

TREND

# Make — mine a PROSECCO!

The champagne days may have ended in Ireland, but from brunch to barbecues, Prosecco has become a staple in our glasses. Here, **CORINNA HARDGRAVE** tells you how to pick the best bubbles

Ireland, it would seem, is positively bubbling over this year and it looks like we could be hitting Celtic Tiger volumes when it comes to the fizz in our glasses. Kevin O'Callaghan, the wine buyer at SuperValu, says the only way it's up when it comes to sparkling wine — and Prosecco is the darling of the frothy set, sitting comfortably in the No. 1 spot. And it's not just the Irish who are loving it. In 2006, Italy was producing an impressive 50 million bottles; last year that figure was close to 500 million bottles.

So what makes the Italian bubbly so special? Well, apparently, there's nothing new about its charms. Going back to the 15th century, the debonair Casanova was all too aware of the seductive powers of Gatta wine (as Prosecco was known back then) and found that serving it with oysters was the perfect way to add a bit of merriment to a tête-à-tête with a beautiful young woman. Considering that he was reputed to start his day with 50 oysters for breakfast, we can assume that a fair amount of Prosecco — as well as some quantity of giggling maidens — was devoured.

For many, the attraction of Prosecco is the fact that it is much softer on the palate than Cava or Champagne. With floral perfumes and notes of summer peaches and pears wafting from its frothy crown, there is a fruity sweetness that makes it easy to drink. And, of course, the price adds to the appeal.

The thing to remember here is that there are two types of Prosecco. The Spumante Prosecco is fully sparkling and has a Champagne-style cork that pops when you release the wire cage, and this means that it falls into the luxury bracket, attracting the full whack of tax for a luxury tipple.

However, the other style of Prosecco is called Frizzante, it's semi-sparkling and because it's bottled under less pressure and doesn't require a Champagne cork, it hits in at the lower still-wine tax rate. Price is generally a good indication of whether a bottle is Frizzante, and ranges from about €10 to €15; but another way to check it, apart from reading the label, is to look closely at the bottle closure. If it's Frizzante, it will either have a standard straight cork tied with a rustic looking string called a "spago" (you will need a corkscrew to open it), or a screw top. But remember, this one has less fizz.

As with all things wine, there's more, and as ever, it comes down to terroir. Look out for the letters DOC (Controlled Designation of Origin) or D.O.C.G. on the label — they're the Italian classifications which cover the nine provinces in northern Italy where Prosecco can be made.

DOCg indicates Proseccos of a higher quality. The additional "G" stands for "Garantita", and yes, you guessed it, that means "guarantee". Grapes for the DOCG Proseccos are grown on a clearly defined area on the hills of northern Veneto, close to the Alps which is known as the Conegliano-Valdobbiadene region. Because all of these vineyards are on steep slopes, the work with the vines has to be done by hand, and that guarantees a higher level of quality; but there are also some stringent rules and the wines must pass an official tasting test by a government-licensed committee.

It may sound a bit complicated, but just remember these two things. The least expensive bottles are generally Frizzante, and Prosecco Superiore or DOCG on the label means high quality.

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**VALDOBBIADENE PROSECCO SUPERIORE D.O.C.G. EXTRA DRY, €12.99**

*Tip: from Aldi*  
A particularly good price for a D.O.C.G. Prosecco, floral aromas on the nose are followed with autumn apples on the palate and a touch of crisp acidity

**CASA DI MALIA FRIZZANTE DOC TREVISO, €15.99**

*Tip: from Kelly's of Clontarf, Sweeney's of Glasnevin, all Dublin, and La Touche of Greystones. Co Wicklow*  
An organic Frizzante with lasting bubbles, the fresh apple flavours get a nice zip from a touch of lemon on the palate



**COLDIGLIANO PROSECCO SPUMANTE D.O.C. VENETO, €23.95**

*Tip: from Searsons, Donnybrook Fair, Drinkstore, Stoneybatter all Dublin, No. 21 Blarney, Co Kerry; The Parting Glass, Enns Kerry, Co Wicklow, Objekt, Newcastle West, Limerick and searsons.com*  
Beautifully balanced, this fresh, crisp Prosecco has clean citrus flavours gilded with delicate fruit and floral notes

**GRIFON PROSECCO FRIZZANTE DOC TREVISO, €9, REDUCED FROM €11.99**

*11.5pc, from SuperValu and Centra*  
Super affordable and approachable, this easy drinking Frizzante-style Prosecco is perfect for cocktails, just add peach purée to create a classic Bellini



**MIONETTO D.O.C. TREVISO M.O., €19.95 (REDUCED FROM €21.95)**

*Tip: from O'Briens*  
Elegant and from one of the top Prosecco wineries, in the Veneto this has persistent bubbles and a good balance of ripe apple, citrus notes and minerality

**MONTICELLA PROSECCO SUPERIORE D.O.C.G., €23.50**

*11.5pc, from Marks & Spencer*  
Produced by the Dal Bianco family, this aromatic, single-vineyard Prosecco has delicate touches of lemon, with pear and apple flavours



**AVILLA ARFANTA PROSECCO FRIZZANTE D.O.C. TREVISO, €12.95**

*10.5pc, from Mc Cabe's, Blackrock, Searsons, Monkstown, and searsons.com*  
A soft, off-dry Frizzante with fruity apple flavours. Drink on its own or drop in a fresh raspberry for an extra zing

**TESCO FINEST VALDOBBIADENE D.O.C.G., €17.99**

*11.5pc, from Tesco*  
Crisp and lively, this has a refreshing wash of white peaches and ripe juicy pears. A good aperitif as the sun goes down

## 10 Proseccos to try

**PERLAGE PROSECCO SPUMANTE BRUT ZHARPI D.O.C. TREVISO, €24.95**

*11.5pc, from Morton's of Galway, Bradley's, Cork, Searsons, Dublin, and searsons.com*  
An organic Prosecco suitable for vegans, full flavours of apple and apricot are balanced with good acidity

**RIZZARDI FRIZZANTE PROSECCO D.O.C. TREVISO, €14.95, SPECIAL OFFER 2 FOR €25**

*Tip: from O'Briens*  
Refreshing Frizzante with lively pear and peach flavours from the highly-respected Rizzardi winery. Also available at O'Briens is the fully sparkling Rizzardi Extra Dry Prosecco for €17.95 (reduced from €20.95)

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