

# opening a bottle

## FIRST TASTE GUIDES

### An Easy Guide to Italian Sparkling Wine

*Breaking Down Your Italian Options for Bubbly*

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Things get interesting with the **Conegliano-Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG** category, which comes from the foothills of the Alps. These wines tend to be a little more compelling in the glass, with the most complex versions coming from the named villages/single-vineyard sites known as rive. The Cartizze subzone is often considered the pinnacle of quality, though I don't always agree with that as a blanket statement. The vineyards here are certainly the most dramatic, and there are some high-quality Prosecco from Cartizze, but what's more noticeable with these wines is the tendency to leave a little sugar in the bottle after fermentation (labeled Dry or Asciuto). This leads to a fuller wine, but not necessarily a more complex one.

Price and predictability. Prosecco has become popular because it is easy to mass produce and — in its own way — it has become the anti-fine wine wine. I have no problem with people loving Prosecco, even if I prefer the complexities of other Italian sparkling wines by a long shot. However, the landscape of Conegliano-Valdobbiadene is among the most visually arresting in wine. I am utterly fascinated by the viticulture of the rive and Cartizze vineyards.



*A view over the Rive di Campea near Valdobbiadene, Italy.*