

The Naked Vine

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The Naked Vine: Wine Advice for the Rest of Us.™

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Bubbles to Beat the Brunch Backlash

I casually peruse food articles, as you might guess. One emerging set of hot takes seems to revolve around brunch. Specifically, that brunch sucks.

It's all the same – just dressed up eggs and bacon, they say. Starchy home fries lead to long afternoon naps, crushing the productivity we're supposed to be chasing in this crazy, overly plugged-in world of ours. Anthony Bourdain, in his initial New Yorker article that eventually became *Kitchen Confidential*, said chefs hate brunch. (May all your steaks be rare on the other side, Tony...rest in calm and light...)

I don't subscribe to that point of view, myself. I'm still personally a big brunch fan, although I'm not a huge fan of what many brunches have *become* – waiting for hours in line for quickly prepared slot machine meals from some new, trendy locale. Bottomless mimosas amped with triple sec and double vodka bloody mary bars to accelerate the food coma.

No, what I enjoy about brunch is the pace. Late enough timeframe for sleeping in, slowly letting consciousness return from whatever you might have been up to the night before. And a little hair of the dog – but not too much. I prefer having a brunch that refreshes – so I tend to stay away from, the heavy, greasy food – and along with that, I stay away from the mixed drinks. They tend to go down too quickly, so I stick to relatively low-alcohol sparkling wine.

Some of the more popular brunch sparklers tend to be Italian. For most people, there will be two basic schools of thought about noontime bubbles, Moscato and Prosecco.



Moscato, born in the Piedmont region, is a sweet, fruity wine made from the Muscat grape. Easy to drink, Moscato is the fastest-growing style of wine in the United States, driven in part by a great deal of love from the hip-hop community. Moscato like this one are slightly fizzy – a style called “frizzante” in Italian.

The Moscato I sampled was the **Castello del Poggio Moscato**. Starting with a floral nose of honey, pineapple, and blossoms, my note after taking my first sip reads, “This is like eating a peach.” After a mite more reflection for detail, I thought it’s an initially weighty wine. Peaches and honey are the primary flavors, cut through by a slight effervescence. The finish is surprisingly light, ending with a lingering flavor of honeycrisp apple. At 7% ABV, this would make it a natural brunch pairing, especially with something like a salad with some fruits. If you were interested in having it with something later in the day, spicy foods would be tamed by the residual sugar. \$13.



As for Prosecco, this is a much more “traditional” sparkling wine, full in its carbonation. For a long time, Prosecco was both the name of the grape and the region from which the wine hailed. In 2009, to avoid confusion, the name of the grape was changed to “Glera.” Prosecco is carbonated in tanks – a technique called the Charmat method – rather than in the bottle like Champagne and many other sparkling wines. Prosecco tends to be fairly dry, and is a solid accompaniment for many types of foods. If you’re thinking a heavier menu for your brunch, Prosecco will be a good choice to cut through the fat and starch.

I gave a go to the **Zonin “1821” Prosecco** – A straightforward glass of refreshing bubbles. This Prosecco is on the dry-but-fruity side. I found it had a gentle, blossomy nose of apples and pineapples. Green apple and lemon flavors on the palate are balanced with the lasting, tight bubbles and a zippy acidity. The finish is fruity, with more of those pineapples lingering at the end. As I mentioned, the bubbles will let this wine line up against almost anything you’d order, from brunch salads and soups to greasy hangover relief food. It also works well at the end of a meal, if you’re into the dessert thing. \$13.