

ROSÉS BLOOM IN SUMMERTIME

between Spain, Australia and "others". Quite a mixed bag, with very few strong brands.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that special events are engineered to pull sales through. At the Chéz Gerard group, marketing manager Jasma Patel confirms that its "In the Pink" festival will be running again this year – from 21 July to 16 August. The festival aims to make the most of the freshest foods available at that time of the year – salmon, lobster, strawberries, gazpacho etc. A tailor-made selection of pink food and matching pink wines will be offered, alongside the regular menu. "Rosé wines will definitely benefit from the promotion," said wine buyer Nick Mason. "They work particularly well with summer foods but we also serve them all year round – as well as some chilled reds. This is a fun promotion which allows people to feel relaxed about what they are drinking."

Something similar happens in the Café Rouge chain, where a "Fête de Soleil" encourages the sales of rosé and other light wines through the promotion of Provence. The Pelican group has recently sourced its own rosé, a straight Syrah, which provides the spicy, peppery tones that mark it out as typically Provençal. Said director of purchasing Jason Danciger: "We do encounter initial resistance to rosé wines, but it is all a matter of mood. These styles of wine sell extremely well when put into a context of holidays, picnics, warmth and general 'time off'. We create this feeling within the outlets and feel rosé is important enough for us to find one that we really liked. Rosé is a fun drink, but you have to get the quality right."

"Fun" is definitely the word that is most often used – even if sometimes somewhat apologetically. The feeling that there is unlikely ever to be a Grand Cru Rosé should not

deter consumers from believing that these wines are well made, often subtle and very approachable. In Italy, Valpolicella guru Franco Allegrini is the first to agree there is little future for a crus rosé, but feels strongly that they are an important part of the wine drinking experience. He likens the situation to that of not always wanting to wear a good suit – sometimes jeans are preferable – and so it is with the desire for different styles of wine. "There should always be a place for rosés and light reds. I feel most reds benefit from some cooling," he said. "Room temperature combined with warm hands often creates wine temperatures that are too high. I like to serve my Amarone at around 15° – it really brings out all the aromas and fruit flavours to make it a great summer drink. Easy drinking does not mean lower quality."

The same could be said for pink or red sparklers, a number of which are both top quality and top price – witness Charlie Melton's Barossa sparkling Shiraz, selling well at £14 a bottle, or Gratien & Meyer's Cardinal, made from 100 per cent Cabernet Franc. "This wine is particularly good with summer fruit or chocolate," said Alain Seydoux at this year's LWTF, "or simply as a summer drink with a difference." Gratien & Meyer offers a range of summer sparklers including two rosés, Cuvée Aurore Saumur Brut, and Saumur Cuvée Flamme Brut, as well as Les Sablières, ruby-coloured Saumur Rouge which has an attractive substance under the fresh fruitiness of the palate.

Australian varietal expert Brown Brothers started experimenting with a red made for chilling over 15 years ago. Today its fruity,



"Cuvée Napa by Mumm's basic rosé makes terrific outdoor eating wine"
Greg Fowler,
winemaker

