

DUELING BUBBLES

A Comparative Examination of the Two Most Popular Sparkling Wines in the World



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CHAMPAGNE,
UNCORKED

THE HOUSE of KRUG
and the TIMELESS ALLURE
of the WORLD'S MOST
CELEBRATED DRINK

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PREFACE

- There is no “duel” between Champagne and Prosecco.
- Champagne and Prosecco are two very different wines with fundamental differences:
 - different grape varieties
 - different growing areas
 - different production methods.
- The origin and evolution of Champagne and Prosecco are independent and parallel rather than imitative.
- There are many examples of wine appellations created in direct imitation of Champagne:

- “What if we were to make a sparkling wine as the French do?” Franco Ziliani to Guido **Berlucchi 1955**. (**Franciacorta**, Lombardy)
- Giulio **Ferrari**, just back from a visit to Champagne in **1902**, set about producing a similar type of wine in his native Trentino. (**Trento Doc**)
- Carlo **Gancia** brought cuttings of chardonnay and pinot noir back from Champagne and founded the Gancia winery in **1950** (Asti) with the express intention of creating Champagne-style wine. **Alta Langa** appellation created in **2002** in the upper Langhe area of Piedmont.
- Josep **Raventós** Fatjó went to the Champagne region in **1872** and returned to Spain to produce a sparkling wine employing the same method, but using native Catalonian varieties. (**Cava**)



- Despite their fundamentally different identities, Prosecco and Champagne have surprisingly many things in common.
- Taking a close comparative look at these commonalities — as well as some of the subtler distinctions — can enhance understanding and appreciation of both wines.

Champagne and Prosecco are undoubtedly the two most popular, most iconic, and most widely recognized sparkling wines in the world, but with very different IMAGES:

Champagne

- Luxury
- Special occasion
- Expensive
- Old fashioned & snooty
- Serious

Prosecco

- Casual
- Everyday
- Inexpensive (cheap)
- Young & hip
- Fun & frivolous

The Popularity Meter — Sales:

Champagne

307.3 Million Bottles (2017)

Prosecco

510.3 Million Bottles (2016)

Clarifications:

- Both Champagne and Prosecco are Protected Designation of Origin appellations (AOC/DOC) tied to a specific production area.
- But, while there is only one Champagne, there are now *three* Prosecco appellations: two of them were created in 2010.



Numbers

2016	<u>Conegliano</u> <u>Valdobbiadene DOCG</u>	<u>Prosecco DOC</u>	Champagne AOC
Production in bottles	93, 382,800	410,000,000	306,096,000
Production area (ha)	7,549	23,250	33,868
Maximum Yield kg/ha	12,500-13,500	18,000	10,400 (max 15,500)
Number of producers	178	350	362 (houses + Coops)
Number of towns	15	556	320
Provinces/Departments	1 (Treviso)	9	5

- Most of the growing areas in the Prosecco DOC are in flat plains and valleys that can be mechanically harvested.
- While the glera vine was grown in diverse areas of Veneto, Friuli, Croatia and Slovenia and a wine called prosecco was sporadically made there, no consistent viable viticultural tradition developed other than in the hills of Conegliano Valdobbiadene.
- Only the wine culture and territory of the Conegliano Valdobbiadene area supports a comparison with Champagne.

I. IN THE BEGINNING...

- While both Champagne and Prosecco achieved their fame and notoriety as sparkling wines, *both were originally still.*
- Both areas are quite far north — Reims 49.25°, Valdobbiadene 45.9° — and cold temperatures following harvest often caused fermentation to stop prematurely.
- While the Italians had no problem with the fizz, the French viewed it as a flaw and worked hard to eliminate it.
- Eventually the bubbly version caught on and became extraordinarily popular, completely overshadowing the still version.

But the still wine never disappeared...

Coteaux Champenois AOC

- Highly praised in ancient times.
- The Contes de Champagne were in stiff competition with the Ducs de Bourgogne.
- Bubbles gave the Champenois a competitive edge, but they kept making the still version as well.
- Originally known as “*Vins natures de la Champagne.*” AOC created 31 August, 1974.
- Can be made from any of the approved grape varieties anywhere within the Champagne growing area.



