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TASTING ARTICLES ITALY VENETO PROSECCO

Premium Prosecco – an oxymoron?

Tim Jackson MW 7 Aug 2020

I have been a Prosecco sceptic. A decade of rapid sales growth, especially in the number-one market, the UK, has flooded many markets around the world with lightweight, often slightly sweet – but above all, cheap – bubbles from this vast north-east Italian zone.



Tim goes in search of superior Prosecco. Arcangelo Piaia took this picture of some of the better sites in this popular region.



In parallel, production of **DOCG Prosecco Superiore from Conegliano-Valdobbiadene**, in the heart of Prosecco country, has also shown extraordinary growth. In 2003 around 33 million bottles of sparkling wine were made there, but this almost trebled to 90 million by 2019.

What I will say, though, is that the explorations of subzones and Col Fondo styles do offer opportunities to take quality higher, even if 'greatness' finally proves elusive. Further, the Rive bottlings do show nuanced differences that offer greater interest to wine lovers. Though I found these nuances more difficult to distinguish Rive by Rive, this does not diminish Rive as an idea. And what can be said, at least as a start, is that there are broadly crisper, floral styles around Valdobbiadene with fuller, tropical ones from the Conegliano area. Nevertheless, local viticultural expert, Prof Diego Tomasi, who has studied Conegliano-Valdobbiadene's zones in depth, described several of the Rive in terms of their physical characteristics, and which chemical and sensory characteristics analyses suggest are typical in their wines.