

Robb Report

FOOD & DRINK / WINE

8 Stellar Proseccos That Will Give Your Favorite Champagne a Run for Its Bubbly

Outstanding sparkling wine at a great value. | BY SARA L. SCHNEIDER ON AUGUST 31, 2020

Prosecco—that affordable (okay, cheap) stand-in for Champagne—is a victim of its success. Brands like LaMarca, with its too-cute single-serve minis in search of a straw and a party, have helped brand the bubbly from northeast Italy as whimsical and low cost. Add to those approachable prices the fact that Prosecco is made in the Charmat method (where the second fermentation takes place under pressure in a tank instead of in the bottle, like Champagne), and almost no one takes it seriously.



But bottles from a small region within the region, about 30 miles north of Venice, deserve more respect. **The region, Conegliano Valdobbiadene, has earned Italy's stamp of highest quality—DOCG**, as opposed to the more ubiquitous DOC—as well as recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Prosecco Superiore produced here offers intensity and complexity of flavors not to be found in more familiar bottles.

Enrico Valleferro, export manager for Adriano Adami, describes the distinction succinctly: The DOCG is hilly, the DOC flat and the number of hours per year that each hectare (roughly 2.5 acres) is worked is 400 to 700 vs. 120 to 150. “The DOCG has micro areas (Rive) that are unique and unrepeatable,” says Valleferro. “Elevation, exposition, soil, temperature swings can vary dramatically from Riva to Riva, mile after mile.” The Grand Cru of the region is Cartize, where vineyards drape slopes so precipitous that even hand work seems life-risking.