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Serious Wine Talk
for the not-so-serious drinker

Wine in the Time of Coronavirus, Part 23: The Other Prosecco (Tasting Conegliano Valdobbiadene)

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Prosecco hails from one of the more gorgeous spots in Italy's north-eastern Veneto region, in a hilly zone of Treviso (between Venice and the Dolomite mountains), covering 15 communes. Vine-growing there has ancient origins, and they don't exactly part with tradition there lightly (the borders of the historic production zone have remained almost unchanged for about nine decades). Sparkling wines there are produced using what they call the "Martinotti Method", where the secondary fermentation that produces those beguiling bubbles takes place in pressurized tanks (autoclaves) rather than individual bottles, thus emphasizing the fruity/floral primary and secondary aromas and flavors of the grape (primarily Glera) and maintaining freshness.

That's usually where Prosecco knowledge stops dead, even for wine geeks. But there's an area in the hills – **Conegliano Valdobbiadene** – where the vineyards range from 164 to 1640 feet above sea level, and are situated in between the sea and the foothills of the Alps, with ideal sunlight exposure on the south-facing slopes. While rainfall there is substantial, Glera doesn't mind the wet weather so much, thanks primarily to the steepness of the plantings and the area's ample breezes. This is where the primo Prosecco stuff gets made, folks.



As I learned during a recent virtual tasting with the Consorzio di Tutela del Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore D.O.C.G., Conegliano has clayey soils of alluvial and glacial origin, rich in calcium carbonate, promoting more structure and more intense fruit aromas than you might otherwise expect from Prosecco further down the quality chain. The area of Valdobbiadene is similar, in its ancient moraine, sandstone and clay soils that promote added finesse, and richness.