

## **Toast to 2016 with Prosecco!**

Natasha Lardera (December 30, 2015)



The latest data from Coldiretti, Italy's leading organization of farmers, says that for the end of year festivities 190 million bottles of Prosecco, bubbly made in Italy, will be uncorked all over the world. Coldiretti speaks of a record breaking amount of bottles: there has been an increase of 13% of bottles exported abroad only in the first nine months of 2015 as Prosecco has become Italy's sparkling wine that is most cherished outside of the country.

Ready to toast to the New Year? How do you do it? You'll need enough sparkling wine!

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The demand for this delicious bubbly has increased with the arrival of the holidays, and especially for toasting to the new year – for the first time in 2015 the amount of exports has exceeded the value of one billion euro. On a national level, data show that after seven years of reductions sales have taken a positive turn. In numbers, about 52 million of bottles will be uncorked on New Year's Eve, registering an increase of 4% compared to last year's sales. Furthermore, Coldiretti, could not stress enough, how, on an international level, this has never happened before: everybody is crazy for bubbles.

Sales of Prosecco have increased by 48% in Great Britain and by 22% in the United States. The two countries respectively rank first and second outlet markets, followed by Germany where sales have increased by 5%. A great surprise is that demand has increased also in France, a country known for its nationalistic choices, especially at the dining table. So Prosecco has found a way also in the birth country of Champagne!

If we have to classify the Italian sparkling wines that are most exported in the world Prosecco comes first, and is followed by Asti Spumante (a DOCG white, slightly sparkling wine made in southeastern Piedmont from the Moscato Bianco grape. Asti is sweet and low in alcohol, and is mostly served with dessert), Trento DOC (a white or rose bubbly made in Trentino. Its characteristics are a delicate, rich bouquet, a dry, smooth, rounded and elegant flavor, and a straw-yellow color) and Franciacorta (a DOCG sparkling wine made following scrupulous criteria from the region of Brescia in Lombardy). The international success of all these wines is a step forward for Italian wines in the dethroning of Champagne as the world's favorite bubbly. Indeed Coldiretti is saying that 2016 will be welcomed by more flutes of Italian bubbly than of Champagne.

But we don't have only good news regarding Prosecco as with the increase of its popularity there is also the surfacing of a new issue: fake Prosecco. The problem of Italian sounding products is not new and bottles of Kressecco and Meer-Secco are made in Germany as well as in Russia and South America. Back in March Coldiretti announced that Crimea was responsible for producing a bubbly pretending to be Italian. "Roberto Moncalvo, Coldiretti president, said such counterfeiting cost Italy as many as 300,000 jobs, which could be created if fake Italian products are combated with international support. "The true enemies abroad are the low-cost imitations of national (Italian) foods that don't have any ties with the production system of the country," he said." The issue gets even more serious if Italian-style products made abroad outnumber those exported from Italy. This is the fight of many, led by the Italian Trade Commission, which organizes seminars and lectures to educate consumers.

So let's toast to 2016, and in order to make a good toast we don't need only Prosecco but also some inspiring words, a call to action, that will bring everyone together.

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