

WINETALK

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WINE CONNOISSEURS CLUB OF HAMILTON

Mar 2019

Coming Functions

Mar 10	Wines I never purchase
Apr 14	Proposed winery tasting
May 12	AGM (Mother's Day)
June 9	
July 14	

LAST OF THE SUMMER WINE

Oh no! Summer is almost over, so before we put the sun block and jandals away for another year we have to make the most of the lovely summer wines we have been enjoying over the last few months.

As mentioned in the last Winetalk, the three fastest growing beverages in New Zealand are Rosé, Craft beers and Prosecco. So let's pack our bags, jump on our Vespas or into our Ferraris and head around Italy to find out about the most famous sparkling wine in that country and the fastest growing wine here and in Australia.

We have to fly into Venice to go to the source of the grape and the famous region in Italy for growing the Glera grape which is what Prosecco is made from. It is the north east region about an hour from Venice in the cooler climates of Veneto and the Friuli-Venezia Giulia where the Glera grape (originally known as Prosecco) is more famous than Michelangelo. The name Prosecco is derived from the Italian Village Prosecco near Trieste where the grape and wine originated. It is a beautiful area with undulating vine covered hills, ancient treasures and churches and everything that Italy has to offer in food, culture and the arts. They have an annual Prosecco festival where vineyards all over the area open their doors to tastings, music, food and lectures all in honour of the humble Glera grape. There are approximately 150 million bottles produced each year from the area with levels of quality depending on the different regions there. They come under various appellations of generic Prosecco - there are over 100 Prosecco DOCG labels (Denomination of Controlled and Guaranteed Origin) so it shows how important their Glera is. The Italians love their Prosecco and drink it with just about anything at any time of the day.

Major Wine Regions of Italy



Until recently nearly all the Prosecco we drink in New Zealand was imported from Italy but Brown Bros and Jacobs Creek in Australia are now interlopers in the Glera grape industry. However, I have found out through my investigations and Bob Campbell that a Gisborne Vineyard, Spade Oak Wines, is propagating the Glera. So I investigated and rang owner and winemaker Steve Voisey.

He is in the throes of propagating the Glera grape and is intending to plant it next year. Steve says that Prosecco is the fastest growing seller in Australia and there are many smaller vineyards that are starting to grow the grape there. Spade Oak Wines have some unusual wines and if you go to the website you can see the range he grows. He is also interested in visiting our wine club sometime so we are in contact over that. We don't actually drink a lot of wines from Gisborne except their Chardonnays so it will be an exciting new

experience to taste a few different varieties. Steve said he will see how the Glera grape goes and if it is going to be a venture worth going for he will be producing Prosecco in a few years.

HOW DO YOU CHOOSE A PROSECCO?

Prosecco can be Spumante (sparkling wine), Frizzante (semi sparkling) or Tranquillo (still wine) although the Tranquillo is the least popular. The sweetness of the wine is indicated by "Brut", "Extra Dry" or "Dry" (sweetest). It depends on your taste and your budget. They range in price from \$14 - \$50.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHAMPAGNE AND PROSECCO?

Champagne comes from the Champagne region of North East France and is made with Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier grapes. Prosecco comes from the North East Veneto region of Italy and is made from the Glera grape.

Champagne is made by the Methode Traditionelle method in which the sparkles are created in the bottle. Prosecco carbonates in stainless steel tanks by the Charmat method.

The difference in price is because of the methods of production. Prosecco needs less time and a less intensive process hence the cheaper price.

The market reveals that Champagne is brought for special occasions rather than an everyday drink. Prosecco is a drink to be enjoyed every day at any time of the day.

FLAVOURS are different. Champagne has citrus notes, white peach, white cherry, almond and toast. Prosecco is sweeter with tastes of green apple, honeydew melon, pears and fresh cream.

FOOD matches are also different. Champagne and oysters and fish and chips, a match made in heaven. Prosecco likes chicken, tofu, seafood, mushrooms, creamy sauces and also spicy curries and Vietnamese, Thai and other south-east Asian foods.

So they may both be sparkling wines but their subtle differences set them apart.

However if you are looking for a food-friendly, guest-friendly, easy going, value-conscious festive sparkling wine, you will be hard pressed to do better than a Prosecco.



BELLINI COCKTAIL

This is a famous Italian cocktail created in Venice in the 1930's at Harry's Bar by Bartender Giuseppe Cipriani. It was named after the famous Italian Renaissance painter Giovanni Bellini.

Put some peach puree in a sparkling glass and pour Prosecco very gently over it. About one third peach to two thirds Prosecco. Garnish with thin peach slices. Italians use a mixture of white and orange peaches pureed but one variety will do. It is delicious and famous now around the world! Very nice with breakfast and your cereal or pastries apparently.

WHAT I HAVE TASTED THIS MONTH

In the Prosecco range I have been drinking Graham Norton Extra Dry Sparkling Italia. Made to his own specifications with Glera grapes from a DOCG Region, it is light, fruity and a welcome addition to any picnic, party or to sit and watch an evening with him. He is actually producing a Sauvignon Blanc from Marlborough and others in his Invivo label which he actually drinks with his guests on his show. There is a wide range of Proseccos and some of the bottles are very ornate and over the top in gold, silver and bright colours. An Italian tribute to the contents.



Got the bargain of the month at Pak n Save. Was in shopping and naturally visited the wine aisle. The wine lady was filling trolleys with "END OF LINE" items. Talk about bees flying in around the honey pot. I managed to pick up some Brancott Estate 2018 Chardonnay for would you believe \$7.99. Checking around Countdown it is still selling there for \$22, so I feel a bargain was REALLY made. It is lovely and buttery.

Sorry to hear that Raymond Chan has died. He was a very well-respected wine critic and writer, wine consultant and international judge. He also wrote columns in the Listener and the NZ Herald. You will have noticed those little gold circles on the wines he had awarded points to out of 100. They were and still are a yardstick for purchasing wine. If Raymond Chan was on the little gold circle and gave it a 95 out of 100 it was a goodie. His memorial service is fittingly being held at Ata Rangi Vineyard in Martinborough. Friends are invited to bring along their favorite wines to honour him. Isn't that a lovely touch for a man who was so passionate about our wines.

Enjoy the last of the summer wines, the bubbles, the Rosés, and the Proséccos and look forward to cooler weather and a change to some exciting Autumn wines.

Salute to Prosécco.

Ciao,

Gay Main

