



TENUTA SANTOMÈ
WINERY PRESENTATION



ITALY →



Veneto →



Santomè

Tenuta Santomè is run by the Spinazzè family. They are truly the *new kids on the block* of Prosecco winemaking as the winery started in 1999. Armando, the father - nicknamed “il Moro” which in Veneto slang is referred to a person with a dark complexion, has been a successful business man: after he retired he decided to handover the land that family owned to his sons Alan and William to pursue their dream to create and run a winery¹. The Spinazzè family has always owned vineyards and they have been Prosecco vine growers. Before 1999 they were in fact the largest Prosecco grapes supplier to Cooperativa di Valdobbiadene. Bear in mind that in “Proseccoland” there are more than 5000 wineries but less than 5% of them actually own enough vineyards to satisfy their production needs and therefore must buy grapes in the market. In fact several famous Prosecco producers do not own even an acre of vineyards and this is why Santomè plays an important role in the Prosecco market. The consultant winemaker for Santome is **Marzio Pol**, a well-known Prosecco as well as other local varieties expert. The Santomè vineyards cover an area of **74 hectares (162 acres)**, half of which are located within the main estate in Biancade, and the balance of vineyards is in 2 areas with the largest portion on “Grave di Papadopoli,” an island on the River Piave between the villages Cimadolmo and Maserada and a small (8 acres) in Conegliano on the Riva Bosco Costa vineyard.



¹ Why the bros Alan and William as first names? Well Armando’s and Anna favorite actors were William Holden and Alan Ladd... hence the non-typical Italian names.



Armando William and Alan and their vines...

But working on low yields was just not the solution as there was also the “neighbor problem”. In order to maintain these high yields on the hills the other producers have to spray pesticides by using helicopters (see the right picture) and do it often too! Alan and William wanted to work in the cleanest possible way and to be at least **sustainable**². What has been sprayed by the neighbor could end up in Santomè vineyards. To avoid that they needed to move from the hills. The decision was made to focus Prosecco vine-growing in **Grave di Papadopoli** an island in the middle of Piave river with optimal **soil** (calcium and quartz stones on a mix of sand and limestone) away from any vines contamination, but maintaining the quite protected by wood trees and historical **Bosco Coste** vineyard on Conegliano hills.

The vineyards location: a lot of thought has been given on which area to focus the production of their wines. While the hills of Valdobbiadene and Conegliano were very picturesque they were hiding also a big problem... Vineyards in the area are normally very stressed out as they are used by producers at the staggering 16t/ha (7.3 tons per acre!) yields or more, even if the limit for Prosecco should be 12t/ha (5.45 tons per acre); the difference being sold by many producers under different names such as a fantasy name or as a “millesimé” without specifying the name prosecco on the bottle, as would be illegal.



What they didn't want to see at Santomè is this...



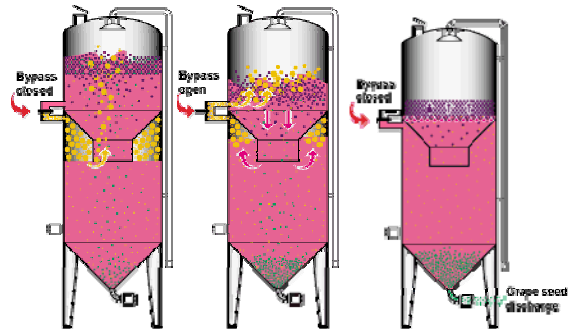
The **Biancade** vineyard, where the main facility of the winery is located, is dedicated to the production of still wines. Biancade **soil** (called “caranto”) has 7 to 9 feet of clay and underneath that there is limestone and calcareous rocks. While in Grave di Papadopoli the core of the production is Prosecco (which is grown on sylvoz and guyot trellis system), in Biancade they grow mainly reds, such as merlot, cabernet sauvignon and cabernet franc (grown there at least since Napoleon army occupied the Repubblica Serenissima back in 1797) and an indigenous variety known as **Raboso**. Trellis systems in Biancade are guyot and cordon spur.

² Sustainable is a “quasi-organic farming”. Called also 'lutte raisonnée', 'lutte intégrée' (France), “lotta integrata” (Italian) it is regulated by European Community Rule 2078. Some growers, especially those in marginal areas opt for a regime that does include the option to use chemicals but they significantly reduce the amount required by monitoring the health of the vines and the weather. In humid or damp conditions, converting to organic in short time can mean an increased risk of rot-affected grapes. Also organic producers use copper in the vineyards. That is a matter of concern for many producers though and must be carefully taken in consideration as copper does not degrade into the soil (it takes 5 times more to get rid of copper than sulfites for example in the soil) with damages, in area where copper must be used that can be heavier than conventional growing practices.

The recently approved law on Prosecco wine making introduced the DOCG and extended the DOC appellation with the 2009 harvest. While Santomè can make the DOCG version out of Costa Rive vineyards, they believe that their DOC is already bringing the best in the glass as proved by winning several blind tastings around the world.



The wines: After the grapes are handpicked and brought to the cellar the winery uses a vibrating conveyor belt that brings the grapes to the fermentation tank in a gentle way. At Santomè the alcoholic fermentation is done in stainless steel tanks called *Ganimede*. The tank uses the carbon dioxide produced by the fermentation to create an automatic and natural *pigeage* and breaking of the cap. No pumps are necessary after the grapes are introduced to the top of the tank. That allows a better color extraction and overall more rounded wine. They also avoid industrial yeasts and they are experimenting wines with no sulfites added.