7 villages that were historically famous for it can have their name above the AOC (Bouzy, Cumières, Aÿ, Sillery, Vertus; Mesnil & Chouilly)

Prosecco Tranquillo DOCG

- “Quiet” Prosecco was included in the very first appellation of 1969.
- Many CV producers make Prosecco Tranquillo though few are marketed and none are currently imported to the US.
- The Prosecco appellation requires that wine must be minimum 85% Glera. While some CV producers make still wines from other native varieties, they cannot be called Prosecco.
- It is likely that the original still wines of Conegliano Valdobbiadene and Champagne will remain overshadowed by their bubbly offspring.
- Still wines offer a clear unadulterated expression of the grapes and *terroirs* that can help better understand the sparkling versions. Plus they are unique and enjoyable in their own right.

1. Conegliano Prosecco Tranquillo DOCG “Gastaldo” 2017 SANFELETTO

- 100% Glera
- Gently rolling hills
- Morainic, alluvial, ferrous soil, typical of Conegliano
- Slight natural *petillance*



- Winery founded in the mid-1800s by Emilio Ceschin.
- Currently managed by grandson Paolo Ceschin and wife Imelda.
- 15 ha (5 owned); about 250,000 bottles/year

2. Colli Trevigiani Verdiso IGT 2016

GREGOLETTO

- 100% Verdiso
- Very steep hills with sharp contours defined by erosion and ravines.
- Loose soil of marls and marine deposits over bedrock of sandstone, compressed clay and conglomerates.
- Gregoletto traces its origins in Valdobbiadene to 1600.
- Specializes in still and bottle-re-fermented wines.



