

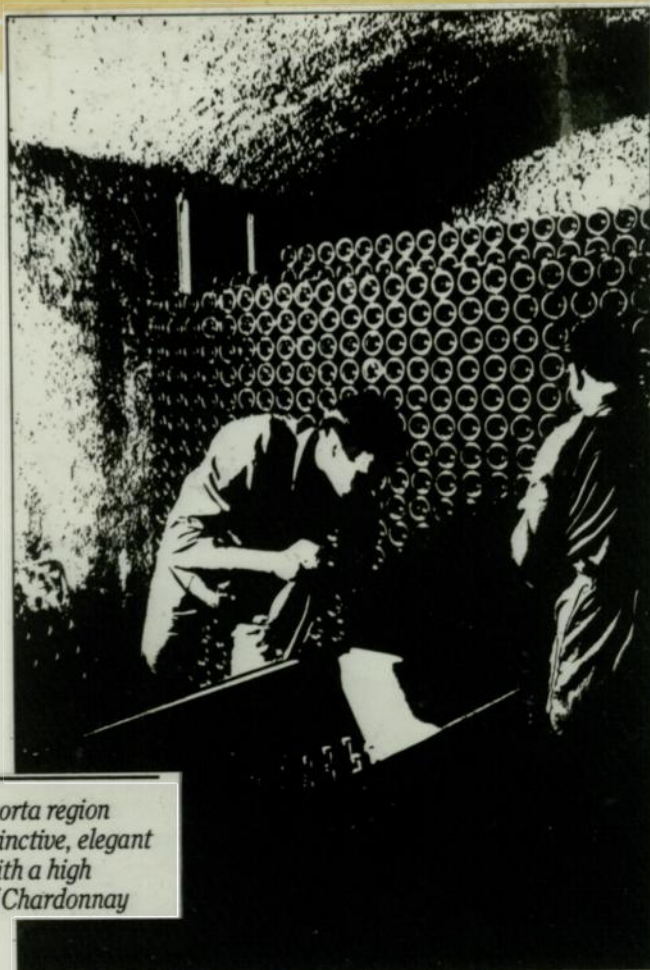
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SPECIAL REPORT

THE WINE SPECTATOR

Italian Sparklers Make a Splash

BY JAMES SUCKLING
Milan, Italy



The Franciacorta region produces distinctive, elegant spumantes with a high proportion of Chardonnay

At Ca' del Bosco the goal is to have a four-year supply in the cellar

'There are about 350 pages of regulation on Champagne. For spumante, we have a page and a half'

— Maurizio Zanella
of Ca' del Bosco



Italian Spumante

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produces 14,000 cases a year.

"I want to have four years of stock in my cellar," said Zanella, standing in his pristine underground vault lined with bottles. "We will give the market a perfect product at that point. The age of the wine will be right."

He said that about 10 percent of the blend for his regular spumantes is from wines reserved in small oak barrels from prior years. He hopes to increase the percentage to 35 percent.

The Wine Spectator
100-Point Scale

90-100	Outstanding
80-89	Very Good
70-79	Good
60-69	Average
0-59	Not Recommended

Tasting Spumante

Outstanding Spumantes

The most outstanding spumantes I tasted were from Monte Rossa, Ca' del Bosco and Ferrari. Here are my tasting notes on various *metodo classico* spumantes, rated on *The Wine Spectator* 100-point scale.

Marchese Antinori Nature (\$18): Light gold, fine bead; light citric, apple nose; dry, apple and pineapple flavors, very light; short finish. Lacks character. 68

Bellavista Brut Grand Cuvée 1982 (\$26.75): Gold, fine bead; lean, grapefruit nose; dry, balanced flavors, good fruit; long, crisp, clean finish. 78

Bellavista Cuvée Brut (\$17.50): Gold, fine bead; light floral nose; dry, clean, crisp, grapefruit flavors; lovely, long, crisp finish. 82

Berlucchi Cuvée Imperiale Brut (\$13): Straw, good bead; light yeast, floral, delicate nose; dry, very round, light apple flavors, very clean and crisp. Very easy to drink. 80

Berlucchi Cuvée Imperiale Pas Dose (\$13): Straw, good bead; light pineapple, floral nose; very dry, austere flavors, some pineapple fruit; short finish. 75

Berlucchi Cuvée Imperiale Brut 1981 (\$14.50): Straw, fine bead; vinous, not much on the nose; dry, medium-bodied, good acidity, nice mouth-feel, round fruity flavors; medium finish. 80

Ca' del Bosco Dosage Zero (\$22.50):

Light gold, fine bead; bread-dough and sweet floral aromas; very dry, but still round on the palate, ripe tropical fruit flavors; long finish. 85

Ca' del Bosco Crémant (\$25.75):

Light gold, fine bead; buttery, floral nose; dry, rich, pineapple and Chardonnay flavors; very rich finish. Lovely and refreshing. 95

Ca' del Bosco Brut (\$21.25):

Light gold, good bead; light ripe apples, delicate nose; dry, full, round, apple flavors, very rich; round, yeasty finish. 90

