

Priorat's new take on rosé

Normally I wait until August to take on the topic of rosé as it seems to be the case that people only want to drink this lighter version of red wine when the heat arrives. Myself, I used to hate the wine because, as most winemakers admit, they make it just because people want to buy a cheap pink wine and little regard is given to the craft of the wine as long as long as it's light in body and a bit sweet.

There are however two main schools of winemaking when it comes to rosé and they sit on either side of the southern Rhône River. First is the Tavel style which is what most people probably know. Vivid salmon in colour, the wine sees more contact with the skins during fermentation, has more body, and is generally the more popular style. The other style is from Provence which is incredibly light in colour and sees little to no contact with the skins during fermentation.

In Spain, most rosés I've found gravitate towards the Tavel style (also called the Navarra style) and it's these wines that are oft-maligned and disregarded as many winemakers use their lesser-quality fruit to keep the retail cost down. While working on the second edition of my Vinologue Priorat book (which is available now!) I had the chance to taste two very new DOQ Priorat wines from Scala Dei and Clos l'Asentiu. These wines are derived from 100% Grenache and show just how excellent rosé can be if the intent is to make a quality wine and a gifted winemaker such as Ricard Rofes (Scala Dei) or Albert Costa (Clos l'Asentiu, Vall Llach) is at the helm.

Cellers de Scala Dei – Pla dels Àngels 2014

Floral notes of lily and violet along with rosemary currants, and peach. A fresh character overall with a great deal of depth.

18€

Clos l'Asentiu – La Matilde 2014

Named after one of the oldest residents in the village of Porrera, it holds aromas of grapefruit, sour cherry, fennel, slate, and orange blossom. Full and pleasing body with excellent balance and freshness.

14€