

Inside Trader Joe's Podcast Transcript — Wine Club: Rosé for All the Days

[Light background music begins.]

Matt: It's that time. Actually, we're overdue for another meeting of the Trader Joe's Wine Club.

Tara: On our agenda for this meeting, rosé, all day.

Matt: Now, I think it's great to take on this topic because there are those who might say it was a passing fad, just a trend blowing in the breeze. No way. This is here to stay.

Tara: Rosé all day. You said, "No way, here to stay." You should do some rosé freestyling here. Or maybe not.

[Upbeat theme music begins, then fades under...]

Matt: Let's call this meeting of the Trader Joe's Wine Club to order.

[Sound of a gavel being tapped twice.]

Matt: First, we need a motion to approve the minutes from our last meeting.

Tara: Matt, let's just skip that and get to the good part. With us to talk about rosé wine is Trader Joe's wine category manager, James.

[Soft music begins.]

James: Hi, Matt. Hi, Tara.

Matt: James, let's put you on the spot. True or false, rosés are a mixture of red and white wine.

James: False.

[Buzzer sound.]

Tara: You hesitated.

James: In some cases, they can be a mix. Less common for the still rosés that we sell, but it can be an approach for some sparkling rosé.

Matt: Way to get technical. I appreciate that.

Tara: Okay.

Matt: So, if rosés, the still wines, the wines without bubbles, are not a mixture. How do they make rosés in the first place?

James: Using red grapes in the winemaking process. The grapes that are being pressed are left in contact with the juice, allowing some of that color to be pulled out of the skins of the grapes. Whereas in red wine, that time can last longer. With rosé it's limited to anywhere from two to 20 hours mostly.

Tara: So the grapes get pressed into juice, and if you're making a red wine, the juice and the skins from the pressing will sit together for a very extended period of time.

James: Correct.

Tara: But for rosé, you use those same grapes, you just remove the skins sooner.

James: Exactly.

Tara: So instead of getting that deep red color, you end up with a pinkish hue.

Matt: A blush.

James: Yeah. Rosé can range from very light pink to darker bordering on light red.

Matt: Most winemaking grapes are pale inside and really the color is in the skin. Those flavors, those colors, they're being drawn out from the skins. I'm fascinated by this. I'm wondering maybe historically we'll never know, did someone accidentally let something sit and it turned pink and they thought, "Well, that looks cool."?

James: It's likely.

Tara: I would say maybe about 10 years ago, American wine drinkers kind of opened up to the idea of rosé as something other than a "cheap" wine because there was this sense in the US that, oh no, pink wines are not serious wines.

Matt: You can probably thank and/or blame white zinfandel for that.

Tara: Because it's sweet.

James: Yeah. I think a lot of customers' initial experience with pink wine was likely white zinfandel and that was likely sweet.

Tara: When rosé started becoming a more serious contender in wine shops and in Trader Joe's for that matter, how did that happen? Why did that happen?

James: I think some aspects of what pushed the trend were rise in popularity of the rosés from southern France. Provence style really led the way in becoming a more popular segment, helping to overcome that misconception about all rosés being sweet wines.

[Transition to light acoustic guitar-based background music.]

Tara: We have in front of us today three different rosés that are on the shelves at Trader Joe's. I kind of want to start with the number one selling rosé in the entire company, La Ferme Julien Rosé.

James: That's a great place to start. La Ferme Julien Rosé has been in stores for many years and has continued to be very popular with our customers. A large part of that is the consistent quality that's being delivered as well as the value that's being delivered.

Tara: \$6.99. It may be a little bit more in some locations, but \$6.99 is generally the price. This is a screw-top wine, easy to open, easy to take on a picnic. You don't have to bring a corkscrew with you.

[Sound of the bottle top being screwed off.]

Matt: It sounded almost chiropractic. Ahhh.

Tara: I've just gotten a rosé adjustment.

Matt: Yeah.

Tara: This is made by a really impressive, well-known winemaker.

Matt: The Perrin family. If you're at all into wine or you're wanting to learn about a multi-generational winemaking family dynasty in southern France, the Perrin family. You may have heard of Chateau Beaucastel. That's within their portfolio of winemaking estates, and they're great at what they do.

[Sound of wine pouring into a glass.]

