

David versus Goliath

Ancient and modern

Franciacorta is an anomaly on the Italian wine scene. In geographical terms, the designated area is rather small, encompassing 16 municipalities and 240 square kilometers east of Brescia. The Milan-Venice autostrada cuts through its southern

section and millions of drivers cross the territory every year without even being aware of the fact. Amidst all of the vehicles on one of Italy's most heavily-trafficked highways, you need a pretty quick eye to glimpse the vineyards at the foot of Monte Orfano, whose 451 meters' elevation makes

it the highest point in the area. But you leave the autostrada at Palazzolo, Rovato or Ospitaletto and plow determinedly through the charmless industrial zone on either side of the busy lanes before ascending in the direction of Lago d'Isèo, you are suddenly plunged into an utterly unexpected land-

scape. Here the enchanting countryside proffers tranquil hills whose gentle slopes are checkered with medieval hamlets, magnificent Renaissance villas and romantic rural churches standing in isolation alongside the fields, while everywhere are neat-rowed vineyards. It was not always like this.

David

NOT YET IMPORTED
estimated shelf price if imported

\$33

Gruppo Italiano Vini
Trento DOC Talento
Brut "Conti D'Arco - Cuvée
Andrea D'Arco"

With its base wine a classic assemblage of chardonnay and pinot nero,



sourced from hillside vineyards in Trentino, Brut Cuvée Andrea D'Arco is a non-vintage Talento that matures in the bottle sur lie for over two years. Appearing straw yellow with scintillating pale green highlights, it produces a rich, full mousse of delicate bubbles and a fairly lengthy, delicate bead. A spacious bouquet is quite emphatic, foregrounding notes of citrus nicely smoothed by nuances of hedgerow. Quite noticeable in the background are impressions of puff pastry from the ageing on the yeast, enhanced by crisp notes of dried fruit and nuts and a pleasant touch of pungent balsam on the finale. In the mouth, a generous mousse emerges immediately, effectively complementing the refreshing acidity. A leisurely finish reprises the bouquet's aromas, showing tasty fruit.

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NOT YET IMPORTED
estimated shelf price if imported

\$35

Martini
Spumante Brut
Metodo Classico "Riserva
Montelera - Cuvée Nobile"

Riserva
Montelera
Cuvée
Nobile is a tribute to the Rossi di



Montelera family, who founded the winery. Alongside the pinot nero in the blend, pinot bianco takes the place of the expected chardonnay. All of the grapes were grown in the Oltrepò Pavese and were harvested slightly early to preserve their crisp acidity; the wine spent 24 months maturing on the yeast. It shows a rich, full mousse of pin-point bubbles and a dense, long-lasting bead. Its appearance is a deep straw yellow, enlivened by brilliant gold highlights. A dense, generous nose offers prominent scents of hedgerow interwoven with fruity notes of pear as classic crusted bread infuses a broad background. The attack is admirably crisp, with a zesty vein of acidity well supported by a body that is both sturdy and full. An appealing hint of fresh greens lifts the fruity finish, which unveils notable length and complexity.

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\$38

Arunda
Alto Adige DOC
Spumante Talento Brut

Arunda, whose name evokes a mountain in the Valle d'Aosta, produces solely classic method sparkling wines, most of them Talento. This one, a blend of chardonnay, pinot bianco and pinot nero, boasts



a rich, dense mousse of delicate bubbles that takes its time to subside, giving rise to a generous, long-lasting bead, and a shimmering, gold-flecked straw yellow. A few moments are enough to reveal the full charm of its bouquet in an prodigious medley of impressions. First to emerge is a delicate fragrance of puff pastry, the result of two years sur lie, which gradually yields to peach and apple melding into hints of hedgerow. It charms immediately, with a velvet-smooth texture and an acidity that is noticeable but judicious, imparting just the right degree of crispness. The finish too shows superb balance, where a subtle bitter almond is a tasty foil to sweet aromatic fruit.

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NOT YET IMPORTED
estimated shelf price if imported

\$42

Cantine Monfort
Trento DOC Brut

This Brut is made from all three of the grapes allowed by the Trento DOC and Talento



production codes, chardonnay, pinot nero, and pinot bianco, grown in the hills around Lavis and Meano in vineyards at elevations ranging from 300 to 500 meters. A small percentage of the base wine ferments in French oak barrels, where it matures until its assemblage with the other lots fermented in steel. The final base wine is then bottled and undergoes a sur lie ageing for a minimum of 15 months. The wine appears a luminous, pale golden yellow while the mousse, as well as the following bead, is delicate in character yet full and dense. An emphatic bouquet releases beguiling scents of ripe peach and pineapple shot through with fresh citrus and grapefruit. The firm palate stands up nicely to vibrant acidity, but in no way lessens the overall crispness. A multi-layered medley of stone fruit and pungent greens enlivens a gratifyingly lengthy finale.

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