

PROSECCO SUPERIORE: MY TOP 20

Following a visit to the picturesque communes of Valdobbiadene and Conegliano, **Rebecca Gibb MW** looks at the latest trends in Italy's most famous sparkling wine and picks out 20 of her top Prosecco Superiore wines to try

The capital city of Azerbaijan was an unlikely location to safeguard the future of the Prosecco Superiore zone, but in Baku in July 2019 the steep hills of Valdobbiadene and the rolling slopes of Conegliano were awarded UNESCO World Heritage status. Verdant terraces curve across its slopes and Inca temple-like mounds, looking down upon more orderly rows of vines on the plains towards Treviso. It is not only higher elevations that distinguish these hillside vineyards from their flatland counterparts (and their UNESCO stamp of approval) but the superior quality of the wines.

It's now 50 years since the zones of Conegliano and Valdobbiadene achieved protection in the form of a denomination, and the success of the region's Glera-based bubbles continues. A total of 556 million bottles bearing the Prosecco name were sold in 2018 with just 90 million – or 16% – hailing from the more prestigious Prosecco Superiore DOCG.

New labelling rules have got rid of the term

Frizzante and introduced an Extra Brut category from the 2019 vintage (less than 6g/L of residual sugar). The latter is a sign of the times: drier styles are increasingly popular but still remain a drop in a sweeter ocean: 60% of Prosecco Superiore is made as Extra Dry (between 12g/L and 17g/L of residual sugar).

These Extra Dry styles – when made with care – are the quintessence of Prosecco's appeal, offering foaming, fragrant, fruity joy. Brut and Extra Brut (someone with a weird sense of humour decided 'Dry' was a good term for the sweetest category) could not exist without improved handling of the Glera grape.

There's nowhere to hide when residual sugar is taken out of the equation, so fruit has to be pristine, and there's no camouflaging any phenolic bitterness or lack of concentration.

Roberto Merlo, viticulturist for Uva Sapiens explains: 'The higher the fruit quality, the less we need the support of [residual] sugar.' Instead, extra time on lees gives Brut wines additional weight, texture and savoury characters.



Rebecca Gibb MW is a wine writer and author. She runs wine events and her own consultancy business, and is the founder of Bamboozled Games

Drusian, 30 Raccolti, Dosaggio Zero, Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore 2018 95

N/A UK www.drusian.it

Francesco Drusian celebrated 30 years making Prosecco with this 30 Raccolti (*raccolti* meaning harvests in Italian) by selecting fruit from 30 different fields to make this stunner. It's a compact, focused style with rich apple flavours and savoury complexity from four months on lees. It has excellent depth and sumptuous texture. Let's hope he wants to celebrate 31 years and more by continuing production of this cuvée. **Drink 2020-2021 Alcohol 11.5%**



Adami, Col Credas Brut, Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore 2018 94

£24.40 Amazon UK, Libiamo Wines

From the steep rocky slopes of Rive di Farra di Soligo, this offers depth and structure as well as delightful aromas that dance around between white flowers and clementines. While light in body, this has innate power that provides razor-sharp briny precision on the finish. **Drink 2020-2021 Alc 11%**



Ruggeri, Vecchie Viti Brut, Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore 2018 94

£25.80-£29.50 Exel, GP Brands, Great Western Wine

Look beyond the bubbles in this old-vine Prosecco and you'll find a base wine of depth and richness. There's primary nectarine and apple fruit but a savoury brioche character that adds a luxurious seriousness to this wine. Hugely satisfying. Includes 8% Verdiso and 2% Bianchetta. **Drink 2020-2021 Alc 12.5%**

Merotto, Cuvée del Fondatore, Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore 2018 93

£19.43 Drinks & Co

From an impressive producer, this wine hails from the Rive di Col San Martino and has a charming fruity nose – expect fragrant peach, pear and orange with a touch of floral. It's light-bodied and pure but there's plenty of underlying power and an almost chewy structure on the off-dry finish (7g/L). **Drink 2020-2021 Alc 11.5%**



Silvano Follador, Metodo Classico Brut Nature, Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore 2017 93

N/A UK www.silvanofollador.it

Organic and made in the traditional method. A harmonious style with only eight months on lees so its crisp and pure aromas aren't dimmed. A dry, refined, saline style with baked pastry notes lingering long on the precise finish. **Drink 2020-2021 Alc 11.5%**

Frezza, Brut, Rive di Colbertaldo, Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore 2018 92

£18.30 Stannary St Wine Co

Light and pure, but make no mistake – there's plenty of intensity despite its delicate nature. Integrated sparkle and lovely balance with just the merest hint of balanced residual and a dry, salty finish with a lingering scented florality. **Drink 2020-2021 Alc 11%**



Garbara, Brut Zero, Valdobbiadene Superiore di Cartizze NV 92

N/A UK www.garbara.it

Hailing from the most expensive zone for vineyard land, Cartizze, this no-sugar style might be rather austere and its tightly wound mousse too intense for generic Prosecco drinkers, but it is focused and powerful with a real sense of purpose. A serious sparkler. **Drink 2020-2021 Alc 12%**