Conegliano

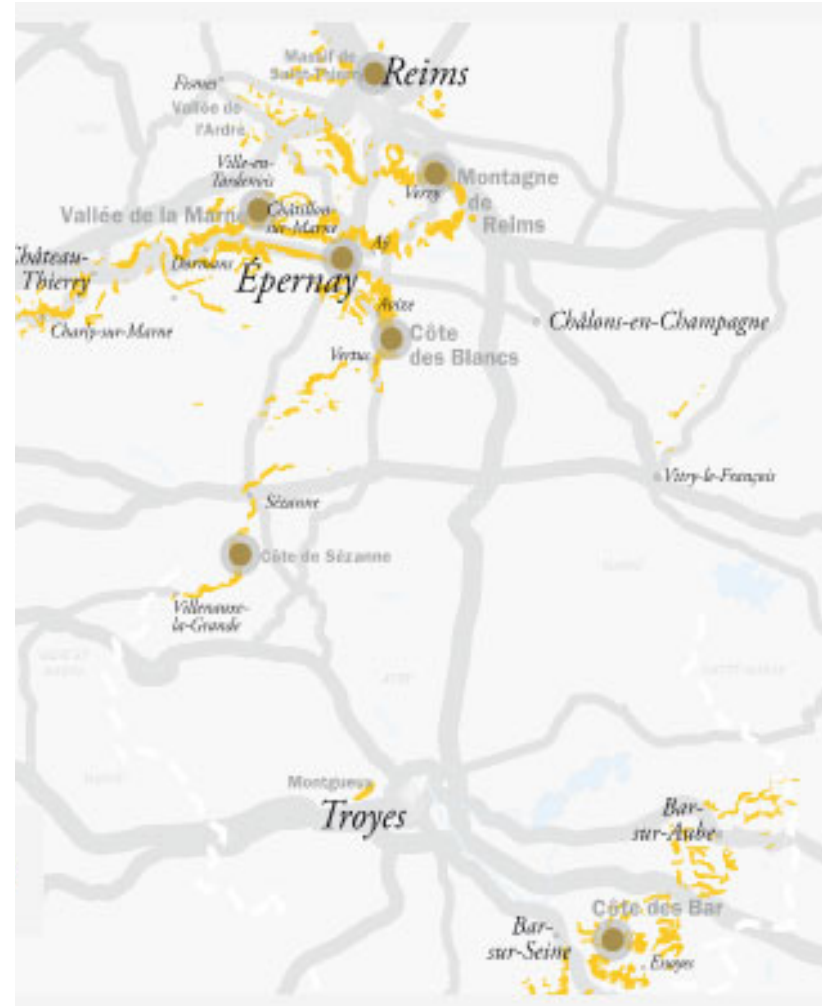


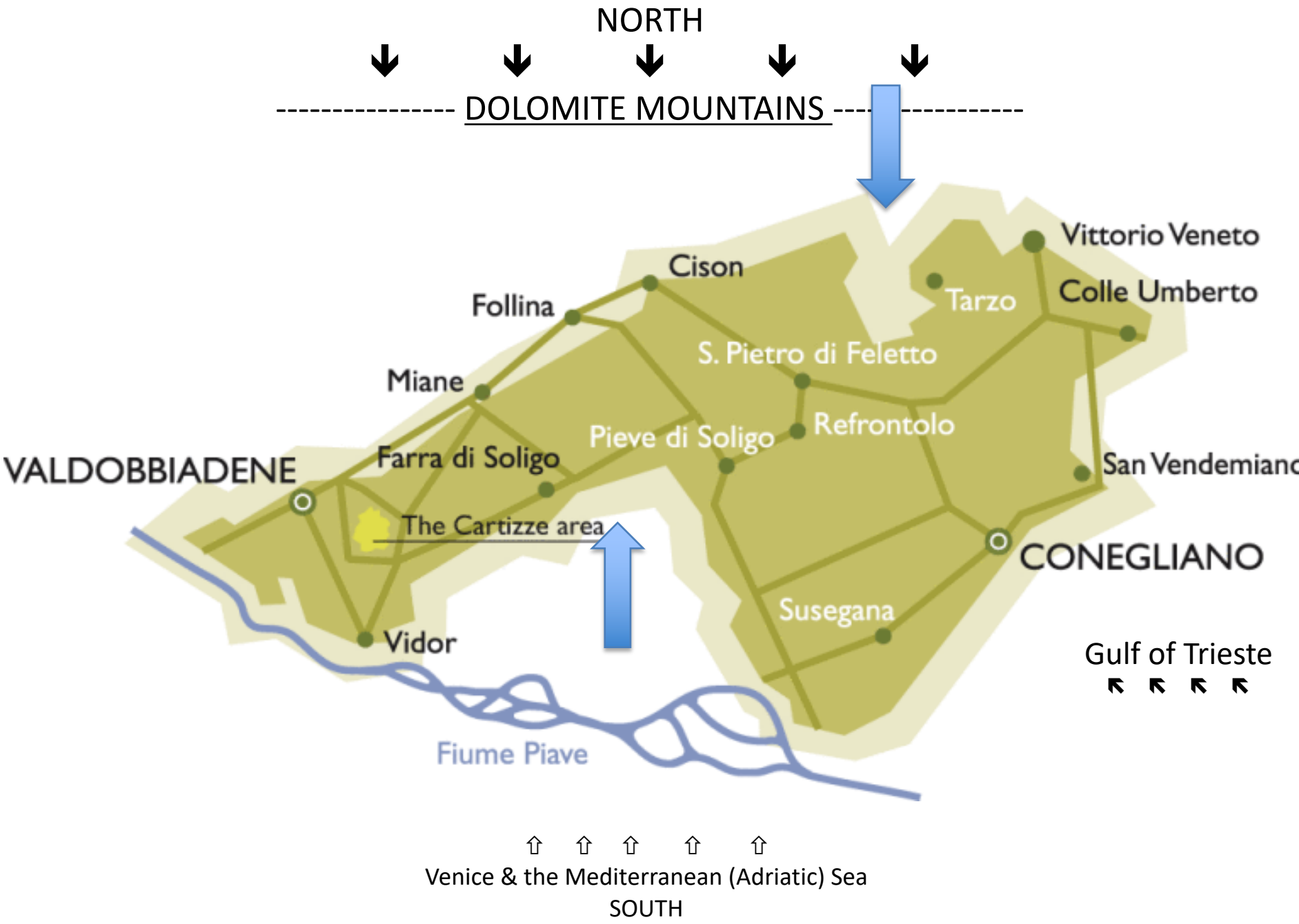
Valdobbiadene



II. GROWING AREA

- Both Champagne and Prosecco have highly diversified, complex growing areas with major distinctions between two parts.
- In Champagne the division is North-South; in Conegliano Valdobbiadene East-West.
- Besides geologic and climatic differences, each area has experienced some social tension between their two major parts.
- Both Champagne and Prosecco began as brand-driven 'placeless' beverages and moved/are moving towards a deeper awareness and expression of their unique, complex terroirs.

