



SPARKLING ROSE is the most classic wine to share on Valentine's Day. Yarden Rose Brut is the perfect choice. (Adi Perze)

Love is in the air



• ADAM MONTEFIORE

Valentine's Day is on its way, and if we are talking wine, we are talking rose.

It is the pink color that lends itself to romance, and a bottle needs to be shared by two. You have to take a certain amount of time over a wine, and it is best shared through a meal. With someone you love and want to be with, what could be more romantic than that?

Of course, rose means so much more than being associated with love and romance, especially here. I feel it somehow symbolizes our region, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Levant. It also matches the local Israeli fusion cuisine so perfectly. Sitting at a table covered with all those small plates of meze and sipping rose, at some restaurant in Tel Aviv or Jaffa, is to me the essence of the Mediterranean.

Then we have the matter of our climate. We experience hot and humid weather for much of the year, and a refreshing, crisp rose is the perfect wine to quench thirst. Drinking rose on the balcony or patio, after a long hot summer's day, is the next best thing to cracking open a beer.

Finally, you have the Israeli character for relaxed informality. Rose matches the atmosphere and mood here, more than almost any other wine style. It does not have the gravitas of a red or a formality of white. It is a wine style for drinking and enjoying, without checking Parker points or having to

have a symposium.

Quite apart from its suitability, rose is also very much in and popular at all price points.

Not that it has not been popular before. The success of Mateus Rose, White Zinfandel and Carmel Grenache Rose 40 years ago shows that drinking rose is not new.

I suppose it was the very success of these brands that ensured rose suffered a poor image that stretched into decades. The new wine lovers, with the built-in snobbery inherent in wine education, allowed themselves to believe that rose was for those with simpler tastes.

Now all that is passé. There are expensive roses about and a large variety of different styles. Roses are no longer divided between salmon pink blush wines and cherry red roses. They are no longer always made like refreshing white wines, to be drunk as young as possible. These days they cover a far broader spectrum than I realized.

I have seen wines, labeled rose, that are so clear that they appear to be white wines. The way they are made, with a kiss of skin contact, gives them the name, rather than the color. Then there are light reds that are also roses. These look almost like red wines diluted with a little water. Furthermore, the dividing line between rose and orange wines is very narrow, and there is an overlap.

So rose is a far broader church than you think. You can't categorize it as a style or a taste.

Here are 10 roses of different styles, types and price points, to titillate the palate, and to give you some

ideas for what to drink with the one you love, on the day for lovers.

Private Collection Rose 2021

Private Collection is one of those brands one feels has been around forever. It is now in the "three for NIS 100" category on the supermarket shelves.

This is a dry rose and is a good choice for those looking for a less expensive alternative. It comes in a bottle more associated with Riesling or Gewurztraminer.

There is not much I can tell you about this wine. The wine notes received from the winery say: "The wine is made from rose grapes, selected from all over the country." *C'est tout*. So it is left to our imagination. However, the wine is nice enough and is in the right price category for those buying on price. NIS 45

1848 Winery, 2nd Generation Rose 2021

This is a real Provence-style rose. Very pale, with delicate fruit and citrus notes and the sharp acidity that makes it refreshing. This is made from Grenache from the Galilee region.

The 1848 Winery is a small winery dedicated to quality, founded by Yossi Shor, the eighth generation of the same Shor family that founded Israel's oldest winery in the Old City of Jerusalem. The winery labels commemorate the generations that have passed down wine as a way of life, from grandfather to father, and father to son. The 2nd Generation label represents value and quality. NIS 60



Story Rose 2020

Provence, in southwest France, is the most famous wine region for rose wines. A Provence Rose tends to be pale pink with very good acidity, and it will usually be in a tall, distinctive curvy bottle. The roses are usually made from grapes such as Cinsault, Grenache and Syrah.

This is both an authentic Provence rose and kosher. It is zingy and refreshing. NIS 85

Bat Shlomo Rose 2020

Bat Shlomo is the winery that is bringing Bat Shlomo, the farming village, alive again.

This wine is from the previous vintage, and it shows in the color. It has some orange tints. However, it has more flavor in the mouth than many of the genre. This is made from Grenache, which was kept for six months in stainless steel tanks. The result is a flowery wine with some berry fruit, a broad complexity with the merest hint of tannin on the palate and a clean finish with good acidity. NIS 90

Barkan, Beta Gris 2021

Gris means gray in French, and many onionskin roses in the south of France and Morocco are known as Vin Gris or Gris de Gris.

