



Wine

BY MICHAEL COOPER

In the pink

A gently chilled rosé is ideal for summer – and there are now more to choose from than ever.



It's summer – time to crack a gently chilled rosé. Matua Valley reports its North Island Rosé 2009 was designed to go “with a bit of shade from the sun, a book and the cricket on the radio”.

Rosés, or pink wines, vary in colour from light pink to pale red. Light, lively and full of berryish, easy-drinking charm, rosé is ideal for outdoor drinking and the perfect picnic wine. In France, rosé is especially popular in the southern, Mediterranean regions, where it is prized as a dry wine with hints of red, but refreshing enough to serve chilled on a hot summer's day.

Here, where in the past five years the number of labels has doubled, there are over 100 rosés on the market. There are two key styles. South Island and Wairarapa rosés, usually made from pinot noir, are typically fresh, vibrant, slightly sweet and crisp, whereas those from Hawke's Bay and points north, based on merlot, are generally more full-bodied, rounder and often drier.

The fresher and younger rosé is, the better. The wines reviewed here are the best of the latest vintage. As winemaker David Evans says on the back label of Passage Rock Waiheke Island Rosé 2009: “Best consumed within 24 hours of purchase.”

\$15 OR LESS

Maimai Creek Hawke's Bay Rosé 2009

★★★ Full-bodied, with plenty of berryish, gently spicy flavour, slightly sweet and smooth. Good value at \$15.

\$20 OR LESS

Poverty Bay Riverpoint Rosé 2009

★★★★★ From “old vine” merlot and malbec, planted in 1985 at Bridge Estate Vineyard, Gisborne, this is a striking rosé, with far greater depth than most. Pink/

pale red, ripely scented and fleshy, it has beautifully rich strawberry/spice flavours, with fractional sweetness balanced by refreshing acidity. Worth tracking down. \$20.

Omaha Bay Vineyard Matakana Rosé 2009

★★★★★ Made from syrah, this is a highly attractive wine with an inviting, bright pink colour. Softly mouthfilling, it is very fresh and delicate, with an array of plum, spice and strawberry flavours. \$20

Askerne Hawke's Bay Rosé 2009

★★★★★ Sturdy (14.5% alcohol), almost fully dry style with an inviting, bright pink/pale red colour. Fresh, ripe, berryish and plummy, it has good depth and a well-rounded finish. Fine value at \$16.

Ata Rangi Summer Rosé 2009

★★★★★ Pale red blend, based mostly on merlot and grown in Martinborough and Hawke's Bay. Mouthfilling, with very satisfying depth of berry and spice flavours, fresh, finely balanced and dry. \$18

Hitchen Road Rosé 2009

★★★★★ A “food” style, bone-dry, mouthfilling and smooth, this wine was estate-grown at Pokeno, North Waikato. Made from pinotage, it is salmon-pink, with strawberry and spice flavours, a hint of oranges and gentle tannins. \$18

Johner Estate Wairarapa Pinot Noir Rosé 2009

★★★★★ Pale pink, this mouthfilling wine has very satisfying depth and delicacy of strawberry and spice flavours, with a hint of apricot, gentle sweetness and good harmony. \$18

Waimea Pinot Rosé 2009

★★★★★ Nelson charmer, partly handled in

American oak barrels. Bright pink, it is fresh, vibrant, plummy and slightly spicy, with a gentle splash of sweetness and crisp acidity keeping things lively. \$18

Mission Hawke's Bay Rosé 2009

★★★★★ Robust (14.5% alcohol), with pink and slight orange hues and satisfying depth of berryish, spicy, well-rounded flavour. Ready. \$16

OVER \$20

Jurassic Ridge Waiheke Island Syrah Rosé 2009

★★★★★ Fleshy, dry and rich, this is a serious yet charming wine, with ripe, sweet-fruit characters and strong, vibrant berry and spice flavours. Not cheap, but memorable and already delicious. \$29

Man O' War Waiheke Island Rosé 2009

★★★★★ Pale red, merlot-based wine, mouthfilling, with deep berry/spice flavours, a vague hint of herbs and gentle acidity. Weighty, rich and rounded, this wine is like French rosé – a sort of substitute red. \$25

Passage Rock Waiheke Island Rosé 2009

★★★★★ Easy summer-drinking blend of malbec, merlot and syrah, pink/red, with good depth of berry, plum and spice flavours, slightly sweet, smooth and fresh. \$22

Wine of the week

Matua Valley North Island Rosé 2009

★★★★★ \$15 Bright pink/red, full-bodied style with strong red berry and plum flavours, deliciously fresh, dryish and smooth.

