

The Latest Trend in Montalcino...Rosato!

Savory Rosatos You Can Sink Your Teeth Into From One of Italy's Premier Denominations

Rosatos can be a roller coaster in terms of wine styles and quality, but if you like your rosatos dry, bright and full of flavor, you should check out the new wave of pink wines coming out of Montalcino.

Made entirely – or in rare cases, predominantly – with Sangiovese, these make perfect sippers for summer and beyond. Unsurprisingly, many of the best Rosatos from Montalcino are crafted by top Brunello producers, those with years of experience with Tuscany's leading native grape. They're turning out delicious wines that boast energy, polish and personality.

Winemaking

Rosatos hailing from Montalcino are made as Toscana IGT (interchangeable with IGP, the EU standard) and the regulations governing IGT are extremely flexible. Producers can make their rosato starting in the vineyard with a dedicated harvest for rosato or by bleeding the must of their red wines. The latter technique – called *salasso* in Italian and *saignée* in French – entails taking a portion of red grape must after short contact between the juice and skins. The pink juice is then fermented separately to make rosé.



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Biondi Santi

This was the technique favored by the late Franco Biondi Santi, who spent years perfecting his rosato that he bled from his Brunello must and which was initially for home consumption until he was finally satisfied with the results. I have fond memories of sipping this delicious 'house wine' in slim water glasses while Franco sought perfection. It was a fantastic wine, loaded with personality, flavor, structure and finesse. Unfortunately, the current owners stopped production after they acquired the estate in 2017.

Today, most Montalcino producers make rosato by harvesting their young Rosso vineyards early, with the specific goal of making a rosé. To maintain vibrancy and aromas, harvest for the rosato is done several days or more before the red wine harvest. A few producers told me that they decided to make rosato initially to put to good use grapes from removing the not-perfectly ripened bunches shortly before the main harvest that normally were simply left to rot on the ground.

While some producers do a short passage in oak, most vinify entirely in steel. Still others vinify in concrete. The best expressions are fragrant, crisp, dry and precise. They have floral aromas of violet, rose and red berry while flavors include wild cherry, spice, citrus and saline.

Here are my Top Picks of what I like to call Rosato di Montalcino, all tasted on my recent trip to the hilltop town.

93 Fuligni 2024 Toscana Rosato Sangiovese

Made with selected Sangiovese grapes grown in one of the estate's younger Rosso di Montalcino vineyards and harvested several days before the Rosso, the 2024 Rosato from Fuligni is a lovely rosato, with a delicate onion-skin color and enticing aromas of Spanish broom, dog rose, wild berry and Mediterranean scrub. Linear and elegant, the dry, racy palate features juicy strawberry, red cherry, bitter orange and peach pit before closing on a saline tang. Bright acidity keeps it crisp and refreshing. Drink. Abv: 12% Kerin O'Keefe June 2025 ©kerinokeefe.com

93 Molino di Sant'Antimo 2024 Toscana Rosato Gina

Made from a pre-harvest of grapes destined for Rosso and Brunello from the estate's Podernovo vineyard and named after their gorgeous dog, a vizsla who is in charge of quality control, the copper colored 2024 Rosato Gina opens with heady scents of citrus, peach pit and lavender. On the dry palate, vibrant acidity accompanies tart cherry, orange zest, white pepper before a saline mineral close. Bright acidity keeps it well balanced. Drink through 2027. Abv: 12% Kerin O'Keefe June 2025 ©kerinokeefe.com

93 Patrizia Cencioni 2024 Toscana Rosato

Made entirely with pre-harvested grapes destined to make Brunello, the fantastic 2024 Rosato from Patrizia Cencioni has an intense color recalling pink rose petal and intense floral aromas of lavender and rose that mix with small red berry and spice. Dry, savory and linear, the full-flavored palate delivers succulent red cherry, pomegranate and orange zest before a saline close. Bright acidity keeps it vibrant and balanced. Drink through 2027. Abv: 12.5% Kerin O'Keefe June 2025 ©kerinokeefe.com

91 Camigliano 2024 Toscana Rosato Gamal Rosa Red Blend

Made with organically farmed grapes, a blend of 80% Sangiovese and 20% Syrah used to add more spicy notes, the crisp 2024 Camigliano Gamal is fresh and fragrant, offering aromas of tropical fruit, citrus and spice. On the bright, savory palate, notes of white pepper accent ripe yellow peach, tropical fruit and white pepper Drink. Abv: 12% Kerin O'Keefe June 2025 ©kerinokeefe.com

93 San Lorenzo 2024 Toscana Rosato

Made from bleeding the must of the estate's Rosso and Brunello grapes, fermented and aged 50% in concrete and 50% seasoned barrique, the stunning 2024 San Lorenzo Rosato is vibrant and savory, delivering aromas and flavors of juicy strawberry, red cherry, orange zest and fennel seed before closing on notes of white pepper and saline. It shows great tension, finesse and good structure. Drink through 2029. Abv: 13.5% Kerin O'Keefe June 2025 ©kerinokeefe.com

90 Sesti 2023 Toscana Rosato Sangiovese

Pale copper in color, the 2023 Rosato from Sesti offers pretty scents of Spanish broom, lavender, peach pit and Mediterranean scrub. Bright and savory, the lithe palate features cranberry, tart cherry and fennel seed before a saline finish. Drink. Abv: 12.5% Kerin O'Keefe June 2025 ©kerinokeefe.com

90 Scopone 2023 Toscana Rosato Maja

Made entirely with Sangiovese grown 495-515m above sea level in the coolest plot on the estate, the savory Scopone 2023 Rosato Maja has aromas and flavors of strawberry, bitter orange and Mediterranean brush. On the palate, fresh acidity accompanies tart cherry, peach and saline. Drink through 2026. Abv: 14% Kerin O'Keefe June 2025 ©kerinokeefe.com

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