

# WINE COUNTRY™

## Sparkling Wine Celebration

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Second Annual Domestic Sparkling Wine Competition!

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## Italian

## Sparkling Wine

The elegant, sophisticated, yet joyous character of Champagne appeals greatly to the Italians. Not surprisingly, a lot of good Spumanti is produced in Italy to satisfy the thirst of its people. The Italians' consumption of sparkling wine is only exceeded by the French and Russians. Surprisingly, few people outside of Italy know much about these wines. Though Asti Spumante is the best known of the Italian sparkling wines, many of the best wineries and winemakers emulate their northern neighbor's wines, using the same types of grapes, grown on similar soils.

Northern Italy, from Piedmont in the west, to the Veneto in the east, is the home of the best of these "Brut" spumanti. Much of these spumanti are produced from Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Bianco (a cousin of Chardonnay), or Pinot Grigio. All these varieties thrive in cooler areas, whether in France, Italy, or the U.S. For making great sparkling wine, the grapes must be first rate, the growing season long, but not too hot, and the soil thin, preferably chalky. The grapes must be picked while still relatively low in sugar (17-19 Brix), with high acid and low pH, yet they must be of sufficient breed and character to produce a flavorful, fresh, and complex wine.

Italian winemakers who concentrate on producing the best Brut spumanti look for grapes from the Oltrepo Pavese area near Pavia, south of Milan, the Trento area of the Alto Adige region north of Verona, the Franciacorta area near Bergamo and the Treviso area of Veneto, north of Venice.

All these areas have several common traits; the vineyards are planted on rolling hills between 500 and 2000 feet in elevation, the soils tend toward the sandy and loamy, often with limestone or chalk noticeably present, yields are low, and the

### BRUT

**Antinori Brut Nature, Cuvée Royale:** Firm mousse, with very small bubbles. Refined and elegant nose, with a hint of yeastiness. Rich, toasty, yet delicate flavors, quite dry and stylish. Not a very fruity wine, but with a long finish and quite like Champagne. \$12.50 - 17.99

**1979 Venegazzu Brut, Méthode Champenoise:** Very fine mousse, with small bubbles. The aroma is just slightly yeasty, the flavor fruity, but a little green. Quite dry, with a refined finish. It is not as rich as the Antinori, but still has excellent flavors and style. \$12.99

**Rosé Ca'del Bosco Brut:** Slight salmon hue from the Pinot Noir used. Fine mousse, very small bubbles. Ripe, rich fruit aromas, with a complex and intense round flavor. Generous, yet austere finish, with a fine touch of yeastiness. A superb rosé sparkling wine. \$20.00

**1978 Ferrari Brut de Brut:** A rounder and riper wine than the Antinori, this wine has rich flavors, is full-bodied and has a mild toastiness from the yeast. Firm mousse, small bubbles and not as austere as the Ca' del Bosco. The slightly perfumed aroma adds depth and complexity and there is a certain resemblance to some of the fuller champagnes like Veuve-Clicquot. \$17.00

**Ca' del Bosco Franciacorta Pinot Zero Dosage:** Very strong mousse, with medium small bubbles. Elegant, austere flavors, with very good fruit. Nice Pinot Noir-Chardonnay flavors, with a very long finish. Not very yeasty, but has a wonderful precise clarity of tastes. For some people, this might be too austere and dry a wine, yet I think it is a superb apéritif wine. Excellent style. \$18-20

**Prosecco Brut di Montello Dei Colli Asolani-Venegazzu:** Made with the Charmat process from Prosecco grapes near Conegliano, this is a delightful, less expansive sparkler. Light perfumed aroma, with a good firm mousse and small bubbles. The flavor is refreshingly dry, slightly fruity, with little complexity, which really does not matter since the wine is so clear and delicate. \$7.50

DECEMBER 1983

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