Ganimede fermentation tanks: how a cycle works

Prosecco wines are made with *Charmat – Martinotti* method; the same is true for the Rosé (even if experiments with the traditional “*champenoise*” method are in progress³). The other wines are or without or partial malolactic (some whites) or with malolactic done (reds). Important reds for long ageing, like Raboso, benefit from the use of wood such as big casks in chestnut then casks and tonneaux of oak. Chestnut is traditionally used with raboso to smooth out the high acidity that remains even after the malolactic is done.



By the way: Santomè is totally solar powered...



...and offers also bed & breakfast accommodation!



³ *Champenoise* method, where the fermentation is done in a bottle cannot be applied to Prosecco as it will destroy the fragrance of the taste otherwise put it the grape is too delicate to survive a champenoise methodology. If someone claims that they are making Prosecco in a traditional method... it means there is a lot of chardonnay or verdiso in that bottle. *Charmat* has the fermentation carried in tanks, so in a “bigger environment” but follows the same principle of champenoise.

Sparkling Wines	
<p>Bosco Coste Prosecco Extra Brut NV (Conegliano & Valdobbiadene DOCG): the prosecco from this single vineyard Riva Bosco Coste (about 7 acres) shows how the grape can get serious and quite complex. indeed thanks to a unique terroir and a wine made with an extremely low residual sugar (officially 4% but practically 3 to 3.4%) and long maturation on lees.</p>	<p>Tasting profile: The result is a quite complex prosecco. Tiny bubbles support a floral nose of acacia jasmine then rosemary and time then a mouth gentle yet firm with apricots and pears with balanced acidity yet persistent finish.</p>
<p>Prosecco Extra Dry NV (Treviso DOC): The traditional version of Prosecco is the extra dry being that the Prosecco grape is an aromatic variety. This Prosecco is made from 100% Prosecco not having any other variety like bianchetta, perera, verdiso pinot bianco chardonnay that are legal to add (up to 20%) but that change flavor profile giving an unpleasant yeasty "beer like" note.</p>	<p>Tasting profile: The Extra Dry is very pleasant, light and refreshing with a distinct harmonious acidity, with the intense, fruity scent of acacia flowers and glycine with a mouthful of green apple and fruit cup, and a dry, well-balanced finish.</p>
<p>Prosecco Brut NV (Treviso DOC): The brut version of Prosecco is more into the structure of the wine with a typical crust of bread bouquet. This Prosecco is also made of 100% Prosecco grape with no other varietals.</p>	<p>Tasting profile: A more austere version compared to the Extra Dry Prosecco that is indicated more for an important event. The wine is intense with scents of crust of bread, fruity components of green apple and white flowers; pleasant and smooth with distinct lemony acidity. Well-balanced with a dry finish.</p>
<p>Santhomas Brut NV: A Rose of Pinot Noir and a small touch of Pinot Grigio left macerating on skins which become a "ramato" coppery like wine, a clear indication of Pinot Grigio as not being really a white grape varietal. The Pinot Grigio enhances up the body of the wine while the Pinot Noir brings out the elegance. We notice that the wine ages also very well.</p>	<p>Tasting profile: The wine has a delicate scent of apple, peach, strawberries hints of roses. The palate is elegant with balanced acidity and a fresh but dry aftertaste. Excellent as an aperitif it accompanies seafood salads, shellfish all the typical Venetian fish soups, with quiche, soufflé and delicious with "lardo di colonnata".</p>

White Wines	
<p>Anna6: Dedicated to their mother this wine is a blend of Prosecco (the grape now has ben re-nominated Glera), Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay. The three varieties are hand-picked early in order to get a wine with a good acidity and a low alcohol content.</p>	<p>Tasting profile: refreshing wine with a nose of sage, tomato leaf and green pepper and a good minerality a zesty note of tangerine and a spicy finish.</p>
<p>Chardonnay: A cuvée where half of the wine goes thru malolactic in big casks of Slavonian oak and half of the wine instead rests in stainless steel tank. The result is a very versatile wine.</p>	<p>Tasting profile: Very intense aroma of ripe pineapple with a floral hint of white flower, leading to blended notes of roasted hazelnuts, butter and honey, then finishing with hints of oregano and thyme. The palate experiences a smooth taste of ripe fruit, dry and full-bodied.</p>

Red Wines	
<p>Moro41: Dedicated to il “Moro”, Alan and William’s father, this is an everyday wine but with high standards and no compromises. It is made of Merlot (about 50%) Cabernet Franc (30%) and Raboso (20%). No wood ageing.</p>	<p>Tasting profile: a young fragrant scent of small red fruits; raspberries, cherries and strawberries, together with a note of delicate floral pansy. Fresh, soft and light, this wine will leave a pleasantly dry aftertaste.</p>
<p>Cabernet Sauvignon: an interesting wine that brings out the Santome terroir. The wine has been aged in tonneaux for six months of French oak then after stabilization in stainless steel it gets another six months of bottle fining.</p>	<p>Tasting profile: Fresh and sweet aroma of wood berries and cherry jam, with an elegant floral component and hints of violet, finishing with a slight note of pepper. Medium-bodied, smooth and fresh with a distinct note of tannin and a dry, persistent finish.</p>
<p>Raboso: In Venetian slang "raboso" is referred to as a pissed off person: 'Leave him alone... he is "raboso" / rabid'. That tells you a lot about this wine which is very acidic and tannic but because of that can age fairly well. Aged one year in chestnut casks and another year at least in French oak both casks and tonneaux this wine needs also a long fining in the bottle before being released.</p>	<p>Tasting profile: An elegant, spicy scent of nutmeg and pepper, followed by dry hay and leather, with hints of cherry and “marasca” cherry (a typical of the area wild cherry) preserve. The bouquet is complete with delicate mint and eucalyptus notes. Full and rich with a soft and dry final taste.</p>

Notes:
