

The age of rosé



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ROSÉ AGEING

 DISCUSSION



It can pay to age your rosé, Julian Leidy reports from Elizabeth Gabay MW's Fine Rosé Day conference.

We're living in an age of rosé. A [2023 study](#) by the OIV (International Organisation of Vine and Wine) asserted that global production of rosé increased by 25% from 2000 to 2021. Although wine consumption has been declining in recent years, rosé still accounted for 10% of global wine

consumption and more than a [third of wine consumption in France](#) as of 2023. And I'm not talking only about the pale pinks of Provence, which remain the most popular rosé archetype. There's also rosato, rosado, clarete, charetto, Schillerwein, vin gris, œil-de-perdrix and more – rosé by many other names is being made and enjoyed in an increasingly diverse array of styles.

But despite its popularity, rosé still struggles to establish itself as a serious, 'fine' wine in the eyes of many consumers and those in the wine trade. One of the main reasons is because it's largely not thought of as a wine that can age.

In response, pink-wine expert Elizabeth Gabay MW organised Fine Rosé Day, a tasting and panel held in October in collaboration with [Libération Tardive](#), a group dedicated to promoting aged wine (to read more about their mission, see [what happens to wine as it ages?](#)). This event was, to the best of my knowledge, the first time when members of the wine trade gathered for a serious conversation about how pink wines are not only fine wines, but also ones that have the potential to develop with age. And as someone who loves rosé, it also reconfigured how I understand rosé's potential to age and its ability to rival great red and white wines.

Can rosé age?

One key factor in the struggle for rosé to be taken more seriously is the question of whether, and how, rosé can age. But because even high-quality, relatively expensive rosés tend to be marketed and perceived as wines that are best drunk young, most rosé is consumed soon after it is released. Since few producers hold back bottles of their rosé as many do with their white or red wines, there isn't much aged rosé available in the library stocks of wineries. This creates a sort of self-reinforcing cycle: since so little aged rosé is available, very little is known about rosé's ability to age.



'Rosés *do* age', said Elizabeth Gabay MW, speaking at the Fine Rosé Day debate about aged rosé, along with panellists (left to right) Siobhan Turner MW, Richard Bampfield MW, Rebecca Palmer (panel chair) and Pauline Vicard.

Gabay acknowledged most rosés are best drunk within a couple years after they are bottled – just like most red, white and sparkling wines, too. For many wine producers, rosé is seen as a relatively inexpensive source of revenue – a wine that can be made quickly and released soon after harvest to bring in money while they focus on making their more 'serious' wines. This is even true among quite a few wineries that produce mainly rosés.

Rather, as panellist Siobhan Turner MW pointed out, 'rosé can age when it's made to age'. She explained that in order to have the potential to develop complexity and improve with age, a rosé needs a depth of flavour that can evolve with time, along with some amount of tannins, sufficient acidity to give the wine freshness and anthocyanins to give some pigment to the wine.

This difference starts in the vineyard: the same level of attention must be paid to yields, ripeness, vineyard practices and fruit quality as with any other good-quality, ageable wine. In the winery, it may require a different approach and possibly new equipment. Producing rosés with substance might entail a longer maceration than is common with many of the palest rosés in order to extract a bit more structure and colour, while doing so at lower temperatures helps avoid over-extraction. Turner suggested that this makes grape varieties with

moderate to elevated levels of anthocyanins, acidity and tannins – such as Pinot Noir, Grenache, Tempranillo or Mourvèdre – particularly well-suited to making ageworthy rosés.

This does not mean, however, that only tannic, deep-coloured, full-bodied rosés can age. Panellist Richard Bampfield MW suggests, rather, that ‘colour is immaterial’ in indicating a pink wine’s ageability. While it is likely not a coincidence that the oldest wines shown at Gabay’s tasting were the deepest coloured and most extracted, plenty of the pale and medium-pink wines presented alongside these demonstrated that well-made rosés of all shades can have the complexity, structure and vitality to develop with age.

Oak ageing – a technique often used for white and red wines designed to age – is traditional for some styles of pink wines, such as Rioja rosado, but in other regions, such as the south of France, winemakers are also still working out whether and how to incorporate oak in a rosé made to age. As with any wine, oak may add complexity, body, additional flavours and aromas and possibly some ageing potential, but care has to be taken to keep the oak influence from overshadowing the wine itself. This is challenging in rosé, as demonstrated by the three vintages of Garrus, Château d’Esclans’ aggressively priced top wine, shown at Gabay’s tasting: all were dominated by oak influence from fermentation and ageing in barrels. By contrast, the trio of rosados from López de Haro (all aged for four years in mostly new French oak) showed marked oak character from extended barrel ageing, but this was balanced by sufficient complexity and intensity of other flavours to suggest the wine would age well.



Garrus, one of the world's most expensive rosés

Finally, making rosés to age should also entail a shift away from clear bottles, since these are more prone to [lightstrike](#). This creates a challenge, though, because consumers are used to buying rosé for its colour, and many winemakers fear that an opaque bottle might put off some buyers. Furthermore, production costs for carefully made, ageable rosé tend to be higher, and consumers often expect rosé to be less costly than fine whites and reds.

Why age rosé?

Many rosés start to show tertiary characteristics when they are three to five years old. At this point, a pink wine's colour often takes on orange or copper hues, which become more pronounced over time. It may also begin to develop tertiary, dried-fruit characteristics and some savoury, spicy and/or meaty notes at that point. Most of the rosés shown in Gabay's tasting, along with some other rosés I have tasted, seem to have the potential to develop or improve for five to ten years, while some may be able to age well for even longer.

This opens up new and exciting possibilities for wine lovers and collectors. There is the chance to explore a style of wine that is just on the cusp of being understood. There's also a value proposition: while rosé with the potential to age tends to be more expensive than most pink wines, it can be much less costly than ageworthy red or white wines.

Perhaps, however, the most exciting aspect is at the table. Vicard noted in the Fine Rosé Day panel that one of rosé's great strengths is its gastronomic potential; Jancis also made this point in [Food rosé – world's most versatile wine?](#) Pink wine can bring a complexity and freshness that makes it a great partner with everything from [Gouda](#) to [roast beef](#). The complexity and savoury, tertiary flavours that rosé can acquire with age opens up even more wine-and-food matching potential. For example, the best wine-and-steak combination I have ever had paired a rare beef filet with a 13-year-old Viña Tondonia Rioja rosado – a wine the same shade of pink as the meat. The smoky, meaty flavours of the rosado married perfectly with the grilled steak; the wine's acidity balanced the meat's fat; and the whisper of silky tannins didn't distract from the food.

Likewise, an older Bandol could work well with the gamey flavours of roast duck or the richness of pork. A Rioja rosado would also pair nicely with pork, brisket or anything smoked. An older Tavel could go well with turkey or steak (I also love it with grilled pork ribs). The fattiness of goose or the tang of ceviche could be balanced by a fresh Provence rosé, made even more interesting by the added complexity gained from a few years of age. A deep, Pinot Noir-based rosé from Les Riceys in Champagne or Marsannay in Burgundy would be a refreshing approach to the classic pairing of Pinot Noir and duck. The possibilities are almost endless.



A four-year-old Bandol rosé from Domaine Tempier provides a fresh, savoury, saline counterpoint to the sweet richness of lobster bruschetta.

What to look for in a rosé to age

It is impossible to give a comprehensive list of rosés that can age, but the eight wineries featured in Gabay's tasting offer some possible sources and highlight some key points to bear in mind when looking for aged or ageable pink wines.

- Colour doesn't necessarily relate to ageability. Chêne Bleu's pale-pink rosé from Vaucluse is a very classic, well-made example of southern French rosé that was ageing gracefully at both 12 and 15 years of age. The two vintages (2018 and 2020) of Château Musar's idiosyncratic, medium-bodied rosé both displayed quite a bit of tertiary, dried-fruit character but still seemed to have the structure and complexity to develop further. Château de Pibarnon's 2021,

2019 and 2016 Nuances Bandol rosé were all medium-pink and medium-bodied, but they had astonishing complexity and vitality.

- Opaque bottles are a plus. Gabay observed that it probably wasn't a coincidence that the older rosés that were showing the best in her tasting were those in opaque bottles (namely, the wines of Château Pesquié, López de Haro and Alexandre Bonnet), as clear bottles are more vulnerable to lightstrike. If someone reading this happens to make a rosé (or a white wine, for that matter) that they want to market as ageworthy, please consider putting it in green or amber bottles.
- As Tam made clear in [the business of serious rosé](#), price doesn't necessarily equate with ageability (true of any style of wine). Beyond the wines featured in the Fine Rosé Day tasting are many other producers, grapes and places that may produce good-value pink wines with the quality, structural balance and flavour complexity that give them the potential to age.

Where to look for rosés to age

In France, Tavel, with its structured, deep-pink wines, springs to mind as one potential source of ageworthy rosé, and it is rarely particularly expensive. Also with the potential to develop with age for anywhere from a few years to close to a decade, or more, are some Cabernet Franc-based rosés from the **Loire** and pink Pinot Noir from **Marsannay**.

Italy's diverse styles of rosato are another source of potentially ageable, reasonably priced wines. With their elevated tannins and acidity, **Nebbiolo** and **Aglianico** can both produce still and sparkling pink wines with the structure and complexity to age. **Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo**, like Tavel, straddles the line between a deep rosé and a light red, producing some wines with great depth. **Etna rosato**, based primarily on Nerello Mascalese, is another wine that can have the complexity and structure to age, and there are several producers dedicated to making it as a quality wine. Gabay also lavished praise on rosato made from **Puglia's Negroamaro**.

This is only the tip of the pink-coloured iceberg; Greece, Spain, America and Australia, among plenty of other places, are sources of high-quality, potentially ageworthy pink wines. The topic of aged rosé is such a new one that there is plenty that is still not understood. But it is this uncertainty, and the capacious

possibilities opened up by showing that at least some rosé does have the potential to age, that make this subject so exciting. I, for one, would be very interested to hear from others. The JancisRobinson.com [Members' forum](#) is a great place for readers to share their experiences with aged rosé, food-pairing recommendations, buying suggestions and more.

The 25 wines below are listed in the order they were shown in the Fine Rosé Day tasting, with a couple of additional aged rosés not shown at the tasting included at the end, but you can reorder the wines as you wish.

Select sorting option

Ch Pesquié, Quintessence Rosé 2020 Ventoux

[\(Edit this note\)](#)

17/20

ROSÉ

Mostly Mourvèdre, with the remainder Cinsault and Clairette.

Orange-tinged salmon colour. Notes of both fresh and dried apricot and nectarine, alongside sage and rosemary. Round and mouth-filling texture, balanced by lively acid. Still lots of interest at five years old and will likely develop further. A standout example of southern-French rosé. (JRL)

Drink: 2023 – 2028

Ch Pesquié, Quintessence Rosé 2021 Ventoux

[\(Edit this note\)](#)

16.5/20

ROSÉ

Mostly Mourvèdre, with the remainder Cinsault and Clairette.

Lots of exuberant, juicy watermelon, as well as sage and thyme. A touch of saline savouriness and white-pepper spice. Vibrant and lively, though it seems a little less elegant and slightly less fresh than the two other vintages of the same wine (2020 and 2022) tasted alongside. (JRL)

Drink: 2023 – 2027

Ch Pesquié, Quintessence Rosé 2022 Ventoux

[\(Edit this note\)](#)

17/20

ROSÉ

Mostly Mourvèdre, with the remainder Cinsault and Clairette.

Medium salmon pink. Fresh, ripe peach, watermelon and tangerine, with a whiff of rosemary in the background. Classically southern French in style but

with lots of intensity and layered complexity that will likely become even more interesting with a bit of age. **GV** (JRL)

Drink: 2024 – 2030

Price: €19.90 RRP (2023)

[Ch d'Esclans, Garrus Rosé 2021 Côtes de Provence](#) [\(Edit this note\)](#) **16/20**

ROSÉ

Grenache and Rolle.

Pale salmon pink. There is still some spicy, slightly toasty oak on the nose and the creamy character shared by all three vintages of Garrus tasted (2021, 2022 and 2023). There are also subtle notes of watermelon, thyme and oyster shell. A bit of alcohol burn on the palate. I'm really not sure that this is fully balanced or that there is enough character to the wine to balance the oak or alcohol. (JRL)

Drink: 2024 – 2027

[Ch d'Esclans, Garrus Rosé 2022 Côtes de Provence](#) [\(Edit this note\)](#) **16.5/20**

ROSÉ

Grenache and Rolle.

Onion-skin, orange-pink colour. Lots of immediately obvious oak spice and a creamy, candied note that reminds me of cotton candy/candy floss. This is underlaid by restrained garrigue and candied-cherry notes. I wouldn't mind a bit more freshness. (JRL)

Drink: 2024 – 2028

[Ch d'Esclans, Garrus Rosé 2023 Côtes de Provence](#) [\(Edit this note\)](#) **16/20**

ROSÉ

Grenache and Rolle.

Very pale salmon pink. Oak, cream and brioche notes dominate at the moment. Some strawberry and watermelon. Needs time for the oak to integrate. (JRL)

Drink: 2026 – 2029

[Hacienda López de Haro, Classica Rosado Gran Reserva 2009 Rioja](#) [\(Edit this note\)](#) **18/20**

ROSÉ

Garnacha and Viura.

A really gorgeous, orangey-pink colour reminiscent of burnished copper. Very complex, with notes of dried apricot, orange and date alongside spicy notes of cardamom, cumin and coriander seed. Fantastic. It may be at its peak now, but it should still be very interesting for the next few years, too. Lots of gastronomic potential – lamb and apricot tagine, perhaps? (JRL)

Drink: 2022 – 2029

Hacienda López de Haro, Classica Rosado Gran Reserva
2012 Rioja[\(Edit this
note\)](#)

17.5/20

ROSÉ

Garnacha and Viura.

Copper-tinged pink. Juicy redcurrant and red cherry alongside more tertiary notes of dried strawberry, cured meat and white pepper. Some notes of allspice and clove. Lots of depth. It's drinking well now but will continue to develop. I'd be happy to drink this on its own to appreciate all its complexity, but it would also be very interesting with a range of foods. (JRL)

Drink: 2024 – 2030

Hacienda López de Haro, Classica Rosado Gran Reserva
2013 Rioja[\(Edit this
note\)](#)

17.5/20

ROSÉ

Garnacha and Viura.

Vibrant, neon-orange colour. Intense notes of strawberry, redcurrant, oregano and acacia honey. Some vanilla oak, but it should integrate in a year or two. A touch of bitterness and a subtle tannic grip. This seems strange to say about a 12-year-old rosé, but the flavours are just beginning to unfurl and should develop for several more years. I'd love to taste this in five years' time. (JRL)

Drink: 2025 – 2031

Alexandre Bonnet, La Forêt 1995 Rosé des Riceys[\(Edit this note\)](#)

16.5/20

ROSÉ

Pinot Noir. Very pale garnet. Dried cherry and date, chestnut, smoke and spice. Fading a bit but still interesting to taste and a remarkable testament to how this style of wine can age. (JRL)

Drink: 2012 – 2024

[Alexandre Bonnet, La Forêt 2012 Rosé des Riceys](#) (Edit this note) 17.5/20

ROSÉ

Pinot Noir. Pale, copper-tinged garnet. Lots of spice: cinnamon, allspice, clove, spiced maraschino cherry. Bresaola and cured venison. Still vibrant and complex, but there's a delicacy to the flavours that makes me think it would be best to drink in the next couple of years. This would be great with duck or turkey; a great Thanksgiving/Christmas wine? (JRL)

Drink: 2018 – 2027

[Alexandre Bonnet, La Forêt 2021 Rosé des Riceys](#) (Edit this note) 17.5/20

ROSÉ

Pinot Noir. Deep reddish pink colour, similar to a Tavel. Red cherry, cranberry, black pepper, thyme and fresh mushroom. A hint of oak spice and smoke. Fresh, with light, silky tannins. In colour, flavour and structure, this straddles the line between a full rosé and a light red. This would be very interesting with a range of foods; I'd love to try it with steak tartare. (JRL)

Drink: 2025 – 2034

[Ch Musar, Rosé 2020 Bekaa Valley](#) (Edit this note) 16.5/20

ROSÉ

Mainly Obaideh and Merwah, with a small amount of Cinsault added for colour.

Deep onion-skin colour. At first, smells of slightly musty parchment, then opens up to tangerine, dried clementine, spiced orange and clove. Clearly shows some development with the dried-fruit and spice notes, though it has the complexity and acidity to continue ageing. A bit idiosyncratic, like most of Musar's wines, but with so many homogeneous rosés out there, individuality is hardly a bad trait. (JRL)

Drink: 2024 – 2029

Ch Musar, Rosé 2018 Bekaa Valley

[\(Edit this note\)](#)

17/20

ROSÉ

Mainly Obaideh and Merwah, with a small amount of Cinsault added for colour.

Deep copper. Dried orange, blood orange and grapefruit; cardamom and coriander seed. Seems slightly oxidised, though that may be intentional. A very unique, adventurous wine. (JRL)

Drink: 2022 – 2027

Ch de Pibarnon, Nuances Rosé 2016 Bandol

[\(Edit this note\)](#)

18/20

ROSÉ

100% Mourvèdre.

Medium, copper-tinged salmon. Lifted, layered aromas of grapefruit peel, raspberry, hibiscus, sage, rosemary and pink peppercorn. A savoury, meaty note that reminds me of jamón ibérico has emerged as the wine has aged. It's still very vivacious and energetic even at nine years old. (JRL)

Drink: 2020 – 2028

Ch de Pibarnon, Nuances Rosé 2019 Bandol

[\(Edit this note\)](#)

17.5/20

ROSÉ

Mostly Mourvèdre (95%).

Rose-pink with flecks of orange. Fresh and dried strawberry and cherry alongside herbal notes of rosemary, thyme and sage. A bit of a cured-meat note. There's also the pink-peppercorn note that all the Pibarnon Bandols I've tasted share. Refreshing acidity. Complex and very harmonious. (JRL)

Drink: 2022 – 2029

Ch de Pibarnon, Nuances Rosé 2021 Bandol

[\(Edit this note\)](#)

17.5/20

ROSÉ

Mostly Mourvèdre (95%).

Medium rose-pink. Notes of watermelon, raspberry, rose hip, black and pink

pepper. A subtle meaty bresaola note is emerging with age. Complex and delicious and very hard to spit. (JRL)

Drink: 2025 – 2030

Letrari, +4 Rosé Brut Riserva 2009 Trento

[\(Edit this note\)](#)

16/20

ROSÉ

Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Spent 96 months ageing on lees prior to disgorgement.

Deep bronze colour. Smoky, savoury and almost meaty. Some hints of white cherry and dried orange peel. A bit of an oddity. It isn't completely past it, but is starting to fade (JRL)

Drink: 2018 – 2025

Letrari, +4 Rosé Brut Riserva 2012 Trento

[\(Edit this note\)](#)

16.5/20

ROSÉ

Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Spent 120 months ageing on lees prior to disgorgement.

Dried grapefruit and orange peel; smoke and white pepper. Vibrant acidity. Very interesting. (JRL)

Drink: 2023 – 2030

Letrari, +4 Rosé Brut Riserva 2015 Trento

[\(Edit this note\)](#)

17/20

ROSÉ

85% Pinot Noir, 15% Chardonnay. Spent 120 months ageing on lees prior to disgorgement.

Pale onion-skin colour. Lots of grapefruit and tangerine pith. Some toasty, smoky autolytic character. Electrifying acidity. It's just starting to open up and will definitely age for several more years. A serious wine. (JRL)

Drink: 2025 – 2033

Chêne Bleu, Le Rosé 2010 IGP Vaucluse

[\(Edit this note\)](#)

17.5/20

ROSÉ

A deeper, copper-tinged salmon pink than the other two vintages of this wine (2013 and 2024) tasted alongside. Wow! Complex, lifted aromas of orange, blood orange, satsuma and cardamom. Lots of impact on the palate, with a great depth of flavour and a lingering finish. I'd love to have this with crudos or ceviche. (JRL)

Drink: 2017 – 2027

Chêne Bleu, Le Rosé 2013 IGP Vacluse

[\(Edit this note\)](#)

16.5/20

ROSÉ

65% Grenache, 30% Syrah and 5% Cinsault.

Pale coppery pink. White cherry, underripe white peach, white pepper and clove. The alcohol burns just a bit on the end. It's interesting, but it doesn't seem to have quite as much complexity or longevity as the 2010 Chêne Bleu rosé tasted alongside. (JRL)

Drink: 2017 – 2026

Chêne Bleu, Le Rosé 2024 IGP Vacluse

[\(Edit this note\)](#)

16.5/20

ROSÉ

81% Grenache, 17% Mourvèdre and 2% Syrah.

Pale salmon pink. White cherry, raspberry and a slightly confected watermelon note. A pronounced herbal, garrigue character. Very characteristic of southern-French rosé but with more character and depth than many. It's delicious now, but if the older vintages of this wine are any indication, it will also age for at least a few years. (JRL)

Drink: 2026 – 2030

Dom Sylvain Pataille, Fleur de Pinot Rosé 2017

[\(Edit this note\)](#)

17.5/20

Marsannay

ROSÉ

Pinot Noir. Deep salmon pink. Dried apricot, blood-orange juice, white cherry and redcurrant. Dried peonies and roses in the background. It's so vibrant and long and a true testament to how well rosé can age. (JRL)

Drink: 2022 – 2028

Feudi di San Gregorio, Duèl Esse Rosé 2015 IGT Campania (Edit this note) 17/20

ROSÉ

Aglianico. Traditional method. Spent 90 months ageing on lees.

Aggressive bubbles. Lots of impact and intensity on the palate. Blood-orange juice and peel, grapefruit, redcurrant, white cherry and marjoram. Seems very youthful and could age much longer. (JRL)

Drink: 2025 – 2031

Rosé is taken pretty seriously at JancisRobinson.com – see [more than 100 articles](#) we've published highlighting its evolving [quality](#), [diversity](#), [production methods](#) and [food-pairing](#) possibilities. And if you want to discover more rosés, see the 7,800+ pink wines reviewed in [our tasting notes database](#).

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