

Looking at the world through rosé-tinted glasses | Alistair Gibson

Despite continuing to live in our new normal, the summer is coming and there is another bank holiday on the horizon.

By Alistair Gibson

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Mirabeau Pure 2019, Côtes de Provence Copyright: Other 3rd Party

Wisps of barbecue smoke can now be seen rising over garden fences and the new vintage of Provence rosé has arrived on the wine shelves, so maybe we can allow ourselves to briefly look through rosé-tinted glasses?

As it happens, the last trade tasting I went to in London before the lockdown came included a tasting of the new vintage of AIX Rosé, one of Provence's most recognisable labels.

It was established as recently as 2009 by Dutchman Eric Kurver, who took an unprofitable estate making red and white wine and turned it into one of the region's best rosé producers.

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The very first vintage won the prestigious Medaille d'Or in Paris as the best rosé in Provence. The rest, as they say, is now history.

The estate very much plays to its strengths and produces only rosé. And, being ultra fashionable, it is currently the biggest bottler of magnums in

Provence.

AIX Rosé 2019 Coteaux d'Aix en Provence (bottles £13.50 currently on offer from £14.50, magnums £27 on offer from £29 – Hermitage Cellars) is a classic Provence blend of grenache, syrah, cinsault with this year a little carignan added.

It has a lovely bright, pale pink colour, with a bouquet offering citrus, summer red fruits, watermelon and a little Asian spice, before a wonderful fresh, lively palate with more summer fruits and crisp acidity and a long, pleasing finish.

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As great rosé should, this just makes you want to come back for another sip. It is a great aperitif and would work well with some simply grilled fish such as red mullet or garlic prawns straight off the barbecue.

An equally well known Provence rosé producer is Mirabeau,

established by English couple Stephen and Jeany Cronk at a similar time to AIX.

Their 2019 range has also been released and I've so far tasted the lovely Mirabeau Pure 2019, Côtes de Provence (£10.99 on offer from £14.99 until June 2 – also available at Ocado and Majestic).

It's a blend of 60 per cent grenache and 40 per cent syrah and the nose has notes of citrus, ripe peach, pink grapefruit and orange peel.

The palate is quite juicy with summer berries and zesty citrus acidity leading to a mouthwatering finish.

This would work really well with some sushi, or a classic Provence tomato tart with olive tapenade, accompanied by a big dollop of sunshine.

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