

Rose wines getting respect, finally

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Rose wines have emerged from the sweet and cheap to drier and higher priced over the last five years and their popularity is continues to grow.

“I have noticed a trend that is moving from East Coast to West Coast is the increasing popularity of dry Rose wines,” said Paul Kalemkiakiran Jr., executive director of the Wine of the Month Club said. “It’s taking the American palate a little longer to appreciate these wines because they were long associated with being inexpensive and sweet.”

California winemakers concur.

Russian Hill Winery in Sonoma County makes a dry “Patio Pink” that has essences of strawberries, fruit forward complexity and a label evokes scenes from “Sex and the City”. The pink wine is produced from Pinot Noir grapes and sells for \$14. It is a perfect accompaniment for Chinese food and other lighter dishes.

“The Rose movement has been growing slowly for some time although a majority of people who visit our tasting room have a misconception about our ‘pink’,” said John Peterson, director of sales at the winery. “Many of the folks equate our dry Rose with White Zinfandel and choose not to taste it.



However, nine out of 10 Rose tasters are converts after a little wine education and sipping. Although several wineries have begun to produce a dry Rose it does not make up a large segment of the selections. Russian Hill’s Rose is different from older versions because it is bone dry and lower in alcohol at 13.6 percent

“It’s the perfect wine for the hot weather we have been having here,” he said. “When the temperature climbs most people don’t think about drinking a heavy red. ‘Patio Pink’ is seasonal and is available only in the spring and summer. We make a limited production – 60 cases a year – and it is sold out by September.”

DeLoach Vineyards in the Russian River Valley also produces limited cases of Rose (\$20) that uses a blend some of their old vines – Carignane, Grenache and Zinfandel, with a touch of Pinot Noir for richness – to showcase its classic flavors.

The result is bright, fruit flavors with aromas of strawberry, watermelon, guava and honeysuckle with cranberry and spicy notes on the palate. It would compliment a picnic feast or a dinner of wild game or turkey.

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