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# The Chosen Table

Food and Wine Travel Guide in Italy & Europe by Apron and Sneakers

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By: Rowena Dumlao - Giardina November 2, 2021 North, Wineries, Wineries in Italy

## Celebrating Graziano Merotto Who Marks 50 Years of History with Prosecco

**T**he authentic interpreters of Prosecco Superiore on the hills of Conegliano Valdobbiadene still tread through their vineyards manually, always mindful of the health and quality of the grapes that grow in their vines. It's a tedious work that requires a lot of time and energy but with the immense devotion to the art of winemaking, it is never considered a burden. Graziano Merotto is one of these people who has devoted his life in the vineyards, following a tradition rich in memories and knowledge handed down from generation to generation. **The year 2021 marks the 50th year of his involvement in the world of Prosecco.**





It all started in the early 1900s when Agostino Merotto, Graziano's grandfather, began tilling the land for **viticulture**, pioneering experiences that he passed on to his grandson, knowledge that he was able to develop and use as guidelines in the development of the vineyards and the way to maximize their expressions. Thanks to his passion, determination and vision, most especially to the quality of his wine, today Merotto is one of the producers that have helped establish the name Prosecco Superiore.



The vineyards of Merotto and some trusted contributors are located between Col San Martino, Farra di Soligo and Collalto. This includes the **Particella 86 at Col San Martino**, at 230 meters above sea level, which is considered a **treasure in the vineyards of the Prosecco Superiore** area. Col San Martino, located in the heart of the Conegliano Valdobbiadene area, has a vital role in the history of the Prosecco Superiore where grapes of high quality are grown. From the old times, the steep slopes of this area only allowed cultivation of vines and pastoralism. **The hill is particularly shaped with terraces of vineyards, all done by hand which made it possible have a cultural landscape, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.**



The most ambitious project began in **2009** with the creation of the **Cuvée del Fondatore** **Graziano Merotto** **Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG**, developed after many years of experimentation. It is wine that marks an epochal transition: the first harvest coincided with the year in which the **DOCG** was designated to **Conegliano Valdobbiadene area**. Seeing huge success, it was acclaimed with numerous awards, specifically **Tre Bicchieri** by **Gambero Rosso**, uninterrupted, starting from the 2010 **Millesimato**, which at the time was a rarity in the Prosecco area.





## The Work of Graziano Merotto For Half a Century

Graziano Merotto founded his winery in 1972 after he graduated from Scuola Enologica di Conegliano where renowned oenologist Tullio De Rosa was teaching. He immediately showed a great aptitude for wine production and he also expressed a clear perception of sparkling wines. With significant sacrifice and hard work, he was able to achieve high levels of excellence, giving a legacy which became a part of history in the area. Olchera was the first vineyard that he owned and a year later, he purchased the agricultural land marked in the maps of the area with the appellation of Particella 86, a vineyard of fundamental importance today.

**It was in the late 1970s when Graziano started experimenting with the Charmat method under the guidance of oenologist Piero Berton who describes it as follows:** *"Graziano Merotto works with tenacity in his land. He has intuition, concreteness and love for his work. He wanted a house for wine. He has grown up, works hard, knows Prosecco. Graziano wants to remain modest, simple, open, sensitive. It suggests sobriety, a sovereign virtue to capture art and a smile from his glasses."*

True to Graziano's gracious nature, he believes that any such journey requires good traveling companions. His whole team in the chain of production, from the ones who take care of the land, to the ones who help transform them into wine, until the collaborators working all over the globe, are the true heritage of the company. *"The earth as a living entity, to whom we owe love and gratitude. Its fruits are gifts that man must deserve with a daily tribute of effort, attention and respect,"* It is the "religion of the earth" that Graziano has always believed in from the beginning.

Today, to celebrate half a century of work, respecting the land and its expressions, a wine is born that is the synthesis of experiences, successes and errors because, to use Graziano's words, ***"wine is not made only in the vineyard, the wine is the path of man and his knowledge."***





## Vertical Tasting of the Cuvée del Fondatore Graziano Merotto Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG Brut Millesimato

*"My wines are all different from each other and have proper names to communicate the different characters, just like people. However, **there are three elements that unite them: the gustatory freshness, the fragrance of the fruit and the high point of drinkability.** These are in fact the requisites we try to obtain to create harmony and balance in the glass."* Among the selections there are some special wines, produced in limited edition, which constitute the top of the pyramid of quality signed by Merotto. Strictly selected grapes that contribute to tell, through these labels, the long story of love and respect that binds Graziano Merotto to the hills of Col San Martino.

