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Decanter

THE THREE LEOVILLES

ADVENTURES
IN FIZZ

50 great sparkling
discoveries



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15 top Italian sparklers (continued)

Cantina della Volta, Lambrusco di Modena Rosé Brut, Emilia Romagna 2013 92

£12.50 (ib) **Bancroft Wines,**

BI Wines

Cristian Bellei inherited the unconventional family passion for metodo classico in the frizzante region of Emilia. Even more unconventionally, he applies the bottle refermentation method to the local grape varieties. This is vibrantly fresh with a highly appealing array of fruit and floral aromas, a super-fine perlage on the palate and zippy bone-dry finish.

Drink 2017-2018 **Alc** 12.5%



Cocchi, Pas Dosé Brut Nature, Alta Langa, Piedmont 2008 92

N/A UK www.cocchi.it

This historic house, pioneer of sparkling wine in Piedmont, is now owned by the Bava family who has focused modern production on the Alta Langa DOCG. This is a 100% Pinot Noir with 80 months' lees-ageing. Creamy mousse, white blossom and yellow fruit on the nose. Big impact, concentrated palate with a long, savoury mineral finish. **Drink** 2017-2020 **Alc** 12.5%

D'Arapi, Pas Dosé, Puglia NV 92

£21.09 **Tannico**

The flat lands of Puglia are perhaps the last place you'd expect to find a quality metodo classico, but this estate has been challenging preconceptions for over 35 years with stylish wines based on the local Bombino Bianco grape. Apple pie crust nose, then lemon pith, citronella and hints of dark blossom. Stylish, long and refreshing. **Drink** 2017-2018 **Alc** 12.5%

Gini, Gran Cuvée Brut, Veneto 2008 92

N/A UK www.ginivini.com

Gini is one of the great names in Soave, but the family also owns a small plot of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir on a hillside outside the DOCG zone. When the conditions are right, Sandro Gini makes

this vintage sparkling cuvée. Complex, creamy nose with sweet ripe apple and peach, sumptuously rich palate, soft round finish. **Drink** 2017-2018 **Alc** 12.5%



De Bartoli, Terzavia Cuvée Riserva Extra Brut, Sicily NV 90

N/A UK www.marcodebartoli.com

com

De Bartoli has taken Marsala and turned it upside down with this metodo classico from an oak-aged, multi-vintage cuvée of Grillo. Massive, complex nose of hazelnut oil, curry and raisins with an underlying salty rancio quality. Bone-dry on the palate, asymmetrical, challenging, intriguing. For adventurous palates. **Drink** 2017-2018 **Alc** 12%

Vajra, NS Della Neve, Piedmont NV 90

£18.85 **Tannico**

The only wine missing from Barolo producer Aldo Vajra's eclectic hand-crafted range was a metodo classico. He has filled the gap with this rosé based on Pinot Noir and (what else?) Nebbiolo. Red berries, spice and parma violets plus an intriguing note of charcoal on the crisp palate, the perfect summer pink. **Drink** 2017-2018 **Alc** 13%

Puiatti, Ribolla Gialla Extra Brut, Friuli-Venezia Giulia NV 89

N/A UK www.puiatti.com

Ribolla Gialla is Friuli-Venezia Giulia's most ancient local variety. In recent years its high acidity and fairly neutral aromatic profile have persuaded the region to launch it as a light, vat-refermented rival to Prosecco. Giovanni Puiatti breaks this mould with a much more ambitious metodo classico: complex, evolved nose of mature yeasts, classy, creamy texture and juicy citrus finish. **Drink** 2017-2018 **Alc** 12%

Richard Baudains is a DWWA Regional co-Chair for Italy who has written for Decanter since 1989

For full details of UK stockists, see p88

Spain & Portugal

IN SPAIN, CAVA continues to dominate the sparkling wine scene. As a result, new and evolving categories of Spanish sparklers are still small and relatively embryonic. About 250 million bottles of Cava are produced annually, mostly from Catalonia in the northeast of the country, with production centred round the village of Sant Sadurní d'Anoia.

Despite the Catalonian dominance, Cava (meaning 'cellar') can be made across the country. Favoured grape varieties are Macabeo, Parellada and Xarel-lo, although Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are also used in many brut blends. Cava is another relatively new arrival in the sparkling wine world with significant exports not taking place until the mid-1970s. The industry was revolutionised by the gyropallete, which mechanised and transformed production for Cava, and other traditional-method regions.

Although it can be argued that Cava has been slow to move with the times, the industry is now seeing significant change. A single-vineyard quality tier supported by minimum three years' lees ageing (Cava de Paraje Calificado) was introduced in 2015 to showcase the best-quality cava has to offer. (See p8.)

Another approach for some producers is to break away from the Cava DO to focus on individual terroir and to raise quality. Alongside these developments, an increasing number of high-quality wines are starting to appear from the cooler, wetter areas of Galicia in northwest Spain.

Similar developments can be seen in neighbouring Portugal, where wines from the Alvarinho, Loureiro and Trajadura varieties are offering lots of promise, and a cool-climate, saline style. These provide a very interesting alternative to wines from Bairrada further south where Baga is the grape used in many good-quality traditional-method wines.