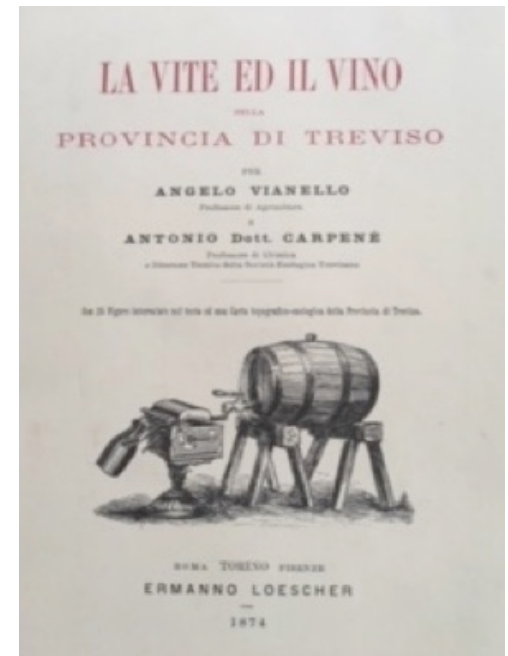




III. 'LOST' GRAPES

- Both Champagne and Conegliano Valdobbiadene were affected by phylloxera — as well as social upheaval and devastating wars — after which both regions focused on specific varieties as their best chance at viticultural survival and success.
- Some grapes got lost in the shuffle while many others disappeared.
- “*Vite e Vini nella Provincia di Treviso*” (1874) mentions 37 white grape varieties in the Conegliano Valdobbiadene area.

Champagne	Prosecco
Pinot Noir Meunier	Glera (Tondo)
Chardonnay	
Arbane	Verdiso
Petit Meslier	Bianchetta Trevigiano
Pinot Blanc (Fromenteau)	Perera
Pinot Gris (Blanc Vrais)	Glera Lungo



3. Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG Extra-Dry 2017 MONGARDA

- 90% Glera, 10% **Perera** and **Bianchetta**
- 'Rive Alte' 3.5 ha vineyard in Col San Martino (Valdobbiadene)
- Calcareous marl and conglomerate rock.
- 38-50+ year-old vines.
- Residual sugar: 13 g/L
- 10 ha of vineyard; 30,000 bottles/year.



LES 7 EXTRA-BRUT

Vignoble : Parcelle située sur le village de Chavot.
Terroir argilo-calcaire. Culture naturelle,
traditionaliste et dynamique.

Assemblage : 10% Pinot Gris - 8% Arbanne
18% Chardonnay - 14% Pinot Noir
18% Pinot Meunier - 17% Pinot Blanc
15% Petit Meslier

Vinification : Fermentation naturelle en barriques.
Elevage sur lies fines pendant 6 mois avec
batonnages réguliers. Sans fermentation
malolactique. Réserve perpétuelle depuis 2005.

Dosage : 4 Gr/l

Dégorgement :

01 - 2013

Appréhender l'identité des cépages oubliés ... 12,5% Vol.



