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Dining

Two Challenges Dogging Prosecco's Success

Cathy Huyghe | Aug 22, 2019

Sometimes marketers go overboard. With designated holidays throughout the year, that is, like National Bubble Bath Day, National Jelly Bean Day, and National Pastry Day.

There wasn't a National Prosecco Day (August 13) in effect when I started writing about wine. But there is now and -- given Prosecco's bandwidth, popularity, and demand by consumers -- it doesn't have much to do with marketers going overboard. It's a thing, in other words, with the millions-of-cases-sold numbers, and \$2.7 billion in sales globally in 2018, to back it up.



The Environmental Impact of Success?

It would be easy, if simplistic, to consider the life of a Prosecco producer as ""sitting pretty."" Sales are way (way) up, global thirst for your product seems endless, and **UNESCO has just designated what's essentially the representative crown jewel of your region, the hills where the Conegliano and Valdobbiadene Prosecco wine is made, as a World Heritage site.**

What could possibly go wrong? With sales way (way) up, growers have rapidly planted more and more vines in order to meet demand. Land that was dedicated to woods and pastureland just two decades ago are now planted with vines, as the area covered by Prosecco-producing vineyards increased from about 4000 hectares to 7000 hectares in just 20 years.

Many harvests failed in 2016, some by as much as 50%. At the beginning of 2018, producers faced another Prosecco shortage when rapid changes from hot to cold weather impacted the grape harvest across much of Europe. Soil erosion is increasing at a rapid pace, according to a report undertaken by Padua University earlier this year. Vineyards between Conegliano and Valdobbiadene account for nearly three-quarters of soil erosion, at a rate that's 11 times higher than the Italian average.

The market success that Prosecco currently enjoys didn't happen overnight, and the resolution of these challenges won't be instantaneous, either. There's push and pull in both directions, in both cases, and that deepens the perspective well beyond the bubbles in your next glass of Prosecco."

