

*There is much to be said for drinking reds with a little chill – in these days of exaggerated ripeness and creeping alcohol, bottles often shape up neatly when served a fraction cooler.*

rosé every year. Their styles are consistent and they are striving for quality right the way through, from their work in the vineyard to wine in the glass. There's a basic division between the sweet and dry wines and, as a category in Australia, rosé is fast growing up, with more and more makers chasing a savoury, textured style.

Just about any red variety can be turned into rosé, and in Australia the sweeter wines tend to be built mostly around varieties such as grenache and shiraz. The **2005 Charles Melton Rose of Virginia (medium chill, A\$19.90/NZ\$19.95)** is a benchmark for this style, bagging all the juicy, rich fruit into a vibrant off-dry style. In McLaren Vale, the same styles are well suited, and the **2005 Geoff Merrill Grenache Rosé heavy chill, A\$18.50/NZ\$19.95)** is another ripe, creamy red fruit affair, as is his **2005 Liquid Assets Sangiovese Rosé (medium chill, A\$18.50/NZ\$19.95)**.

Another McLaren Vale producer, Coriole, has one of the longer track records with Italian varieties in Australia, making sangiovese, both straight and blended, and the occasional nebbiolo. The **2005 Coriole Nebbiolo Rosé (medium chill, A\$18)** is a fragrant, perfumed wine with musky cherry fruit and a crisp, snappy finish. It loses none of the perfume in the chill.

Amulet, a small, family-operated winery in Victoria's Beechworth, is also using Italian varieties for its rosé wine. The **2004 Amulet Rosato (heavy chill, A\$16)** is a blend of sangiovese, shiraz and cabernet and it focuses its work in a dedicated part of the vineyard specifically for this wine. Its macerated cherry fruit aromas are sangiovese-induced, and the palate is generous and rich and can hold its shape at low temperatures. Also in the Beechworth area, Julian Castagna's small biodynamic estate turns out a sophisticated, food-worthy shiraz rosé with terrific consistency. The **2005 Castagna Allegro Rosé (light chill, A\$30)** is a captivating pale red that's entirely barrel-fermented and has

fresh-cut strawberry aromas, a dry, savoury palate and crisp red-fruit flavour. Castagna has added a small drop of viognier to one barrel in 2005 and blended a small amount back into the cuvée. This wine is all about texture, so you should tread lightly in the chilling department for the full effect.

Another textural, dry shiraz-based wine, the **2005 Fairbank Rosé (medium chill, A\$19.95)**, achieves the same result, making a statement of an unashamedly European-inspired savoury style. Winemaker Gilles Lapalus treats the wine as a serious and dedicated rosé from the outset, looking to strike a balance between flavour and texture, relying on fruit quality and winemaking rather than sugar to do the job.

Former Mount Mary and Jasper Hill winemaker Mario Marson has released three of his own wines, all from the Heathcote region. His **2005 Vinea Marson Rosé (heavy chill, A\$17)** is predominantly sangiovese with a small amount of nebbiolo and shiraz in the mix. With super-florals and a full mélange of red fruits, it's a bigger wine with sweet fruit and a subtle savoury twist. A good chilling brings it into a sharper style and neatens up the finish.

Cabernet-based rosé is common the world over, and Adam Marks has really worked hard to get his **2005 Bress Rosé Cabernets (light to medium chill, A\$18)** from Victoria's Harcourt Valley into great shape. Its pure berry fruit and red florals perfectly match the pale red colour, and the emphasis on texture and balance ensure flavour carries long on the palate. There's a little tannin kick, so not too cold is best for this.

Pinot noir produces delicious rosé, with its abundant soft tannins and attractive fleshy fruit both handy prerequisites for good cool-red drinking. Two wines worth seeking out are the **2005 Scorpio Pinot Noir Rosé (light chill, A\$24)** and the **2005 Yering Station ED Pinot Rosé (light chill, A\$17.50/NZ\$22)**. Both are bone dry (ED stands for extra dry) and show vibrant, supple

pinot character when served cold, holding their fragrance at lower temperatures.

There are also more imported rosé wines arriving on our shores, with good examples from Italy, France and Spain that are moderately priced and better made than ever before. The modern **2004 Ros'aura dei Feudi di San Gregorio (heavy chill, A\$30)**, made from 100 per cent aglianico, almost defies its origin, such is its modern, brash style. The sweet, supple red fruits tighten nicely when served cold, the lower temperature lightening the load and lifting the palate a notch.

From Spain's Ribera del Duero region, the **2005 Cillar D Silos Rosado (heavy chill, A\$26)** is Ribena-coloured, with cherry cordial and blackcurrant aromas. It has a rustic authenticity about it, and tempranillo works well in the chilled rosé style, with lots of fruit flesh and enough weight to handle meaty grilled fare or simply enjoy on its own.

The south of France is a great source of light reds for chilling, as evidenced by the recently arrived **2004 Domaine Tempier Bandol Rosé (medium chill, A\$43.95)**. One of the greatest in the genre, it's super-pure, savoury and textured, looking more modern and vibrantly red-fruited these days. From the nearby appellation of Costières de Nîmes, the **2004 Mas de Bressades Cuvée Tradition Rosé (medium chill, A\$19.95)** is full of bramble and raspberry leaf, the palate straightforward and smoothly textured, with the savoury finish and brisk cut ideal for terrines and charcuterie.

Gamay, principally in the shape of French Beaujolais, is great when chilled and similarly performs well at a regular red wine temperature. Beaujolais producers have lifted the bar recently, assisted by a couple of vintages that have produced richer fruit. It seems that yields are also being addressed. The **2004 Georges Duboeuf Chiroubles (light chill, A\$23)** has terrific pure strawberry fruits, and is fragrant, juicy and expressive. The palate is tight and tidy and looks even brighter when lightly chilled. Somewhat richer, the **2003 Georges Duboeuf Moulin a Vent (medium chill, A\$28)** shows the warmth of the '03 vintage – featuring more cooked berry fruit with extra weight, the palate draws together when served from the fridge.