Residual Sugar

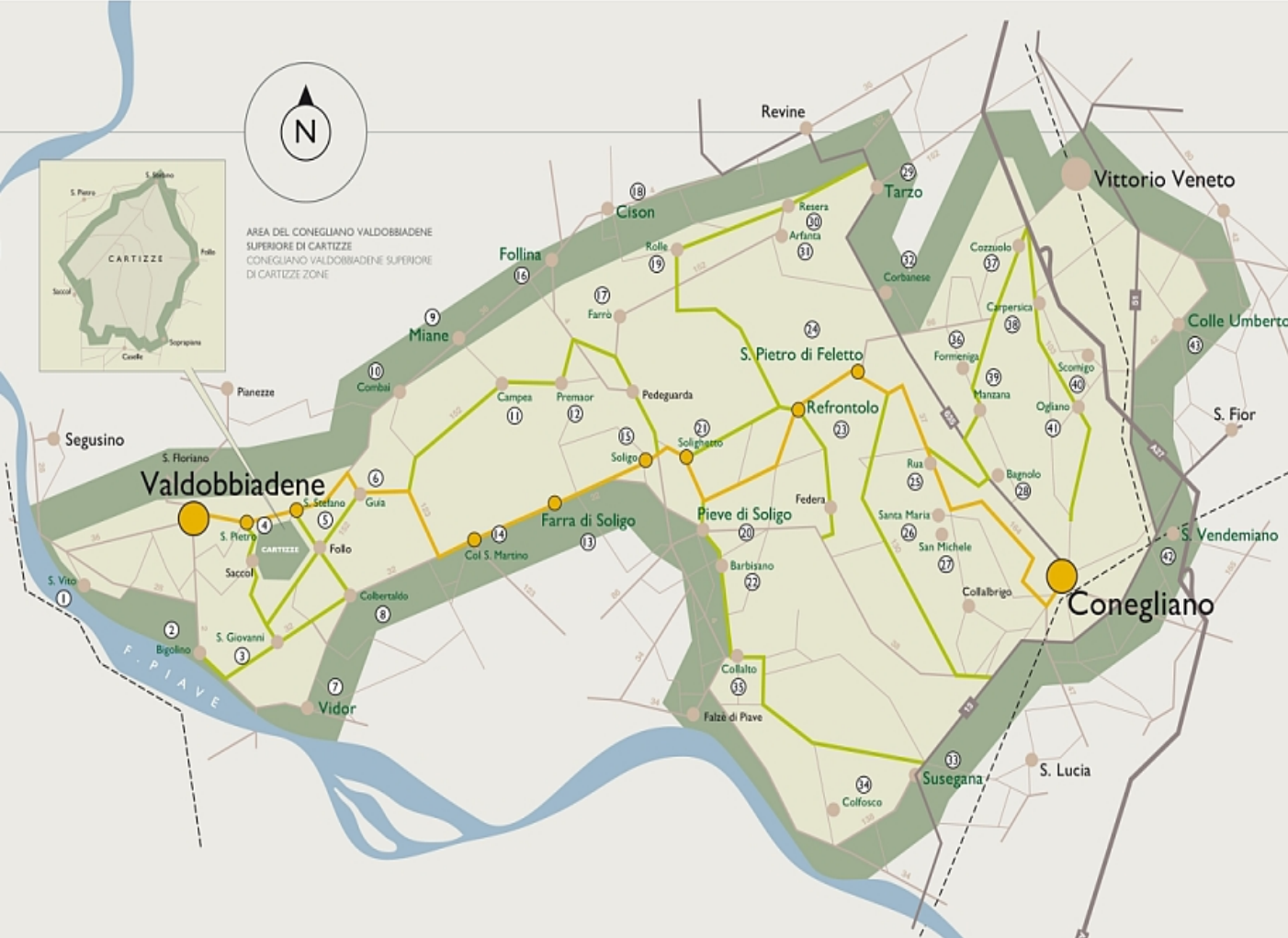
Grams/Lt	CHAMPAGNE
0-3	Brut Nature
3-6	Extra-Brut
0-12	Brut
12-17	Extra-Dry
17-32	Sec
32-50	Demi-Sec
50+	Doux

Grams/Lt	PROSECCO
0-3	Brut Nature*
3-6	(Extra-Brut)
0-12	Brut
12-17	Extra-Dry
17-32	Dry
	*or zero dossaggio

IV. CRUS, CLOS & LIEUX DITS

- Like many other highly diversified viticultural regions, the Champagne and Conegliano Valdobbiadene growing areas are subdivided into numerous increasingly specific subzones:
- In the aftermath of the Champagne Riots of 1911, a system called the *Échelle des Crus* was created that set minimum prices for grapes based on which village they came from:
- Each year a benchmark price per kilo of grapes was set: villages with a Grand Cru rating received 100% of that price; Premier Cru villages received 90-99%, and all others got 80-89%.
- Originally there were 12 Grand Crus (which increased to 17 in 1985) and 44 Premier Crus. The system was officially abolished in 2010.
- In Conegliano Valdobbiadene a system called *Rive* was created in 2009 consisting of 43 districts of towns and hamlets.

LE 43 RIVE DELLA DOCG CONEGLIANO VALDOBBIADENE



COMUNE DI VALDOBBIADENE

1. RIVE DI SAN VITO
2. RIVE DI BIGOLINO
3. RIVE DI SAN GIOVANNI
4. RIVE DI S. PIETRO DI BARBOZZA
5. RIVE DI SANTO STEFANO
6. RIVE DI GUIA

