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ITALIAN SPARKLING WINE TASTING NOTES

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CHAMPAGNE METHOD SPARKLING WINES

NV Cremant, Ca' del Bosco, \$25—(50% chardonnay, 50% pinot bianco) Rich, refined, complex aroma of excellent quality: it has the toasty, yeasty character of the finest Champagnes and plenty of ripe fruitiness. Very supple and richly flavored on the palate, with moderate effervescence (it is a cremant, after all), a very long flavor evolution, and a long, harmonious finish. Simply the finest Italian sparkling wine I've tasted. Quality: ★★★★★ Relative value: Exceptional

1976 Riserva del Fondatore, Giulio Ferrari, \$34—(100% chardonnay) Complex, yeasty bouquet of fine character. Supple, medium-bodied, very complex in flavor (yeasty, smoky, butterscotch, pine), with crisp acidity, and a very long finish. A more austere wine than the generous Ca' del Bosco Cremant, but equally impressive. Quality: ★★★★★ Relative value: Very good

1980 Brut de Brut, Ferrari, \$20—(100% chardonnay) Fine quality aroma: distinct, elegant chardonnay fruitiness with medium yeastiness. Ripe and intense in flavor with a long evolution of flavors on the palate, the wine has excellent balance and a long crisp finish. Quality: ★★★★★ Relative value: Excellent

NV Rosé, Ca' del Bosco, \$23—(50% pinot noir, 50% pinot bianco) Intense, cassis/strawberry aroma; some yeastiness. Rich, cassislike flavors, good depth and balance, long flavor persistence. A ripely-styled, but excellent, rosé. Quality: ★★★★★ Relative value: Excellent

NV Franciacorta Pinot Brut, Ca' del Bosco, \$20—(40% pinot bianco, 40% chardonnay, 20% pinot noir) Fruity, ripe, mildly yeasty aroma; very good quality. Rich and ripe in flavor with good depth and balance; long finish. I prefer this wine to their Dosage Zero bottling, which has no dosage and is aged longer on the yeast. Quality: ★★★★★ Relative value: Excellent

1981 Brut Rosé, Ferrari, \$18—(60% pinot noir, 40% chardonnay) Yeasty, fruity aroma, with good character. Very lively effervescence on the palate with

firm acidity, good fruit, and a long, persistent finish. Quality: ★★★★★ Relative value: Very good

NV Contratto Brut, disgorged in the fall of 1983, \$16—(80% pinot noir, 20% chardonnay) Fruity, good quality aroma with a hint of yeastiness. Medium weight, crisp, and well balanced on the palate; it is long and refreshing on the finish. Somewhat lighter in style than any of the previous wines. Quality: ★★★★★ Relative value: Very good

NV Dosage Zero, Ca' del Bosco, \$20—(40% pinot bianco, 40% chardonnay, 20% pinot noir) Intense and ripe in the nose with strong yeastiness. Dry, full-flavored, and quite rich on the palate; it has a somewhat coarse finish, but good flavor persistence. Quality: ★★★★★ Relative value: Very good

1981 Brut, Decugnano dei Barbi, \$15—(60% chardonnay, 20% trebbiano, 20% verdello) Intense fruity aroma, with a hint of yeast and pine resin. Full flavored and fruity on the palate, it is crisp and balanced, if slightly bitter on the finish. Quality: ★★★★★ Relative value: Very good

1981 Banfi Brut, Villa Banfi, \$13—(pinot noir, chardonnay, pinot bianco) Fruity (pineapple) aroma with a hint of butterscotch. Delicate but intense in flavor, with good balance, firm acidity, and a crisp long finish. Quality: ★★★★★ Relative value: Very good

1982 Rosé di Borgonato, Fratelli Berlucchi, \$10—(barbera, pinot noir) Spicy, fruity nose, with some depth of character. Fairly dry, full, and spicy in flavor, with a crisp, moderately persistent finish. Quality: ★★★★★ Relative value: Very good

OTHER SPARKLING WINES (DRY)

NV Pinot Brut, Valtidone, \$6.50—Rich, fruity aroma of good quality, but no yeast. Ripely flavored and fairly rich on the palate, it is crisp, balanced, and persistent on the finish; approaches a table wine in style. Quality: ★★★★★ Relative value: Exceptional

NV Prosecco, Nino Franco, \$9—(prosecco, verdiso, pinot bianco, pinot grigio) Aromatic nose: apples, bananas, butterscotch. Fruity, crisp, and well balanced on the palate with medium

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