



THE Palest ROSÉS

In the U.K.—where the rosé market has been rising 30 to 40 per cent a year—the passion for pale has been fueled by Jamie Ivey, author of *Extremely Pale Rosé*. At a chance lunchtime encounter, Ivey was challenged by a Provençal vintner who claimed to make the palest rosé in France (Château Étienne Rosé, Côtes de Provence); Ivey spent the next summer on a quest to find a wine that was even paler. He soon discovered what wine aficionados already knew: Colour doesn't relate directly to taste. Rosé is typically made from red grapes, and the depth of colour depends on how long the grape juice is allowed to remain with the skins after pressing. If the juice is filtered off quickly, the wine will be pale; if it's left longer with the skins, it will be deeper in colour. In the end, Ivey's palest find was Château Sainte Marguerite Cru Classé, Côtes de Provence—but still not faint enough to beat the special cuve that Château Étienne winemaker Bernard Étienne makes for himself and select clients, coloured "the most beautiful translucent pink which seemed to wink in and out of existence."
—Gayle Keck

STATUS SIPPING *in the Pink*

Once considered overly sweet plonk, rosé wines have become the favourite sipping choice in summer among the jet-setting Hollywood crowd. At Los Angeles's Twenty Twenty Wine Merchants, noted for its glitterati clientele, "Rosé sales have been going up a steady 10 to 20 per cent a year, and it seems this year even more," says store president Bob Golbahar. "A lot of our clients are travelling to the Cannes Film Festival every year, and they get introduced to Provence rosés by many of the restaurants, with Domaines Ott almost being the 'official wine' of the festival."

Along with Domaines Ott, which was bought by the Champagne house Louis Roederer in 2004, Domaine Tempier is a Provençal rosé with chic cachet among the glamorous and well-travelled set. But rosés also count among their fans wine industry insiders.

"The quality of rosé wines has improved immensely during these past five years," says Parisian-based wine educator Britt Karlsson, whose BKWine company leads tasting tours through France. "The big difference today is that rosé wines don't always have residual sugar, as they all used to have. You can get perfectly dry rosé wines today, and they go very well with a lot of food." She also notes that, in shades of pale pink to rich salmon, rosés are beautiful to behold—much like the people sipping them in the sidewalk cafés of Cannes and Saint-Tropez.

—Melissa Castleman