COMUNE DI VIDOR

7. RIVE DI VIDOR
8. RIVE DI COLBERTALDO

COMUNE DI MIANE

9. RIVE DI MIANE
10. RIVE DI COMBAI
11. RIVE DI CAMPEA
12. RIVE DI PREMAOR

COMUNE DI FARRA DI SOLIGO

13. RIVE DI FARRA DI SOLIGO
14. RIVE DI COL SAN MARTINO
15. RIVE DI SOLIGO

COMUNE DI FOLLINA

16. RIVE DI FOLLINA
17. RIVE DI FARRÒ

COMUNE DI CISON D'IVALMARINO

18. RIVE DI CISON D'IVALMARINO
19. RIVE DI ROLLE

COMUNE DI PIEVE DI SOLIGO

20. RIVE DI PIEVE DI SOLIGO
21. RIVE DI SOLIGHETTO
22. RIVE DI BARBISANO

COMUNE DI REFRONTOLO

23. RIVE DI REFRONTOLO

COMUNE DI S. PIETRO DI FELETTO

24. RIVE DI S. PIETRO DI FELETTO
25. RIVE DI RIJA
26. RIVE DI SANTA MARIA
27. RIVE DI SAN MICHELE
28. RIVE DI BAGNOLO

COMUNE DI TARZO

29. RIVE DI TARZO
30. RIVE DI RESERA
31. RIVE DI ARFANCA
32. RIVE DI CORBANESE

COMUNE DI SUSEGANA

33. RIVE DI SUSEGANA
34. RIVE DI COLFOSCO
35. RIVE DI COLLALTO

COMUNE DI VITTORIO VENETO

36. RIVE DI FORMENIGA
37. RIVE DI COZZUOLO
38. RIVE DI CARPESICA
39. RIVE DI MANZANA

COMUNE DI CONEGLIANO

40. RIVE DI SCOMIGO
41. RIVE DI OGLIANO

COMUNE DI SAN VENDEMIANO

42. RIVE DI SAN VENDEMIANO

COMUNE DI COLLE UMBERTO

43. RIVE DI COLLE UMBERTO

In both Champagne and Conegliano Valdobbiadene, within these larger municipal subzones are numerous individual vineyards with their own specific place names.

4. Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG Rive di Colbertaldo “Vigneto Giardino” Asciutto 2016 ADAMI

- Giardino vineyard acquired by Abel Adami in 1920. Some years later he began making a wine exclusively from grapes of this vineyard.
- Presented at the *Mostra dei Vini Tipici d'Italia* (Siena) in 1933. Considered the first single-vineyard prosecco.
- ‘Asciutto’ = Dry: 19-21 g/L
- Shallow dry clay over calcareous rock; steep gradient in an amphitheater configuration.
- Adami produces about 750,000/yr from 50 ha, 12 of which they own.



- Champagne has thousands of historic *lieux dits* (named places), but it has only 21 *clos*.
- *Clos* = “A vineyard enclosed by a wall or hedge or other barrier such that it cannot be crossed by a man on horseback.”
- The assumption is that for someone to build a wall around a vineyard, there had to be something rather special about it.



Clos du Mesnil

5. “Grave di Stecca” Brut 2010

NINO FRANCO

- 100% Glera
- Enclosed vineyard in Valdobbiadene.
- Limestone bedrock with topsoil of clay & alluvial deposits.
- 7 g/L
- Does not bear the DOCG appellation.
- Makes two other single-vineyard proseccos: *Vigneto di San Floriano* and “Nodi” from the Col de Vent vineyard.



6. Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG Brut Nature Rive di San Pietro di Barbozza “Motus Vitae” 2016 BORTOLOMIOL

- 100% Glera. 0 g/L
- Very steep hillsides.
- Charmat Lungo: 10 months sur lie in autoclave + 3 months refining in bottle.
- Yeild: 10,000 kg/ha



- Giuliano Bortolomiol played a key role in revitalizing the CV area after the WW II.
- One of the original founders of the Confraternita di Valdobbiadene (1946) and the group of producers that would later become the official Consorzio (1963).
- Giuliano is also credited with creating
- the first brut prosecco in the 1980s.



V. HOW DRY I AM

The Transition from Sweet to Brut

- Both Champagne and Prosecco began as sweet wines — Champagne was typically *very* sweet indeed.
- The first truly dry Champagne is reputed to have been made by Louise Pommery around 1886. When her British clients tried it they thought it tasted ‘brutish’ and sent it right back.
- Both Champagne and Prosecco made their first entry into the US in the guise of a cocktail: Champagne Cocktail and Champagne Punch during the first half of the 19th century; Prosecco via the Bellini in the 1970s.
- Over time, taste preferences changed and the wines evolved towards a predominantly drier style.
- Today the vast majority of Champagne on the market is brut.
- As little as 5-10 years ago, the vast majority of Prosecco was Extra-Dry or Dry. Today Brut is gaining ground rapidly. The Brut Nature category was officially added in 2016.

