

Italy's Sparkling Advantage: Prosecco and Franciacorta

BY ERIC GUIDO | DECEMBER 15, 2020

Champagne may be the most popular category for sparkling wine around the world, but Prosecco doesn't fall too far behind. If my recent tastings have revealed anything, it's that this attention is well-deserved. Granted, there's an ocean of simply palatable Prosecco produced each year; and because of this, in building this report, I thought it prudent to be selective in choosing which producers to focus on. Having said that, overall, the wines that I tasted really impressed me. First, let's consider the price point. With nearly 100 bottles of Prosecco tasted, a mix that spanned from the entry level, to the more defined locations

within the **Conegliano Valdobbiadene of Rive and Cartizze**, the average bottle price came out to just \$23. This number alone is amazing, yet what's even more interesting is that it includes many wines that overperformed in every possible way. Will you find a Prosecco that will deliver all of the jovial fruit and juicy freshness you could ever hope for at the \$15 price point? You certainly will. However, what you'll also find is an even higher percentage of wines that transcend expectations. These are the Proseccos that manage to communicate a sense of place and varietal purity, often with little to no residual sugar, while at other times, such as in the Extra Dry category, with a filigreed sweetness that will remind you of your favorite Riesling Kabinett.

I believe the potential here is untapped; simply look to the steep hillside vineyards of the Rive category to see what I mean. Each one is made from hand-harvested fruit, grown at lower yields, easily identifiable from their labels and vintage-dated. Seriously, one of the only negative impressions that I left these tastings with was how the Proseccos from Cartizze simply didn't communicate their elevated status or the price tags that go with them, yet these also make up the smallest percentage of Prosecco produced. In the end, If you haven't yet had your eye-opening Prosecco moment, then I strongly urge you to look to many of the top wines in this report.