The Cuvée del Fondatore Graziano Merotto Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG is the symbolic wine of the winery made of 100% Glera. It came from a challenge of demonstrating how a great brut can be produced without losing the aromatic-gustatory characteristics particular to Prosecco. The project came into fruition after entailing many years of experimentation with innovative techniques. The process begins at the vineyards of Particella 86 where they undergo DMR or Double Reasoned Maturation which means that around 20 days before the harvest, 20% of the shoots at the lower part of the vines are cut but the bunches remain in the plant for another 20 days. In this way, the grapes undergo a slight withering, and losing about 20% of the juice, obtaining a strong concentration but preserving the acidity, which is not affected by the ripening process. The remaining bunches are harvested normally. After pressing in the cellar, a long refermentation takes place, which lasts over 6 months giving the wine a unique complexity. The must is left in an autoclave where, with the maintenance of low temperature, slowly becomes a sparkling wine. And this is all under the care of Oenologist Mark Merotto.





#### **Cuvée del Fondatore Graziano Merotto Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG Brut Millesimato 2020**

This is the most traditional vintage of this wine for the past 20 years and climatically, the year was not so hot. It's a brilliant straw yellow wine with fine and persistent perlage. In the nose, it gives aromas of white flowers and crispy pears and green apples with notes of citrus. A pleasant wine to have in the mouth with freshness and sapidity together, as the fruity notes linger, ending it with long persistence.

#### **Cuvée del Fondatore Graziano Merotto Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG Brut Millesimato 2018**

A tranquil climatic year which held no surprises. Brilliant straw yellow with hints of golden yellow, fine and persistent perlage. A nose with more complexity than the previous vintage, giving aromas of ripe banana peel and very mature pineapple. Vibrant acidity in the palate, full impact of flavors with persistent finish.

#### **Cuvée del Fondatore Graziano Merotto Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG Brut Millesimato 2016**

A product of the hottest vintage. Five years old and still displaying its beautiful youthful pure characteristics and elegance, both in the nose and in the palate. Brilliant straw yellow with a persistent and fine perlage, pronounced florality in the nose and crispy white fruits of pear and white peach. The acidity is highlighted in the mouth, sapid, fruity and a long finish. An excellent vintage!





**Cuvée del Fondatore Graziano Merotto Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG Brut Millesimato 2014**

A very difficult vintage cool temperature and lots of rain resulting in a problems of high humidity, which didn't permit a late harvest. Brilliant golden yellow, fine and persistent perlage and intense and complex nose with notes of tropical fruits, marked mature bananas and spices. The freshness is still present, roundness in the mouth and finishes with the lingering mature fruit.

**Cuvée del Fondatore Graziano Merotto Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG Brut Millesimato 2010**

Another difficult year wherein the shoots were killed in a spring cold frost. Brilliant with golden yellow in color, concentration of ample aromas in the nose of ripe yellow fruits, sweet spices and floral notes. The mouth is awarded with a pronounced freshness and pleasant flavors. Inspite of the difficulties in spring and its 11-year age, the evolution of the wine is beautifully wrapping up in the glass.



**Cuvée del Fondatore Graziano Merotto Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore D.O.C.G. Brut Millesimato 2020 Edition 50th Anniversary** Characterized by the red wax seal as opposed to the green seal of the other vintages. It represents the history of Grazianno's 50 years of life dedicated to research to get the best from the splendid territory of Conegliano Valdobbiadene. The fruits of this unique wine come from a collection of small quantities of grapes from the oldest and most suitable vineyards of Col San Martino. The vinification took place in the traditional way, followed by ageing on the lees for about a year. The final result is unique as well as the spirit and inspiration that contributed to the birth of this wine. Brilliant, light straw color and with fine foam, a nose with accentuated white flowers and notes of fresh, crispy pears. Elegant, fresh in the mouth and the sapidity is also quite highlighted. As a wine made for a very special occasion, this is definitely an outstanding Prosecco to drink now and to age.

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