VI. A FORK IN THE ROAD:

METODO ITALIANO vs. MÉTHODE CHAMPENOISE

- Both Champagne and Prosecco were born as still wines with a slight natural *pétillance* and a tendency to undergo a spontaneous second fermentation in bottle or cask.
- In both cases (though at different times) the bubbly version caught on and producers started creating it intentionally.
- And this is where the evolutionary paths of the two wines really begins to diverge....

MÉTHODE CHAMPENOISE

By 1750 the bubbly wine from Champagne was in high demand and the industry was booming. But there were some problems...

Problem #1

Sediment leftover after the second fermentation made the wine cloudy and glommed together creating a ropey effect.

Solution

During the first decades of the 19th century Barbe-Nicole Ponsardin ('Veuve Clicquot') and her cellar master Anton Mueller, developed a technique called remuage to get all the sediment into the mouth of the bottle and disgorge it.



Problem #2

Excessively high pressure after the second fermentation caused a high proportion of bottles to explode, creating a tremendous loss of product and a dangerous situation for workers.

Solution

In 1831 a pharmacist named Jean-Baptiste Francois in Châlons-en-Champagne published a treatise containing a formula for how much sugar to add to the wine in order to obtain the desired amount of pressure.

METODO ITALIANO

- 1876: The Conegliano *Scuola Enologica* was established, one of Italy's oldest and most important.
- 1895: **Federico Martinotti**, director of the Experimental Station of Enology in Asti (1872) developed and patented the technique of conducting the second fermentation in large pressurized temperature-controlled receptacles.
- The autoclave technology was adopted almost immediately by the Conegliano Enology School and by early 1900s perfected for use in making sparkling wines in the area.



- The main advantage of the autoclave was the possibility of creating a consistent, stable product that could be transported.
- It was not until the economic resurgence of Italy following WW II in the mid-1950s and '60s that the autoclave gradually became diffused throughout the area of Conegliano Valdobbiadene and the modern day wine industry was born.
- 1948: The Bellini cocktail was created by Harry Cipriani of Harry's Bar in Venice in and bubbly prosecco became a symbol of post-war *Bella Vita* in Italy.
- While the autoclave became the go-to method of production and accounts for the vast majority of prosecco produced, second fermentation in bottle was never completely abandoned and was permitted in the appellation from the very beginning.

7. Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG “S.C. 1931” Metodo Classico Pas Dosé 2009 BELLENDIA

- From the hills of Carpesica (Vittorio Veneto) Northeastern part of the area.
- Gently rolling hills. 180 meters asl.
- Subsoil of mixed clay and chalky limestone of various depth with a thin layer of morainic residue above.
- Part of the must is fermented in temperature-controlled stainless tanks while another part is fermented in wooden casks without temp control.
- Re-fermentation in bottle with 18 months *sul lievito* followed by disgorgement.
- No dosage. 2 g/L



VII. The Grower Revolution

- Both Champagne and Conegliano Valdobbiadene have historically had the same type of structure:
- A relatively small number of commercial wineries that produced the vast majority of wine yet owned a minority of vineyards and
- A large number of grape growers that owned the majority of vineyard territory and supplied the bulk of grapes to the commercial manufacturers, but produced little (if any) wine under their own label.
- This created a natural synergy and interdependence (as well as some conflict) between grower and manufacturer.
- It also often created a brand-driven product in which the person who grew the grapes, as well as the specific place that they came from, was lost.

- In both Champagne and Conegliano Valdobbiadene, most growers transformed at least some of their grapes into wine and many also turned it into sparkling wine. But relatively few of them commercialized it under their own label.
- In Champagne this began to change in the 1960s & '70s and snowballed in the '80s and '90s into a veritable (peaceful) revolution that has radically changed the entire winegrowing region.
- A similar type of change began in Conegliano Valdobbiadene in the 1990s and is continuing to develop to this day.

8. Valdobbiadene Superiore di Cartizze DOCG Brut Nature Metodo Classico 2016

SILVANO FOLLADOR

- 1.3 ha parcel in lower part of Cartizze (Santo Stefano)
- Limestone and clay soil
- Yield: about 10,000 kg/ha
- Predominantly glera with some verdiso, perera and bianchetta.
- Primary fermentation in cement vats with native yeasts; 2nd fermentation with selected neutral yeasts.
- No dosage: 3 g/L
- 3,500 bottles made
- Biodynamic practices but not certified.



- Silvano and sister Alberta re-activated their family winery.
- Instead of maximizing yields they drastically reduced them.
- Among the first to make a brut Cartizze.
- Visionary, committed winegrowers who follow their own path.



