

WTOP Radio Wine of the Week
July 8, 2016
Storm the Bastille With E. Guigal Wines

In America, the Fourth of July celebrates the anniversary of the day we declared our independence from Great Britain. In France, July 14th celebrates the historic day the oppressed citizens of France stormed the Bastille – a prison and citadel that stood as a symbol of the hypocrisy and corruption of the aristocratic government - and declared their independence from the repressive rule of King Louis XVI.

The French recognize Bastille Day as the end of the monarchy and beginning of the modern republic. Taking a page out of the newly minted American government, the French celebrated their freedom from patrician rule and embraced the belief that the right to govern should be organized by ordinary citizens and not the King.

Today, Parisians celebrate Bastille Day as a national holiday with a grand military parade up the Champs Elysées, colorful arts festivals, and raucous parties. Hmmm, sounds familiar. So, in solidarity, I am dedicating this week's Wine of the Week to drinking French wine in honor of our Bastille Day. Time to storm the cellar and uncork a bottle of French wine! And not just any French wine, but specifically wines from one of the most prolific and prominent wine families in all of France; E. Guigal.

I love rosé wines in the summer (and fall, winter and spring). The **2015 E. Guigal Côtes du Rhône Rosé** is an exceptional example of the quality and value that can be found in the Rhone Valley. It is a beautifully structured, dry rosé bursting with flavors of red raspberry, strawberry and watermelon in the mouth. The long finish is bright and refreshing, buoyed by intriguing hints of Provencal herbs and notable minerality. According to several winemakers in the region, the 2015 vintage is one of the best vintages in half a century. **\$15** for a piece de resistance.

If you're looking to break out of the ABC (Anything But Chardonnay) white wine mold, try doing it with the **2014 E. Guigal Côtes du Rhône Blanc** (SRP \$15). This blend of white Rhone varietal grapes – predominately Viognier, with additions of Marsanne and Roussanne - produces a wine that storms the tongue like it was the Bastille! Notes of white flowers, apricot, acacia and white peach invite outdoor sipping in the sun, while the wine's fresh, aromatic, and complex character make it a great match for a variety of lighter foods including seafood, shellfish, or poultry. **\$15**

If red wine is your Bastille storming choice, the **2012 E. Guigal Côtes du Rhône Rouge** is without a doubt one of the best red wine values in the market today. It is a southern Rhône wine made with a distinctly northern Rhône approach. Guigal forgoes the usual Grenache-heavy blend in favor of the bold Syrah as the main varietal (60% Syrah, 35% Grenache, and 5% Mourvedre). This is generous, medium-bodied wine with smooth, rounded tannins and aromas of dark berry and black pepper spice. Fresh, lively and supple, it offers forward notes of violet and black cherry that maintains surprising depth and richness on the palate. A perfect pairing with traditional dishes like cassoulet or simply enjoy it with a plate of charcuterie. **\$15**

Of course, if you absolutely must have a bottle of Champagne on Bastille Day, and I think everyone should, then pop open a bottle of the Non-vintage **Moët & Chandon Impérial Brut** from the Champagne region of France. It has a unique house style that displays flavors of creamy lemon and nectarine that are elegantly woven into a round, balanced wine with wonderful structure and tiny, precise bubbles. A touch of brioche is a pleasant highlight at the end of the graceful finish. **\$40**