

Decanter

Asti and Moscato d'Asti: expert's choice

These delightfully grapey-fresh, lower-alcohol Piedmont sparklers make for a fun, light summer fizz, as James Button discovers.



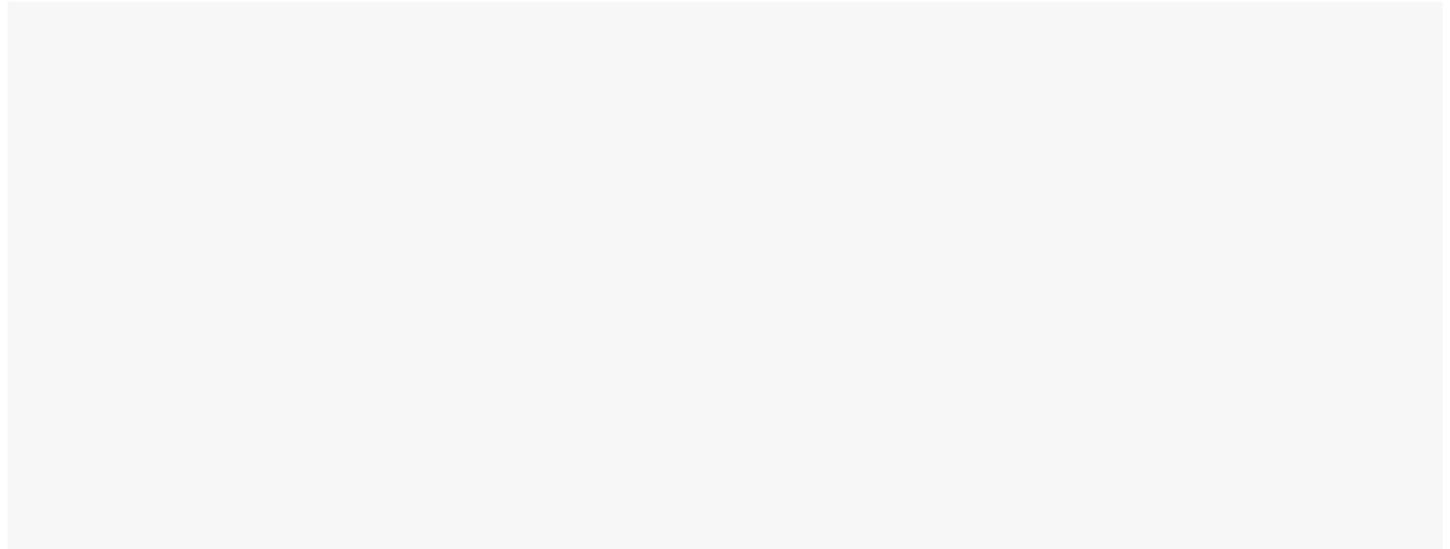
James Button
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Scroll down to see tasting notes and scores for the top Asti and Moscato d'Asti wines

Fifteen years later, Eugène Charvat developed the autoclave design that is still used today. This Martinotti-Charvat method is used for many sparkling wines, including Prosecco, but Asti is unique in that the grape must is fermented only once. It absorbs some of the carbon dioxide during fermentation in pressurised autoclaves, which gives it its sparkle, and the single fermentation retains all the aromatic fruity freshness of the Moscato grape.

When the desired alcohol level is reached, the autoclave is chilled to stop fermentation and the wine is filtered to remove the yeast before bottling.



Production regulations traditionally stipulated that sparkling Asti should have alcohol no higher than 9.5%, but modifications in 2017 and 2020 eliminated this limit, meaning that today Asti can be fermented to dryness, naturally reaching 11%-11.5% alcohol.

Among the 24 sparkling Asti samples I tasted for this feature, there were only a trio of dry (secco) Asti, but I found that this style worked excellently with the delicate floral, fruity character of Moscato.

The additional alcohol and leaner, fresher feel give these secco wines a bit more punch and structure compared to traditional sweet (dolce) wines. The Asti Secco style is well suited to modern consumer tastes, so expect to see more of it on the shelves.

See all 59 Moscato and Moscato d’Asti wines tasted for this feature

Moscato d’Asti

Moscato d’Asti is the sweeter, frizzante alternative to slightly drier and fully sparkling Asti.

The complexity of floral notes – especially in wines from the Canelli sub-zone – and juicy exotic fruits, combined with subtle licks of cream, gentle fizz and rounding sugar, makes Moscato d’Asti a superb sunshine wine – and its low alcohol level is ideal for lazy lunches!

Just be aware that while the alcohol level might encourage you to polish off a bottle by yourself, Moscato d’Asti generally contains more sugar per litre than Coca-Cola at 106g/L!

The top Asti and Moscato d’Asti wines:

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James Button

Vite Colte, La Gatta, Moscato d'Asti, Piedmont, Italy, 2020



Tasted by **James Button** (at Windsor, 19 Mar 2021)

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Ripe apple and peach scents with some floral notes and a hint of beeswax. Intense, concentrated but fresh palate - really honeyed, with ripe peach, mango, lychee and tropical fruits. There's a stoniness on the mid-palate that provides some complexity and refreshment, while the gentle acidity balances it all nicely. Soft finish of honey and lime.

Drinking Window 2021 - 2023