Garbara, Extra Dry, Valdobbiadene Superiore di Cartizze 2017 92

£24.95 Philglas & Swigot

While light in body, this caresses the palate with its well-judged sweetness, concluding clean and pure with a salty edge. Expect an almost glacial purity of white flowers and nectarines. **Drink 2020-2021 Alc 11.5%**





Merotto, Integral, Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore 2018 92

£14.32-£16.68 Italvinus, Vinissimus, Vinumterra

This is the first vintage of this single-vineyard Prosecco, which rests on lees for four months after its second fermentation. This is a delicate, almost weightless and dry (2.7g/L) style; it might be light in body but should not be taken lightly. Refined apple and nectarine flavours and gentle sinew. **Drink** 2020-2021 **Alc** 11.5%

Villa Sandi, La Rivetta, Valdobbiadene Superiore di Cartizze 2018 92

£27.99-£36.50 Bella Vita Shop, The Oxford Wine Co

From the coveted Cartizze slopes, where a hectare (if you could find one for sale, that is) can fetch €1 million, this is made even rarer by being a Brut style (12g/L). Delicate, elegant and magnificently relaxed in its own skin. Expect pure peach and pear flavours, a refined mousse and a rush of fine acidity on the close. **Drink** 2020-2021 **Alc** 11.5%



Antica Quercia, Su' Alto, Indigeno, Conegliano Prosecco Superiore 2017 91

N/A UK www.anticaquercia.it

This Colfondo has a floral scent and lees-derived yeasty nose from this rare, organic Conegliano estate. The second fermentation takes place in bottle and it is not disgorged, so is completely dry, and does not have full clarity in terms of appearance, though all the good stuff remains. A refreshing change. **Drink** 2020-2021 **Alc** 11%



Astoria, Casa Vittorino, Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore 2018 91

£13.95 (2017) Gerard Seel

From the Rive di Refrontolo, a wonderfully perfumed Brut expression, all florals, lemon peel and clementines. Youthful, light yet powerful and saline too. **Drink** 2020-2021 **Alc** 11.5%



Colesel, Brut, Valdobbiadene Superiore di Cartizze 2018 91

N/A UK www.colesel.it

From a whopping 4ha owned by Colesel in the Cartizze sub-zone of Prosecco Superiore, this is a textural style offering depth and richness with a fine creamy mousse. There's a savoury edge and it's just off-dry (8g/L) but well balanced, finishing clean with appetising gourmand edge. **Drink** 2020-2021 **Alc** 11.5%



Conte Collalto, Isabella Brut, Rive di Colalto, Conegliano Prosecco Superiore 2017 91

POA Thorman Hunt

A ripe, round style with lots of lees-derived savoury notes (10 months on lees). Weighty and full with a creamy texture and a very gentle mousse. Balanced with long length, lanolin and almond-like flavours lingering. **Drink** 2020-2021 **Alc** 11.5% ➤





La Farra, Rive di Farra di Soligo Brut, Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore 2018 91

N/A UK www.lafarra.it

A rather more savoury Prosecco expression than you might expect, with a lees-derived pastry appeal and a deep apple flavour. This is a dry style with a fresh burst of acidity and appetising texture on the finish. **Drink 2020-2021 Alc 11.5%**

Silvano Follador, Brut Nature, Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore 2018 91

£20.50 (2016) Meadowdale Wines

A dry and understated style with a gentle mousse. There's substance to this wine, offering depth while remaining light in touch. Expect delicate aromas of nectarine and citrus and a touch of savoury. **Drink 2020-2021 Alc 11.5%**



Andreola, Col del Forno Brut, Rive di Refrontolo, Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore 2018 90

£13 Italvinus, Vinissimus

An off-dry, full and structured style – perhaps due to its clay-based soil. A richly aromatic expression, it's almost tropical on the nose with very creamy flavours on the palate. **Drink 2020-2021 Alc 11.5%**

Bisol, Jeio Brut, Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore NV 90

£12.45-£14.49 All About Wine, Bibendum Wine, Buy Great Wine, GP Brands, The Champagne Co, The Drink Shop, Thrifty Fifty, Vinvm, Wine Direct
All credit to Bisol for this organic wine, which offers a pure, elegant example of delicately sparkling Glera. Classic scents of apple, nectarine, florals and even a hint of orange peel. A delicious, good-value drop. **Drink 2020-2021 Alc 11.5%**



Col Vetoraz, Dry, Valdobbiadene Superiore di Cartizze 2018 90

£18.99 Italvinus, Vinissimus

The wines from the top of the Prosecco pyramid, Cartizze, are typically medium-sweet (despite being labelled as Dry – how wonderfully confusing!) and the high-sodium soils give a saline, linear finish acting as a counterpoint to the residual sugar. There's bright nectarine fruit and florals and a fine integrated mousse. **Drink 2020-2021 Alc 11.5%**

Spagnol Col del Sas, Brut, Rive di Soligetto, Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore 2017 90

£16.99 (2016) Hay Wines

While subtly aromatic and not immediately impressive, persevere with this: it is delightfully textured with incredible delicacy, a lively yet integrated mousse and a mouth-coating finish, suggesting a smart winemaker. **Drink 2020-2021 Alc 11% D**