Matt: So this is by far customers' favorite rosé that we sell in terms of the number of bottles that customers buy. By far. I think it's kind of hiding in plain sight. While it's so popular, for some people this might be a bit of a sleeper hit. If you're at all interested in a rosé, check this out. La Ferme Julien.

Tara: Salute.

[Sound of wine glasses clinking together.]

Tara: It's so easy drinking. It's smooth, it has a nice crisp finish on it.

Matt: I think people might assume like, oh, there's really not much to a rosé. It's got a lot going on.

Tara: It's got a lot.

Matt: Among the things flavor-wise, it also has sort of a weightiness to it, a mouthfeel that's not like glycerin sweetness. It's not heavy, but it's present, and I think it's so flexible. Great

as an aperitif, as a cocktail thing, but this has got picnic written all over it, if not literally maybe in invisible ink with a special flashlight.

James: Yeah, the balance of red fruit, red berries, and some citrus notes all combined in this really bright, refreshing wine. It's a very light color, but it does pack in a good amount of intensity that may not be expected.

Tara: I will pick that up. That's really impressive.

James: We're already shipping the 2024 vintage, so the newest vintage.

Matt: I mean, I think most people buy wine from Trader Joe's to enjoy soon after that purchase. You could cellar this kind of wine, but most people don't really think about cellaring rosé and that's okay. I think you really touched on, James, this idea of inventory turn or the rate at which customers buy the things we make available. Selling product is good for product because you are getting something fresh, and I think of rosé as really about freshness.

[Transition to upbeat acoustic guitar-based music.]

Tara: I want to go next, James, to the number two selling rosé at Trader Joe's.

James: Yes, the Emma Reichart Rosé of Pinot Noir. Today we'll be trying the 2023 vintage.

Tara: La Ferme Julien is made using a blend of grapes from France. Emma Reichart is made using only pinot noir. Some rosés are a blend, and some rosés are single varietal. What's that all about?

James: So I think La Ferme Julien was made as a blend just to be consistent with some of their own blend styles. Can be true in reds, whites as well as rosé. There are some examples from Southern France that are just from grenache or other varietals, but the Emma Reichart being made in Germany, so less variety of red grapes to pick from, and pinot noir is actually one of the top red grapes from Germany.

Tara: You don't think of rosé and Germany together, and yet it's consistently one of the top performers in the Rosé section at Trader Joe's.

Matt: By a lot. A lot of people love this wine.

[Sound of bottle top being screwed off.]

Matt: I am just pouring wine everywhere. I feel like I'm doing ablutions or blessings or all of the above. Growing grapes in Germany, I mean, it's a little farther north than I think of like Italy or France technically speaking, and I think it might-

Tara: Not even just how you think of it.

Matt: Yeah.

Tara: It actually is a little farther north. (laughs)

Matt: It actually is. Turns out on a globe it's higher up, and so it's cooler. So red wine matures differently, and I'm thinking maybe that's why this pinot noir rosé is what it is because of that climate.

Tara: So I've never had this wine.

Matt: Really?

Tara: This wine is delicious. It's a little bigger, it's a little more substantial. That's a wine that I might have with a hearty sandwich, like a big turkey, avocado, lettuce or arugula on sourdough.

Matt: Yeah, there's a lot more acidity going on than I recall, which I really like. I wonder how many customers know that this is from Germany. With all due respect, it doesn't drink like sort of classic German wines. On the back label, there's a little flavor meter, and it talks about on a scale from sweet to dry, clarifying that this is in fact dry. This is not a sweet wine, and it isn't.

Tara: One of the flavor notes that's listed on the back label is tart cherry, and I totally get tart cherry. That was the very first thing that I tasted was like, "Ooh, there's cherries happening here." I'm absolutely going to add that to the rosés that I will serve at parties or barbecues. That'd be really good with a burger.

James: One of my favorite pairings for rosés is salmon, and I think that's a good direction to go in for any of these wines.

Tara: What's the price on that one right now?

James: So that is actually \$5.99.

Tara: \$5.99/ That's even less than La Ferme Julien.

Matt: That's a great deal.

Tara: I don't know how you do it, James, but I'm glad that you do.

Matt: All right, now we just went through the top two selling rosés, our customers' favorite rosés. We have a third that got off to an amazing start last year. I think we were hopeful and still surprised by how well this Rosé sold. What do we have, James?

