

Rose Wine

For years the main choice for wine drinkers has been red or white.

Rose wine, previously suffered the reputation of being a sweet housewives' wine in funny shaped bottles. It did not have the same prestige as other wines, but now there is worldwide interest in Rose and it is served at top restaurants.

Rose wine is produced in three ways:

- The "Blanc de Noir" method which is as the name suggests – a white wine is made from red or black skinned grapes.
- The Saignee method, whereby juice is separated from red wine fermentations.
- Blending, whereby white wine and a very small amount of red wine are used to produce a very basic Rose table wine.

The main difference between rose and red wine is the length of time the grape juice stays in contact with the skins, this is known as maceration. The grapes are crushed and destemmed and left to macerate before pressing. The entire red colour in grapes is in the skin (peel one and you'll see the flesh is green or yellow), the longer the skins stay in the juice, the more colour comes out. The rest of the wine making process is as for white wines.

The maceration time is influenced by the style of the wine but also by the grape variety. For varieties such as Grenache, it usually lasts 8-12 hours. For varieties with more deeply pigmented skins, such as Cabernet Sauvignon, the maceration time is usually shorter. Other factors such as the thickness of the grape skins also add to different styles of Rose.

The most popular wine cultivars used for the production of Rose are Pinotage, Cabernet and Shiraz.

Styles of Rosé wine are as varied as their range of colours, from the refreshing medium-dry Loire Rosé, to the bone dry, powerful wines such as Tavel from the Rhône, to sweeter blush wines such as White Zinfandel, typically from California.

A small glass (120 ml) of Rose (medium) contains 83 calories and it is thought, that just like red or white wines, a drop of what you fancy really can do you and your body good. That is the case as long as it is a little drop. Drink only moderately.