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THE CLUB'S GUIDE TO... PROSECCO



Ross Clarke
@theguir

It seems you can't go anywhere these days (certainly not in [London](#)) without seeing [Prosecco](#) on the drinks menu. But there's much more to this Champagne challenger than meets the eye – and the palate. Food writer and *Club* contributing editor Ross Clarke visits northern Italy to find out more about the rising star of Italian bubbles

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1 What is Prosecco?

Without wishing to state the obvious, it's a type of sparkling wine, but also a small town just above Trieste (from which the drink gets its name). Like wines and other glasses of bubbly, there are drier and sweeter versions, and its taste should not only be well balanced between acidity and sweetness, but also fresh on the nose with bright fruity flavours, including green apple, white peach and tropical fruits. With more to Prosecco than that glass you toasted the bride and groom with recently, there's even a non-fizzy version - look out for *tranquillo* on the menu. And don't be fooled by the names either, extra dry is actually the sweetest and *extra brut* the driest.

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2 Where does it come from?

The Prosecco DOC region stretches from Vicenza to Trieste, Belluno to Padova – but its heart lies less than an hour's [drive](#) from [Venice](#) in the province of Treviso. The capital, also called Treviso, is a somewhat undiscovered city characterised by canals, terracotta-hued buildings and cobbled streets. It is less crowded than its more touristic neighbours, but come nightfall the central square and surrounding streets burst with life. Head to Prosecceria dell'Oste on one of the side streets leading from Piazza dei Signori and work your way through the labels on its Prosecco bottle-lined wall. Rest your head at the effortlessly chic [Maison Matilda](#).



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3 How do I get up-close to the vines?

Wine tourism is still relatively low in the region, but most wineries are happy to invite you in for a tour and tasting – just drop them a line to arrange a visit. First stop? Make for the

town of Conegliano to the [Oenological School of Conegliano](#) – Italy's oldest – and drop by [Museo Manzoni](#) to learn about Prosecco's history. Around this charming little town you'll find many wineries, such as [Villa Marcello](#), run by the Marcello family from their ancestral home.



4 Where can I find the best tasting rooms?

At the agriturismo estate of [Borgoluce](#), gourmands will appreciate the fresh buffalo Mozzarella, salami and cured meats as they sup sparkles. Venture west to explore the area considered the best for Prosecco grapes, the hill of Cartize. Stop for sampling at [Ruggeri](#) before enjoying lunch at the curious Osteria senza Oste, a self-service stop where you can buy nibbles and Prosecco from a vending machine at the top of the hill, with vineyards views. End the day at the chic and sleek [Villa Sandi](#) estate (*pictured*), with its 1km of tunnels – some secretly excavated during the world wars – which hold over 1.2 million bottles. Take respite at [Agriturismo Relais Dolcevista](#).



5 And if I can't make it to Italy?

Prosecco is exported worldwide, with the UK the biggest importer – its consumption has now outstripped Italian. In London, try Cantina Colli Euganei Prosecco Extra Dry DOC at

new out-of-the-ordinary Italian in [London](#), try Cantina Con Legame Prosecco Extra Dry DOC at [Caravan King's Cross](#) as you brunch on polenta ricotta hot cakes, stewed plums, maple yoghurt cream and pecans. Or try Prosecco Brut DOC Millesimato from Villa Marcello as you nibble on Italian small plates such as squash, sage and Parmesan crochettes at [La Goccia](#), Covent Garden (*pictured*).



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