

RIKUS NEETHLING

PINOT NOIR ROSÉ

— 2026 —

SOUTH AFRICA



APPEARANCE

A luminous ballet-slipper pink, leaning towards a deeper shade of rose quartz. Almost crystalline in its brightness, the wine catches the light beautifully and, strikingly, echoes the pink of the label almost exactly.



NOSE

Pronounced and unashamedly evocative of spring and summer. There is an immediate floral abundance of blushing hibiscus and peony, followed by wild strawberry, raspberry and red apple. A playful suggestion of candyfloss gives the nose a fleeting sweetness before pink peppercorn, cool fennel and lifted rooibos pull it firmly back into more interesting territory. As the wine opens, the perfume becomes less overtly pretty and more intriguing, with pomegranate and pink peppercorn coming to the fore.



PALATE

Dry, tangy and driven by brisk, commanding acidity that immediately makes the mouth water. The palate is leaner and more tart than the generous perfume suggests, creating an interesting tension between nose and taste. There is an almost austere mineral quality to the wine – crushed stone and sea spray – which strips away some of the initial sweetness suggested by the fruit and leaves the palate feeling particularly dry. White watermelon rind, pomegranate and a faint herbal character emerge through the mid-palate, accompanied by a very fine, slightly grainy phenolic texture.

The acidity acts as the spine of the wine. It is racy and persistent, carrying the fruit rather than allowing it to become plush, and ultimately leaves the palate craving food.



FINISH

Medium (+) in length, linear and persistent. Tart red fruit gradually gives way to crushed stone, saline freshness and a gently phenolic dryness that lingers after the fruit has receded.



CONCLUSION

A rosé with quite a few surprises. The luminous colour and exuberant perfume initially suggest something soft and playful, yet the palate is altogether more serious. High acidity, minerality and subtle phenolic grip provide an armature around the fruit and give the wine considerable energy and tension.

Pinot Noir is particularly interesting in this context. Its naturally delicate red-fruit spectrum and perfume suit rosé beautifully, but here it also brings restraint. Rather than relying purely on strawberry fruit, the wine moves towards pomegranate, pink peppercorn, herbs and stone as it develops in the glass. Lifted and confident in being different.



AGEING POTENTIAL

Very appealing now for its perfume and energy, although the acidity and structure suggest an interesting evolution over the next two years. Some of its angularity should soften as the fruit broadens and integrates.



FOOD PAIRING

Seared salmon and burrata salad

WITH SHAVED FENNEL, ORANGE AND PINK PEPPERCORN

Lightly seared salmon served with torn burrata, shaved fennel, rocket and fresh orange segments. Finish with olive oil, lemon zest, a squeeze of lemon, flaky salt and cracked pink peppercorns.

This is the kind of food the wine asks for. The burrata provides creaminess against the racy acidity, while the natural richness of salmon gives the wine something to push against. Fennel and pink peppercorn pick up its more unusual aromatic notes, while orange and lemon echo its citrus-like freshness. The salt and creaminess make the red fruit noticeably more generous in the glass.



TASTING NOTE

Don't let the colour fool you.

It is almost ridiculously pretty – luminous ballet-slipper pink, somewhere between polished rose quartz and something you might want to wear rather than drink. The nose follows suit at first: hibiscus, peonies, wild strawberries and raspberries, with a fleeting cloud of candyfloss. Then the wine changes its mind as pink peppercorn, pomegranate, fennel and rooibos creep in. The acidity is racy and unapologetic, making the mouth water and pulling the wine towards the tartness of young pomegranate and white watermelon rind rather than sweet red fruit.

It also has an intriguing texture. A faint graininess runs across the palate, followed by something like crushed stone and sea spray. It is dry, mineral and just a little austere at the edges – a fascinating counterpoint to that exuberant perfume.

Perhaps that is where Pinot Noir makes this rosé particularly interesting. It gives you the perfume and delicacy you hope for, but also a more restrained, finely drawn character underneath. The fruit and acidity travel together rather than one dominating the other. A rosé that looks rather playful but turns out to have considerably more attitude than its colour might suggest.

