this tastes:



Janina Doyle 10:33

So this rosé, the colour is actually quite a darker orangey pink colour and on the nose, Lots of red fruits, wild strawberries and raspberries and there's a real little, like an orange edge to it. Kind of, like a sweet bitter aroma to the wine like an earthy perfume. Like think a touch of turmeric and actually like a slight touch of violets and clove. Actually very interesting. Now the palate, juicy, medium body and the acidity is there, it's medium plus but absolutely lovely and refreshing. This wine has got some seriousness to it. There's like slight hint of smoke mixed in with all those fruity strawberries and a little touch that orange rind coming in, the spices all following through. You know this is really easy drinking you can actually drink it by yourself but food wise, I'm thinking duck with some star nice and orange could be very, very delicious with this and obviously you could also have it with some charcuterie and some lovely cheeses and stuff. But if you're after a bottle of this wine in the UK, it's around £13, the 2019 that I'm drinking you can get from The Sourcing Table.



Janina Doyle 11:07

Now, the majority of rosé wines are meant to be drunk, young and don't benefit from ageing. But that is not a rule for all. Depending on how the rosé is made, there is no reason it can't have the complexity and finesse of fine wine and the ability to age gracefully. Now, again, this is a really good winery to illustrate this point as that Chateau Musar Rosé 2017 is just that. The grapes here are two indigenous varieties. So the first is Obaideh and the second Merwah. Just remember, there's a transcript. Go to that in the show notes if you want to see the spellings. So it's these two varieties with just a little touch of Cinsault. Now grown at 1200 metres above sea level and even more low yielding vines. This wine has been barrel fermented, and then aged for 12 months in 100% new Nevers oak barrels. So just like their Chateau Red, and their Chateau White, they hold back the wine for a decent amount of time before releasing it. This rosé bottle is left for 14 months before being released, you can already probably get the idea this is eight serious wine. Now I'm actually upset that I'm trying it as this wine probably needs years more before it reaches its most beautiful peak. But hey, we live in an exploratory world and so for science purposes, I will need to try this now.



Janina Doyle 13:34

So it has a really pale onion skin colour. And the nose, Oh, I've just I've just seen on the bottle only 11.5% alcohol. There you go, that's also a very good point with noting. There's really heady aromas, but it's still showing a kind of real restraint. Actually, I'm surprised that I can smell so much on a wine that I thought was going to need to spend more time in bottle. Really exotic spices and like this, it's kind of peach pie and incense sticks. It's

almost like a slight woodiness with some, I don't know...it's a Rosemary herb with it, and like a little squeeze of mandarin as well, mandarin juice. Rich and full bodied on the palate. There's a real unctuousness, a real oiliness to it. Peach and kind of a slight lemon curd coming through. It's very soft, very elegant. Now that is far from a fruity rosy but maybe like a little a touch of orange cream, a little star nice as well. Actually, in a really subtle way. It's like flavours of a Moroccan Spice Market. It's dry. Zesty acidity. A nice long length. This would be so good with a proper Lebanese Mezze platter. I'm probably not being very original right now. But it's the first thing that comes to mind. And I can just imagine this with Kafta lamb meatballs, Baba ghanoush, Tabbouleh, the lot. I have to say this is incredibly drinkable now It's like a really serious, subtle rosé without the fruit but with so much other spices and complexity to it. And truly, actually, this is quite a unique style of rosé. So if you're intrigued, definitely get yourself a bottle for what it is, it's actually not really that expensive. This wine is about £28/29, the 2017 vintage at the moment is at The Solent Cellar and also at Wadebridge wines. Okay, so now let's look a little bit further into what is rosé wine, really.



