

# Wine Connoisseur

MAGAZINE



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# Do You Know How to Pair SPARKLING WINES WITH FOOD?

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Italian producers of bubbly have this message for you:

## SPUMANTE IS NOT ONLY MEANT FOR CELEBRATIONS!

According to the July 2015 Osservatorio español del Mercado del Vino (OeMV), Italy leads the international commerce of sparkling wines, ahead of both France and Spain! Between 2004 and 2014, Italy's sparkling wine exports have risen 240% thanks to the good value for the money, a crucial issue during the economic crisis. This is why France has recently ordered a detailed report on Italian sparkling wines!

The main sparkling wine production areas in Italy are:

### CLASSIC METHOD\*

#### **Trento**

(in the Trentino region, northeast)

#### **Franciacorta and Oltrepò Pavese**

(in the Lombardia region, north-west)

#### **Alta Langa**

(in the Piemonte region, northwest)

\* Or "Champenoise" method, the same method used for Champagne, where the 2nd fermentation is typically the process for sparkling wines where bubbles are created in the bottle.

### MARTINOTTI METHOD\*\*

#### **Prosecco**

(in the Veneto and Friuli regions, northeast)

#### **Asti**

(in the Piemonte region, northwest)

\*\* Or "Italian" or "Charmat" method where the 2nd fermentation takes place in big tanks.

Many other regions are trying to exploit the good trend with indigenous grapes, contributing, even if mildly, to the expected total production of 44 millions of hectoliters in 2015.

SPARKLING WINE PRODUCTION IN ITALY IS NOT JUST A TREND—IT'S A SUCCESSFUL REALITY. AND MUCH OF ITS SUCCESS IS RELATED TO FOOD PAIRINGS.



Historically, sparkling wines have been consumed during big occasions or as aperitif and Carpenè Malvolti Prosecco was advertised as "the perfect pairing: Prosecco and Panettone" (typical Italian Christmas cake). This was one of the first examples of a successful wine campaign in Italy during the 50s and I wonder whether it influenced the current consumption of sparkling wines with food.

Bubbles are symbol of celebration, but there are also many reasons why sparkling wines are perfectly paired with main courses and starters such as pasta, raw and grilled fish, prosciutto and salami, cheese, and white meats, not to mention the convivial role they play. In fact, Spumante does not hide the food's taste! The acidity, intensified by the carbon dioxide, is ideal for cleansing the mouth during a meal!

Last but not least, sparkling wines have a different sugar content—from a level near zero in "Dosaggio zero/ Nature" and "Extra-dry" varieties to the "dry/sec," "demi sec," or even "doux (sweet)" ones to the more popular brut or extra-dry medium varieties

Italian wineries and associations are sending the food pairing message in the following areas, such as Trentino, with its Trento DOC sparkling wine, also called "spumante di montagna" (spumante from the mountains) where the altitude and climate distinguish it from other productions, making it one of the best sparkling wines in Italy. Their style is mainly represented by the elegance of Chardonnay, which also ensures longevity and profound aromatic intensity. Sometimes, Pinot Noir completes the production. (Pinot Blanc and Pinot Meunier are used a lot less).





Here area just a few interesting wineries of the area.

**FERRARI:** This family business carries Trento DOC and has a strong Italian reputation worldwide. The winery was founded in 1902 and has been managed by the Lunelli Family since 1952. The family has also invested in other Italian regions, always focused on territory and style! Beyond the reserve “Giulio Ferrari,” a basic Brut (100% Chardonnay) is a great value for money, along with their Perlè Blanc de Blancs, which was rewarded as a “World Champion Sparkling Wine Outside of Champagne” at an international contest for bubbles in 2015!

**ABATE NERO:** This small winery produces 50.000 bottles a year and pays much attention to detail! The wines are precise, clean, and made to be consumed with



food to bring out the freshness and elegance of Chardonnay. The very low sugar content perfectly cleanses your palette! A lovely “Extra brut” version represents them well.

**LETRARI:** This medium-sized company (160.000 bottle/year, only 60.000 of Trento DOC sparkling wines) deserves much attention. The wines are almost perfect: elegant, balanced, full. The grapes’ perfect ripeness is reflected the glass. “Quore” demonstrates the potential of a fresh Chardonnay balanced with smoothness and fruit. The Reserve 976 is an exiting one—a complex wine with honey and apple juice aromas that are charming and long lasting.

**BALTER:** This is a wonderful location for private gatherings. Going up the tower, it is possible to admire all of their vineyards and discover the high density of vines, which predicts the wine’s quality. They are delicate and immediate. The presence of Pinot Noir is higher, reaching the 20% in their Reserve.

**CAVIT:** This is a big company with a total production of several millions of bottles a year—about 500.000 of which are “Altemasi” Trento DOC sparkling wines. These wines are often rewarded by some of the most important Italian guides. Their wines express the territory and are perfect when paired with food, thanks to their acidity.