

ROSE-TINTED GLASSES

A decent rosé needn't put you in the red. One of our Best Buys cost less than £3



Unlike Mateus, most modern rosés come in ordinary-shaped bottles

Rosé is right back in fashion, with many retailers reporting a surge in sales. Matt Pym, buyer for Majestic, told us: 'Our sales of rosé have grown by 45 per cent in value over the last 12 months.' We gave 29 European still rosés (New World rosés were undergoing a vintage change when we went to press) to seven professional tasters – and found you don't need to splash out to get the pick of the pinks.

In fact, at just £2.86, one of our Best Buys, Asda's Rosé d'Anjou, was the cheapest wine on test and another was less than £4. Country or region of origin didn't seem to matter as our top wines were from different places. But freshness did (most rosé should be drunk as young as possible): the 2004 vintages in our test fared better than the 2003s.

Though some tasters criticised the poorer wines for lacking the fruity flavour that typifies rosé, the tasting was considered 'not a bad showing', with 'decent quality overall'. But we did have to open seven second samples because of faults in the first (it's normally one or two), prompting the comment that 'all rosés should be in screwcaps, to retain the essential freshness of this style of wine'.

BEST BUYS

Top of the tasting, with 15 marks out of 20, was **Valley of the Roses Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé 2004, Bulgaria, Co-op, £3.99**. It was fruity, fresh and ripe, with raspberry and strawberry flavours.

In second place was **Marks & Spencer La Prendina Estate Pinot Grigio Rosé 2004, Italy, £5.99**, which was typically described as

delicate, and 'a good aperitif'. It scored 14.

Two wines tied third but we've made only the non-vintage **Asda Rosé d'Anjou, France**, a Best Buy because, at £2.86, it's great value for money. Our panel found it attractive and easy to drink, with 'some sweetness'. It too scored 14.

Drink our Best Buys as aperitifs or with light savoury dishes.

Other wines on test, in order of merit

14 Berberana Marino Rosé non-vintage, Navarra, Spain (Budgens, £3.69)
14 Monteforte Rosato 2004, Verona, Italy (Co-op, £3.99)
14 Inycon Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé 2004, Sicily, Italy (Sainsbury's, £3.89)
14 Domaine de Pellehaut 2004, vin de pays des Côtes de Gascogne, France (Waitrose, £4.99)
14 Agramont Garnacha Rosé 2004, Navarra, Spain (Sainsbury's, £3.99)
14 Terramar Rosé 2004, Tarragona, Spain (Morrisons, £4.49)
13 Domaine de Sours Rosé 2004, Bordeaux, France (Sainsbury's, £5.49)
13 Negrède Cabernet Sauvignon

Rosé 2004, Hungary (Waitrose, £3.99)
13 Chateau de Sours Rosé 2004, Bordeaux, France (Majestic, £8.99)
13 Chivite Gran Feudo Rosé 2004, Navarra, Spain (Oddbins, £5.49)
13 Marks & Spencer Domaine de Verlaque Rosé 2004, Côtes de Provence, France (£5.99)
12 'Jacques' blend Cabernet Rosé 2004, vin de pays du Jardin de la France (Sainsbury's, £3.89)
12 Muga 2004, Rioja, Spain (Majestic, £5.99)
12 Champeteloupe Rosé d'Anjou 2004, France (Tesco, £4.69)
12 Chateau de Flaugergues 2004, Côteaux du Languedoc, France (Majestic, £5.99)
12 Marques de Cáceres Rosé

2004, Rioja, Spain (Oddbins, £6.59)
12 Cuvée des Amandiers Rosé 2004, vin de pays d'Oc, France (Majestic, £3.49)
12 Marks & Spencer Gold Label Rosé 2004, vin de pays d'Oc, France (£4.99)
12 Chateau de Caraguilhes Organic Rosé 2004, Corbières, France (Waitrose, £6.99)
11 Mateus Rosé non-vintage, vinho de mesa, Portugal (Sainsbury's, £3.99)
11 Marks & Spencer Las Falleras Rosé 2004, Utiel-Requena, Spain (£2.99)
11 Amethystos Rosé 2003, Greece (Oddbins, £7.99)
11 Adagio Pinot Grigio Rosé 2004, Veneto, Italy

(Majestic, £4.99)
11 Chateau Tour de Mirambeau Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé 2003, Bordeaux, France (Oddbins, £6.99)
7 Cuvée Fleur Rosé 2004, Rhône, France (Waitrose, £3.55)
6 JP Chenet Cinsault-Grenache Rosé 2003, vin de pays d'Oc, France (Budgens, £4.09)

KEY FACTS

Our experts tasted the wines with the labels covered and marked each out of 20. The score shown is an average, rounded to the nearest whole figure. Prices (and stockists) may vary. We give the price we paid at the outlet shown.