Janina Doyle 16:00

So rosé: it has the freshness of a white wine, and then the fruit of a red wine. So it's made from red grapes, and the juice from inside the berry is actually in fact clear. So when the berry spends a short time macerating with the skins, it extracts some of the colour. And then due to the short time, the wine turns pink. Now one of the questions I get asked about rosé, is can you make it by simply mixing red wine and white wine together? Well, yeah, in theory, you could do this, but certainly not in Europe, where the rules are heavily regulated and it is in fact illegal to do exactly this process. The only place you could actually do this in Europe is Champagne, where at the end of the winemaking process, you can add back in a little bit of red wine to make a rosé sparkling. Even if winemakers around the world could just mix red and white together, it's just not a common practice because it's about quality and character. And you wouldn't be able to use a geographical indication, which is where you have to follow specific rules for that place to ensure certain consistencies of quality and a flavour profile. So that probably leads me to talking about the methods of production for rosé winemaking.



Janina Doyle 17:23

We already talked about direct pressing, which of course produces the lightest coloured rosés. Then there is light maturation. This is leaving your crushed grapes in contact with the skins. And you can do this for a few hours or even up to three days, again, depends on how deep a colour you want, the concentration of red fruit characters, and the structure that you're basically looking for. This is definitely the most popular method. Then there is

the Saignée method, which is always up for debate if this method can make the best quality rosé wines or not. Now the reason for this, is that the rosé is very often seen as a by product whilst making red wine. So in this process, the winemaker will be making a red wine, choosing grapes chosen specifically to make this red wine. Perhaps the grapes are not so ideal for rosé winemaking or maybe those grapes were extremely ripe, or they'll pick from a site that is not so ideal for rosé wine. So at the beginning of the maturation process, he or she bleeds off some of the juice. Now Saignée translates to bleeding. So this is the process of running off some of the juice. What this does is it concentrates the red wine, as the skin to juice ratio is now higher. But now this wine that was taken away has a pink tinge and you can now continue making this wine as a rosé wine. So these wines tend to be the darkest and the most intense, which some people who don't like pale roses actually prefer. If you like the idea of a darker, bolder style a rosé look out on the label because sometimes wineries are very, very nice to us and they do put the word Saignée on the labels. Now we mentioned in the Saignée method that perhaps the winemaker wasn't working with red grapes specifically chosen to make a rose a wine.



Janina Doyle 19:20

So I suppose that leads me on to what grapes are used for the production of rose a wine? Well, in theory, you can use any red grape. I already mentioned many of those grapes at the beginning of this podcast when I was talking about the regions of France where rosé is made, but here is your full list of the most popular ones. So Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Cinsault and Carignan. Possibly followed by Merlot, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Tempranillo in Spain and Sangiovese in Italy. But what is potentially most important is what decisions are made in the vineyards to make sure you get enough ripeness, but have good acidity levels to give that freshness, that a good rosé needs to offer. So perhaps the grapes will be picked a little bit earlier. So they'll have those higher acidity levels. Maybe they may also be planted on slopes facing away from the sun or on altitude where temperatures are cooler. Canopy management can be very different if you're planning to make a rosé instead of a red for example, you could specifically leave them with more leaf cover so that they can still mature but maintain that acidity. So with so many decisions to make in the vineyards, as well as in the winery, it's no wonder that the quality has got better and better as people have understood rosé winemaking more and more.



Janina Doyle 20:45

Now I also want to talk about a specific style of rsé so you can separate it from the rest and this is White Zinfandel. A California Wine, that is a pretty sweet style and in my opinion sits in its own category. Now think candy floss flavours and strawberry notes for