VIII. The Missing Link

A Softer Gentler Mousse: *Cremant & Frizzante*

- In both Champagne and Prosecco there is/was an intermediary category of wine in between still and full-sparkling.
- This is a lightly sparkling wine with a softer creamier mousse and more delicate fizz.
- In both cases this version preceded the development of the full sparkling one.
- 1-2.5 bar atmosphere.
- In Champagne this wine was known as *Cremant de Champagne*. The category was officially eliminated in 1994 as part of a deal with other French and European sparkling wine producers: The Champenois relinquished the name to other French producers in return for having exclusive use of the term 'Méthode Champenoise'.

- In Italy it is called *frizzante*.
- This was the original style of prosecco that was intentionally made sparkling in the bottle.
- Two basic ways:
 - making a still wine then adding sugar and/or yeast (*liquor de tirage*) and then bottling it.
 - Temporarily stopping the fermentation midway via lower temperature, bottling it, and then raising temperature in the spring .
- Either way, the sediment was typically left in the bottle (*Methode Ancestrale; Col Fondo*).
- While many producers in the area made it, very few were commercialized and the category was in danger of being removed from the appellation.
- Besides the traditional method, *frizzante* prosecco can also be made in autoclave without sediment in bottle.
- Currently, under new regulations recently added to the *Disciplinare*, the *frizzante* category is slated to be removed from the appellation after 7 years.

9. Valdobbiadene Prosecco Rifermentato in Bottiglia Col Fondo 2016

CÁ DEI ZAGO

- Founded by his grandfather in 1924, Cristian Zago works 6 hectares using biodynamic protocols.
- Makes only bottle-fermented wines, Col Fondo and Metodo Classico.
- Strictly artisan approach; does all the work in vineyard and winery himself.



Suggested Retail Prices

(approximate)

1. SANFELETTO Prosecco Tranquillo DOCG “Gastaldo” 2017	NA
2. GREGOLETTO Colli Trevigiani Verdiso IGT 2016	\$18.00
3. MONGARDA Valdobbiadene Prosecco Extra-Dry 2017	\$17.00
4. ADAMI Valdobbiadene Prosecco “Vigneto Giardino” 2016	\$22.00
5. NINO FRANCO “Grave di Stecca” Brut 2010	\$45.00
6. BORTOLOMIOL Valdobbiadene Prosecco “Motus Vitae” 2016	\$36.00
7. BELLENDIA Conegliano Prosecco Pas Dosé “S.C. 1931” 2009	NA
8. SILVANO FOLLADOR Valdobbiadene Superiore di Cartizze 2016	\$27.00
9. CÁ DEI ZAGO Valdobbiadene Prosecco Col Fondo 2016	\$21.00

IX. The Long and Winding Roads

- Champagne and Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco have undergone very similar evolutionary journeys, though at different times and in different places.
- And these journeys continue:
- CHAMPAGNE: Where there was once bitter hostility and antagonism between the North and the South and small farmers and large *maison*, there is now a sense of mutual respect and shared purpose, focusing on taking care of the land, high standards of quality, and expression of its unique terroirs, with an emphasis on TERROIR.
- Champagne is currently undergoing a comprehensive re-evaluation and revision of the growing and production areas, which have not changed much since the creation of the first appellation in 1936.
- The period of public hearings ended several years ago and the group of experts is now carefully considering what to add and what to remove. It is estimated that about 4,000 ha of vineyard ha will be added, though the overall perimeters of the area will not change.

- The journey of Prosecco took an abrupt turn in 2009 with the creation of the new Prosecco DOC.
- Had the DOC appellation not appeared on the scene, it is entirely possible that a similar emphasis on the particularities of the growing area would have developed, as it did in Champagne.
- But having an entirely new wine called simply '*Prosecco*' appear when it did, flooding the market with a vast majority of bottles at a lower cost, created tremendous confusion and confirmed most peoples' preconceived notion of what Prosecco is (and isn't).
- After the banalization of Champagne in the 1960s-1970s and the explosion of other sparkling wines on the international market, Champagne created a renaissance through the RM revolution, a new emphasis on terroir and the things that make Champagne unique from any other winegrowing area.
- Unless Conegliano Valdobbiadene can embrace its unique complex growing area, capture it in the bottle, AND communicate the distinction to consumers, the future could be difficult indeed.

THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

