

Château Saint-Maur: France's Classy Rosé Wines

July 31, 2015

7:23 PM MST

Sipping rosé wine on a daily basis is a rite of summer. Crisp, highly aromatic French rosé keeps hot temperatures in check, and wine drinkers cool and happy. And while most bottles retail for under \$20, making them a daily pleasure, premium rosé wines, like **Château Saint-Maur**, offer a special experience, and are worth the extra money.

Sixty years ago, the French officially classified the estates of Provence, designating 23 properties **Cru Classé**, of which 18 continue to make wine today, and 14 who are active in the organization. Outside of Bordeaux, this is the only other French wine region that ranked its wine estates based on history, winemaking, cellar reputation, and vineyard quality. Just like the Bordeaux Classification of 1855, estates can't be added or revised, as in adding new vineyard land. This makes the Cru Classé status rare and special, and are reflected in the wines of Château Saint-Maur.

The vineyards of **Château Saint-Maur** bask in the brilliant sunshine of Provence. The vines drink in the maritime air of the **Gulf of Saint-Tropez**, their roots draw in mineral sustenance from the calcareous clay soils of the vineyard slopes. Nestled against the foothills of the coastal Maures Mountains, the grapes are sheltered from wind, and protected from hot summer temperatures by Mediterranean sea breezes. By planting the vineyards in an east-west orientation, the clusters are well ventilated, keeping disease at bay. In this perfect place, the very special rosé wines of **Château Saint-Maur** achieve the ultimate expression of finesse and flavor.

Four years ago, Château Saint-Maur changed hands, and investments were made, from the vineyards to a new



View all
12 photos



Patricia Decker



Patricia Decker

cellar. In this state-of-the-art **wine production facility**, the essence of their rosé wines comes to life. Direct press of the fruit to temperature controlled fermentation brings out the best in Saint-Maur rosé, which is 90% of their production. Three levels of rosé flesh out their lineup, a virtual pyramid of Provencal pink wine. Here's a closer look, from the top down.

The **2014 Château Saint-Maur Clos de Capelune Cru Classé Côtes de Provence** is simply stunning. This very pale salmon colored blend of 35% Grenache, 30% Cinsault, 20% Mourvedre, and 15% Rolle is extremely elegant and balanced, yet pure and round in its fruit. Refined and complex, with vibrant acidity accented by a smoky minerality, its broad texture and long, persistent finish sets the Clos de Capelune apart from the other two Saint-Maur rosés. With aromas and flavors of citrus, peach, melon, and flowers, the palate resonates bright and crisp. Thirty acres of **Clos de Capelune** vines commune with the sky, which, at 1600 feet above sea level, is the highest vineyard in Provence. From this terroir, the small production bottling of Clos de Capelune is the pinnacle wine of the Chateau. Of the 7,000 bottles produced, only 1,500 are available to the US market. At \$60, this quality wine is worth it, a rare rosé that surpasses most summer pink wines.

The **2014 Château Saint-Maur "L'Excellence" Cru Classé Côtes de Provence** is the heart of their production, the prestige cuvée. Made from 30% Grenache, 30% Cinsault, 30% Mourvedre, and 10% Rolle, this pale salmon rosé earns its moniker, an excellent wine. More ripe than the Capelune, citrus, peach, melon, orange zest, and floral aromas and flavors weave a tapestry of concentrated flavor, mineral accents, and zesty acidity. With 60,000 bottles produced, US consumers see 6,000 in their wine shops. At \$45, this mid-range rosé rocks, excellent by the glass or with food.

The **2014 Château Saint-Maur "Cuvée M" Cru Classé Côtes de Provence** is a blend of equal parts Grenache, Syrah, Cinsault, and Tibouren. Full bodied, rich and round, this rosé is very well balanced, with the characteristic Saint-Maur zingy acidity. Expressive when swirled, wild strawberry, citrus, mineral, and floral aromas resonate across the palate. This rosé enters your mouth like a white wine, and then blossoms into this intense rosé as it crosses the tongue, finishing long and persistent. This entry level rosé, at \$25, is quite a deal, with 50,000 bottles imported for US wine drinkers to quench their summer thirst.

Beware, you will be smitten with the superior rosé wines of Château Saint-Maur, and will crave them every day. Drink them in the dog days of August, or squirrel them away for a spot of sunshine on a winter day, Château Saint-Maur's classic and classy rosé wines enchant all those who sip their ethereal summer charms. Seek them out and uncork joie de vivre!



Patricia Decker

Burbank Wine Shopping Examiner

© 2006-2015 AXS Digital Group LLC d/b/a Examiner.com