Freddo Contessa Rosa (\$12.50): Straw, fine bead; light citric, apple, dry, apple, citric, fruit green; short finish. Animate. 68

Gancia Gran Crémant (\$22.50): Straw, fine bead; floral nose; dry, very fruity, light grapefruit flavors; 82

Carlo Gancia (\$10.50): Almost gold; strawberry, dry, rich, stylish, pineapple, slightly bitter; long, fruity 82

Rossi Riserva Monte Rossa (\$12.50): Straw, nice bead; cardboard, wet-wool nose; apple flavors, astringent; some "off" characteristics. 68

Angelo Riccadonna Riserva Privata 1981 (\$12.50): Straw, fine bead; earthy, slight cardboard nose; dry, earthy flavors, good acidity but slightly bitter on the finish, austere. 68

Villa Banfi 1982 (\$13): Straw, fine bead; light, yeasty, floral nose; dry, round flavors, very clean, refreshing, with good, crisp acidity. 88

The following wines will be available in the United States in 1987.

Monte Rossa Brut: Straw, fine bead; light, delicate bread-dough nose; dry, medium-bodied, round, lovely sweet apple flavors, balanced, delicate finish. Elegant spumante. 90

Monte Rossa Non Docato: Pale straw, very fine bead; floral, sweet yeast aromas; very dry, floral flavors, balanced, light grapefruit, marvelous, crisp and clean; crisp finish. 92

La Versa Metodo Classico Brut 1982: Straw, coarse bead; light, fresh cherry nose; dry, medium-bodied, light cherry flavors, very clean, good acidity, long finish. 83

— James Suckling

Spumante From New Releases

Here are several dry Italian *metodo champenoise* spumantes reviewed by the New Releases tasting panel over the past year.

Loredan Gasparini Brut di Vene-gazzù 1982 (\$12): Straw color, coarse beading; tight, yeasty, doughy, Pinot Noir fruit on the nose; austere, crisp, lean, very good complexity and balance, subtle apple, biscuit and yeasty flavors, well-knit; crisp, lean finish. Restrained and elegant in a rich Champagne style. 91

Bellavista Franciacorta Brut Gran Cuvée 1982 (\$27): Yellow, medium beading; fruity, lemony, yeasty, spicy nose; generous, tart, spicy, apple, good acid and balance, assertive style; tart, clean, slightly raw finish. Lacks only finesse. 84

Cinzano Pinot Nature NV (\$7): Very pale straw, sluggish bead; faint lemon-lime nose; off-dry, creamy texture, delicate, ginger and lemon-lime flavors, good balance; simple, citric finish. 84

Cinzano Dry Sparkling Sauvignon Blanc NV (\$7): Pale straw, good beading; smoky, sweet pea, hay nose; off-dry, creamy texture, some Sauvignon Blanc character, nutty, smoky flavors, lean structure, good balance; smoky finish. Unusual but very drinkable. 83

Fazi-Battaglia Brut NV (\$10): Pale straw, moderate beading; light vanilla, creamy, toasty, slightly swampy nose; tart lemon and yeasty bread-dough flavors, crisp with some complexity, turns slightly swampy; lingering finish. A good French-style sparkler without the Champagne price. 82

Cinzano Dry Sparkling Chardonnay NV (\$7): Light straw, medium beading; fruity, spicy, ginger, melon nose; off-dry, tart, clean Chardonnay fruit flavors, good balance; clean, fruity finish. 78

Contratto Spumante Classico Brut Riserva 1981 Dégorgement Spring 1985 (\$19): Pale straw, lazy beading; swampy, nutty, hint of apples on the nose; very mature, some complex flavors of apple and nuts, almost flabby; short finish. Prematurely old. 64

Contratto Spumante Classico Reserve for England NV Dégorgement Spring 1985 (\$15): Pale straw, fine beading; perfumed, oaky nose; austere ginger flavors but not much fruit, simple; ginger finish. Just bearable. 60

Importers

Here are the importers for each of the spumante brands tasted above that are now available in the United States.

Berlucchi: Imported by Berlucchi America Imports, New York.

Carpene Malvolti: Imported by Orion Importers, Manhasset, N.Y.

Marchese Antinori: Imported by Buckingham Wile Co., New York.

Marone Cinzano: Imported by Cinzano USA, Lake Success, N.Y.

Ca' del Bosco: Imported by Winebow Inc., New York.

Fontanafredda: Imported by Dreyfus Ashby & Co., New York.

Ferrari: Imported by Atlas Marketing Inc., Inglewood Cliffs, N.J.

Equipe 5: Imported by Jerrold Jacoby Wine Merchant, San Francisco.

Martini & Rossi: Imported by Renfield Importers, New York.

Villa Banfi: Imported by Villa Banfi USA, Farmingdale, N.Y.

Gancia: Imported by Paterno Imports, Chicago.

Riccadonna: Imported by Allied Wines & Spirits Import Co., Miamisburg, Ohio.

Bellavista: Exported by Neil Empson; various distributors.