This example is a little more heavily colored than most Gris wines and is made from Tempranillo, a variety most known in Spain. It comes from a single vineyard at Beit Nekofa in the Judean Hills. The wine has good berry fruit, nice fresh and quite full flavors, a hint of oak from eight months in barrel and a refreshing finish. NIS 89

Recanati Gris de Marselan 2021

This is the perfect gift. In comes in a light pink box, and the bottle, with a pink label of course, is shaped like a skittle. Called Gris, but of course the wine is not gray, but red wines are not red and white wines are not white, so all of us in the wine world are a little color blind. This wine is faintly pink in color, so it matches the gift box and label.

It is made by leaching the color out of Marselan grapes for just for a few hours. It is a variety that is a cross between Cabernet Sauvignon and Grenache, or Bordeaux and the Mediterranean. The wine is fragrant and crisp. It is one of the more expensive roses and worth it. NIS 99

Nachmani Rose 2021

This is a super, fresh new rose from Nachmani Winery, a tiny family winery. This is the winery that scored 97 points in the Decanter World Wine Awards, which surprised everyone, including the family.

It is made from Cabernet Franc grown in the Galilee. Up to now the winemaking father, David, has made only red wines. His daughter, Shaked, insisted on a wine she could drink with her friends. It is deliciously refreshing. NIS 110



Razi'el Rose 2020

Razi'el Winery is a new winery founded by the Ben-Zaken family, owners of Domaine du Castel. It is situated at Ramat Razi'el, which was Castel's home from inception to 2015. Razi'el produces a sublime, Mediterranean-style red. A refined traditional method sparkling is on the cusp of being released.

This is its rose, made from Mourvedre, Grenache and Syrah. It was fermented and aged in large 600-liter barrels. The wine is pale, salmon pink in color, but in flavor it is a rose with attitude. Maybe a pink wine that wants to be a red. It should be decanted or aerated, drunk with food and appreciated for being unique and different, in the Israel context. NIS 139

Golan Heights Winery, Yarden Rose Sparkling Brut 2014

If pink is the color, and love is the game, the ultimate rose is a sparkling wine. It adds the style and perception of quality to the casual drinkability and beautiful color.

The Golan Heights Winery sparkling wines are as good as any Champagne and a great deal less expensive. Nonetheless, they are made strictly by the traditional method, with the second fermentation in the bottle that is sold.

The Yarden Sparkling Rose is made from Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes, grown in the cooler northern Golan. The grapes are handpicked, whole clusters are pressed and the wine was aged for a minimum of five years on its tirage yeast. The wine is at the same time lemony with soft berry notes; it has a whiff of the bakery in the background, and a refreshing acidity. NIS 135

Mionetto Rose Sparkling Extra Dry

Mionetto is one of the giants of Prosecco. This is the Italian sparkling wine from the northeast of Italy, which has conquered the world, even though it is still

relatively new in Israel.

This wine is Extra Dry. Talking about a misnomer! It is translated in Hebrew on the back label as "Very Dry." In fact, "Brut" in sparkling wine means dry, and Extra Dry relates to 12-17 grams per liter, more semi dry if you match it to table wine. So whilst not sweet, it does have enough residual sugar to satisfy someone who does not want bone dry wines. Remember, on Valentine's Day you are buying for her tastes, not necessarily your own.

This wine may be found in the Yayin B'Ir chain of wine shops. NIS 55

Flower Pot

This is such a fun and original concept, that I had to include it, even if it is not a rose. Instead of sending an emoji of flowers, how about sending the flowers combined with a bottle of wine? Meet Flower Pot, from the south of Italy.

These are fun, fresh, fruity easy-drinking wines with bright original labels. The white is a Pinot Grigio from Sicily, and the red Primitivo, aka Zinfandel, is from Puglia. The wines are organic and accessible. There are seeds behind the label. Peel it off, plant the seeds in a flower pot, and you may in future have the flowers!

Flower Pot is available from Shaked-Derech Hayaiin. NIS 52

For those who have always looked down on rose, you are now free to drink and enjoy it without embarrassment. In fact, many times it is the best choice and often is best value.

If you are still not so sure, Valentine's Day is a good place to start. Happy Rose Day! ■

The writer is an industry insider turned wine writer. He has advanced Israeli wine for 35 years and is referred to as the English voice of Israeli wine. www.adammontefiore.com

Clockwise from left:

STORY PROVENCE Rose, Recanati Gris de Marselan, Flower Pot Red & White. Mionetto Prosecco. (Omri Meron/Wineries)

NACHMANI ROSE. A beautiful fresh rose from a small family winery. (Winery)

ROSE CONNECTS between couples, especially on Valentine's Day. (Heni Henkin)