

ADVENTURES CLUB

by Anthony Lynch • FEBRUARY 2017

NV PROSECCO SUPERIORE BRUT • SOMMARIVA

Prosecco is easily Italy's largest DOC zone, and it continues to grow: 3,000 hectares have just been approved in a recent expansion, taking the total hectares planted to more than 23,000. Picture the entire city of San Francisco under vine—twice over. This equates to almost *half a billion bottles* of Prosecco each year, most of which hail from mechanizable flatlands. Call us snobs, but we wouldn't even use most of this overcropped plonk in our mimosas. However, the beating heart of this massive region is undoubtedly the Prosecco Conegliano Valdobbiadene Superiore DOCG subzone, a real mouthful that ultimately designates the most qualitative *terroir* for Glera, the Prosecco grape. In the shadow of the Alps, poor, well-draining soils at higher altitude yield elegant, aromatic bubbly worlds apart from the mass-produced wines flooding the market. Cinzia Sommariva is an adamant ambassador of the style, following in her parents' footsteps to consistently craft a Prosecco of total class and charm—no mimosas necessary.

\$14.95 PER BOTTLE **\$161.46** PER CASE

2015 ÎLE DE BEAUTÉ ROUGE • YVES LECCIA

Along with several contemporaries, Yves Leccia is in large part responsible for putting Corsican wine on the map. His tireless work ethic and precise craftsmanship have made him a proud flag bearer for the Patrimonio appellation, as his delightful whites, rosés, and reds brilliantly reflect the potential for fine wine in this island enclave. Although this red cannot be granted AOC status due to the high proportion of Grenache (80%, with 20% Niellucciu), it is nonetheless a compelling translation of the gorgeous seaside *terroir* from which it hails. Lively, fresh, and juicy, it offers hints of smoke, wild fruit, and maquis herbs that recall the rugged, rocky vineyard slopes. Its chewy tannins provide a touch of rusticity that makes this red an ideal match for anything off the grill, but it takes well to a slight chill and is utterly quaffable no matter the circumstances. Here at KLWM, we agree: this red is a real treat.



\$27.00 PER BOTTLE **\$291.60** PER CASE

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

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FINOCCHIO AL FORNO

by Christopher Lee

I love this dish—fennel happens to be my favorite vegetable at the moment. The recipe is so simple and good, and you can make it almost anytime in California, as fennel is available more or less year-round. Preparation time is about 15 minutes and cooking time 25—a quick, delicious, and somewhat unusual treat. If you're lucky enough to have wild fennel growing near you, pick a few delicate fronds and lay them on top when you place the cazuela on the table.

- 2 bulbs fresh fennel
- 2½ tablespoons olive oil
- ¼ cup water
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons crème fraîche or cream
- 1 teaspoon chili flakes
- 4 tablespoons grated Parmesan
- 2 tablespoons fine, dry bread crumbs
- ½ teaspoon crushed fennel seed
- Wild fennel fronds to sprinkle over fennel
at the table (optional)

Trim fennel stems 1½ inches above bulb and remove any damaged outer leaves. Slice bulb into ½-inch vertical slices.

Drizzle 2 tablespoons olive oil in bottom of cazuela or shallow casserole and lay fennel snugly in a single layer. Add water, and sprinkle with salt. Cover, and cook over low flame for 5 or 6 minutes, until fennel begins to soften. Turn fennel over and cook another 5 minutes uncovered, until water is nearly gone and fennel is soft. If it goes dry, a little sizzle won't hurt anything. Spoon crème fraîche onto fennel and drizzle remaining olive oil on top. Sprinkle fennel with chili flakes and Parmesan. Mix bread crumbs and crushed fennel seed and sprinkle on top of fennel.

Bake uncovered at 375° F, until top is golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes. At the table, sprinkle with wild fennel, if you're using it.

Serves 4