James: The Maison Barboulot brand Cinsault Rosé. Very excited to have it coming back this year with a new vintage just in time for spring and summer.

[Sound of wine bottle cork popping.]

Tara: That was a nice cork pull, James.

Matt: I see a future in Foley for you, my friend.

Tara: Tell us all about Maison Barboulot.

James: Some customers may be familiar with the cab syrah blend that we've had for a while now. It's one of our most popular reds. We were very happy to add a rosé counterpart. The Maison Barboulot is made from a single grape, the Cinsault grape.

Tara: This is obviously a French varietal, Cinsault.

James: Yeah. So Cinsault, it's often included in blends in Southern France and the Rhone Valley and can also be utilized to make a lovely rosé.

Tara: Okay. Very different from both of the others that we've tasted.

Matt: Very full-bodied.

Tara: It almost drinks like a red wine.

Matt: That to me was the fullest flavor of the three, the more standalone.

James: Yeah, I think this one is versatile. It could be enjoyed with food and also great on its own.

Tara: This to me would be excellent with soft-ripened cheeses and just a very simple cracker.

Matt: I also think the cured meats and fruit, like a prosciutto with melon, I think would work well. Or the rosemary ham that we sell.

Tara: Yeah, I think by the time this podcast is out into the world, it should be arriving in that same timeframe. So you should be able to buy this Maison Barboulot Cinsault Rosé.

Matt: Each of these three bottles, they were chilled, but they've had a chance to sit out on a table in the open, not in ice buckets, not in a fridge. I think I love rosé cool, not cold.

Tara: Mm-hmm.

Matt: I think that sometimes, white wines, rosé wines, I think we make them too cold and then they're refreshing, but maybe the only real flavor that can handle that temperature is acidity. Everything else is kind of tamped down. These are really expressive says he, sounding like a goofball, but like these are nice.

Tara: On the bottle of the Maison Barboulot, it does say chill to 55 degrees, kind of what the bottle feels like right now, and it's been out of refrigeration for about 45 minutes to an hour. It's like cheese though, right? If you eat cheese right out of the fridge, you miss most of the flavors.

Matt: Yep.

James: Yeah. I think if the wine is too cold, you won't really get to enjoy all the different aspects of the taste profile.

Tara: What we've seen at Trader Joe's over the last decade or so is that there isn't any one season for rosé. We sell a lot of rosé all year long, but sales do go up in the summertime when the weather gets warmer. It's graduation season. It's wedding season. It's bridal showers.

Matt: It's celebratory.

Tara: It's celebratory.

Matt: I think it's always great to share some cheer and some joy with some pink wine. Rose gold and other colors have been adopted by the more macho among us. It's okay to drink pink wine everybody, anytime.

Tara: What's the price on the Maison Barboulot?

James: So that's also \$5.99.

Tara: Wow. We're like crushing it here with prices!

[rim shot]

Tara: Yes, I know. They're grapes, and they've been crushed. I didn't mean to do that. We're talking about prices here, and these are the prices that you'll find at most of the Trader Joe's stores in the country. But there are some places where those prices may vary because of local regulations and shipping and things like that.

Matt: Let's do a quick hot take. Why do customers like rosé wine?

James: Because it's refreshing.

Tara: Why do you think customers like rosé wine, Matt?

Matt: Well, what James said, and you can get as serious as you want about anything, but there's some room, some latitude given rosé that allows you just to be enjoying it. You don't have to pontificate, you don't have to "oh, it has a this and a that." It's like, "This is great!" And I mean great with a sandwich. That is helpful info for me.

Tara: Yeah. We could talk about rosé, wait for it, all day, but we're not going to. We're going to let James get back to work.

[Closing theme music begins.]

Tara: I'm Tara Miller.

Matt: And I'm Matt Sloan. The current Trader Joe's Wine Club recommendations for rosé are-

James: La Ferme Julien,

[Sound of wine glasses clinking together]

James: Emma Reichart Rosé of Pinot Noir

[Sound of wine glasses clinking together]

James: and Maison Barboulot Cinsault Rosé.

[Sound of wine glasses clinking together]

Tara: We'll have another Trader Joe's Wine Club mini episode for you soon.

Matt: And episodes about all kinds of products at your neighborhood Trader Joe's.

Tara: Until then, thanks for listening.

Matt: And thanks for listening.

[Music ends.]