this type of wine. Love it or hate it, you can blame or congratulate Sutter House in California as they created the style, actually by accident. Back in the 1970s they were looking for a way to concentrate that red wine, Zinfandel. The Zinfandel grape is what they were using. So they bled off some of the juice to concentrate that Zinfandel. And then looked at this juice that they had separately and said, Well, what are we going to do with it. So they decided to make it as a dry rosé at this point. And they labelled it as a White Zinfandel rather than as a rosé as back then rosé, I didn't really have the same excitement that it does right now. Then a few years later, by accident, they had a stuck fermentation. So this is when the juice doesn't finish fermenting the sugars into alcohol, so it doesn't go fully dry. And well, et voila, the new style of White Zinfandel was created and people went crazy for it. Now although there are many wineries making this style, the name, White Zinfandel certainly has become a brand. For those of you in the UK, you'll probably be most familiar with Gallo or with Blossom Hill. And true story, I hold my hand up. If it wasn't for Blossom Hill White Zinfandel, I may not have gone into wine. This was the first wine and the only wine I drank in my early 20s. So it really is a gateway wine for those that don't drink wine, so I can't fault it. Even if maybe now you might have to pay me to drink it. So keep that in mind if you ever see that on a label. Again, if you see Rosado, that's Spanish for rosé and Rosato is Italian. And if you see the word blush, it does tend to suggest that it will be more of a White Zinfandel style. But actually, it doesn't have to be, it really does just mean rosé. However, I wouldn't worry about this word much anymore, as it's kind of gone out of fashion and isn't really used very much. Now when picking your rosés, do not think that a darker rosé is going to be sweeter, but more that it will be probably more intense and slightly more concentrated. Also don't assume that it will be worse quality. Certainly back in the past, darker roses were often that byproduct. But now with better understanding and technologies. We are so lucky that winemakers are making all sorts of quality roses with different intensities. And it's our job to try them all.



### Janina Doyle 23:47

So to finish off, let's have a little look at some food pairings. Now talking of those bigger, darker, richer style. So this is your Rosé de Saignée. They're just great with barbecues. So think about you can even have them with a bit richer meats but little bit of smoke, they'll go perfectly. Fruitier rosés such as Bandol rosé from Provence or maybe a rosé from Bordeaux. They're actually lovely because they're more medium bodied and there's a little bit more of an oomph to them, salmon and tuna can be a really good pairing. Now if you do have an off dry rosé so think of the Rosé d'anjou from Loire or even the famous Mateus rosé from Portugal which comes in that iconic flask shaped wine bottle. They're really good to pair with some spicy food so grab a Thai takeout, it will be perfect. Now we've already mentioned the white Zinfandel. So that will also go with Asian cuisine, that



slightly spicier foods but works really nicely with some nice cold cut meats and even some lovely creamy sauces. The lighter, elegant styles, the Provence style or even the Italian Bardolinos or Chiarettos that you may want to go and investigate, they can be incredibly versatile. Think olives, garlic, lamb, herbs. They go with seafood, salad, goat's cheese, they're perfect with vegetables, especially grilled vegetables and asparagus. Actually and crab, parma ham, I'm just thinking, the list is endless. Long story short, rosé wine is incredibly food friendly. And it's also not just for summer. So do let me know, what is your favourite style of rosé?



Janina Doyle 25:41

So I wanted to finish with a quote from the late Serge Hochar, who said to his father, back in 1959:



Janina Doyle 25:47

"I want to make the wine my way. I want it to be known worldwide, and I want you to quit."



Janina Doyle 25:56

Now graciously, his father did just that. And we are all the better for it. Reading this, it made me smile as when we have those special moments with a certain glass of wine. This is thanks to the obsession and the passion of these incredibly talented winemakers who've dedicated their lives to making us this, this liquid art. And after all, life is measured by those moments that just take your breath away. Okay, you lovely lot. So that's all I've got for today. Do not forget, if you are enjoying these podcasts, you can show your support by going over to [patreon.com/EatSleepWineRepeat](https://patreon.com/EatSleepWineRepeat) for extra episodes, for just actually a couple of quid a month. And if you are listening through Apple podcast, please do take a few moments to leave me a review. This is apparently the podcast app that makes the podcast most discoverable. Please continue liking and sharing these episodes. And don't forget you can write to me if you've got some suggestions on wine themes that you want to listen to. So just go to [janina@eatsleepwinerpeat.co.uk](mailto:janina@eatsleepwinerpeat.co.uk) Now don't forget to stop and smell the rosé. And until next time, cheers to you.