



BEAUTIFUL
ITALIAN BUBBLES
OF NORTHERN ITALY

FRANCIACORTA | LOMBARDY

PROSECCO | VENETO

By Lauren Maines, What's Wine Is Yours

Photo Credit: Demetrius Fordham

The holidays are in full swing and nothing symbolizes festivity and cheer more than an elegant, long-stemmed glass of sparkling wine. Whether you are a guest at a glamorous cocktail party or enjoying the comfort of your living room sofa with the faint tune of Bing Crosby's, "White Christmas" in the background, those beautiful bubbles glisten in your glass like Christmas lights beneath freshly fallen snow. This holiday season, as you peruse the selection of bottles from your local wine purveyor, I encourage you to step into the Italian isle(s) and experiment with the splendor of Italian sparkling wines.

When considering a sparkling wine from Italy, Prosecco usually comes to mind. Without a doubt, Prosecco is Italy's most popular bottle of bubbles and a guaranteed crowd pleaser. How about another glitzy option for bringing the spirit of Italy to your holiday celebration? Look no further than Franciacorta! What is the difference between these two charismatic and captivating Italian sparkling wines? I'm glad you asked...

Franciacorta - If you are unfamiliar with the sparkling wine, Franciacorta, do not fret! It is completely conceivable if you and fellow consumers around the globe have not heard of or enjoyed this wine. Franciacorta is produced in Lombardy, a region located in northwest Italy. There is historical evidence that wines have been produced in the region of Franciacorta since the 16th century! However, the current style of sparkling wine that we have grown to love was first produced in 1961. The amount of Franciacorta produced annually (17.5 million bottles) is considerably less when compared to Champagne (300 million bottles per year) and Prosecco (150 million bottles per year.) One thing is for sure, Italians love their Franciacorta. So much so that 85% of the wine that is produced is sold in Italy!

Production Method: Franciacorta is produced in the same manner as Champagne. This method is known as, "Method Champenoise" or "The Traditional Method," and involves a secondary fermentation process that takes place in the bottle. **Grapes:** Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Pinot Blanc

Flavor Profile: Franciacorta is typically dry and exhibits the "yeasty" character of Champagne. It typically exhibits "nuttinness" and "bread-like" flavors along with lemon & peach. Franciacorta is rich, creamy, & complex.

Prosecco - Prosecco is a sparkling wine produced in the Veneto region of Northeast Italy. The origins of Prosecco can be traced back to the ancient Romans. According to the famous Roman author, Pliny the Elder,

the Prosecco grape was used to make the Pucinum wine of ancient Rome. This wine was the beverage of choice for Roman dignitaries who believed that consuming this beautiful fermented juice would allow them to live longer lives. Prosecco is also the sparkling wine featured in the traditional Bellini cocktail.

Production Method: Prosecco is produced using the, "Charmat" process. Using this method, the wine undergoes a secondary fermentation process in tanks, rather than bottles. **Principle Grape:** Galera (formerly called "Prosecco" but changed in 2009 to eliminate confusion between the name of the grape and the name of the wine.)

Flavor Profile: Most Prosecco is typically dry, fruity, and simple. It exhibits fresh fruit flavors of green apple, pear, and honeydew.

Sparkling wines add a bit of glamor to any celebration. But remember, THE most important thing that you need to know about the wine that is in your glass is whether you like it or not! Wine should not be intimidating, scary, or snobbish. Enjoy the beauty of the wine that is in your glass, whether it is Franciacorta, Prosecco, or your favorite Merlot. My goal is to always enhance your appreciation of wine and in my opinion, mother natures most prized possession, the grapevine.

Warm wishes for a joyous holiday season and a New Year filled with health, happiness, and full wine glasses.

Cheers!

What's In My Glass? As I sit at my desk with the beautiful amber flames of the fireplace in the background, I am sipping on the beautiful and elegant, **Bellavista, Franciacorta, Vendemmia Satèn, 2014.** The nose begins soft and elegant with a just a hint of yeast. As I give it time to open, the nose evolves and the complexities are illuminated with hints of honey and peach. Hold in your mouth for a few moments and experience the froth-like feeling that I envision as the white foam of the ocean tide as it softly graces the sand. Lemon zest and the softest essence of peach stimulate the palate.

Girls Gone Grape Recommendations:

Ricci Curbastro, Franciacorta, Satèn, Brut

Raphael Dal Bo, Prosecco, (Organic Products) available for purchase at, Liquor Cabinet Wines & Spirits, Windsor, CO