

Fine prosecco from Northern Italy

Conegliano Valdobbiadene DOCG sets high standards for sparklers

LYLE NORTON / May. 17, 2020



Glera grapes provide the basis for the notable prosecco from Northern Italy vineyards near Valdobbiadene and Conegliano. (Courtesy photo)



Even as its appeal expanded and recognition increased, it came as a bit of a surprise that Wine Enthusiast magazine recently named the Nino Franco NV Rustico Prosecco Superiore (\$18) as its top overall wine of 2019. It excels in the characteristics I just mentioned, but with the added depth and complexity, it earned it a 94-point rating. Such a high distinction for an under-\$20 sparkling wine is rare.

The best extra dry prosecco is sourced from vineyards surrounding the towns of Valdobbiadene and Conegliano, below the Dolomites near Veneto. The region provides the cooler climate for the glera grape (synonymous with prosecco) to thrive. In 2010, the Conegliano Valdobbiadene area acquired a Controlled and Guaranteed Denomination of Origin designation to protect and sustain the qualities of this tiny area that produce the best of the best.

While the DOCG designation applies to all Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore production, there are sub-designations such as the small DOCG Cartizze micro-area and the 43- steep hillside DOCG Rive sites, each expressing the local terroir. The DOCG Sui Lieviti designates the prosecco within the region that is fermented and aged sur lie, a process that incorporates the dead yeast and is produced in the Brut Nature style with less residual sugar.