

ITALY

No other country has as many sparkling wine appellations as Italy, with its optional "may be *spumante*" (sparkling) clauses cluttering up more than 100 of the country's Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC) appellations. Yet Italy had no appellation specifically for classic *brut* sparkling wine until Franciacorta was elevated to the higher rung of Garantita (DOCG) in 1995.

A MYRIAD OF HALF-FORGOTTEN WINES Italy's little-known sparkling wine appellations are nearly all *cuvee close* (undergoing a second fermentation in a vat or tank rather than in a bottle). This is the best method for sweet sparkling wines like Asti, which has DOCG status and is Italy's best contribution to the sparkling wine world. However, *cuvee close* is the worst possible method for classic *brut*. This is not because it is an intrinsically inferior method; in theory it should be able to produce *brut* sparkling wines that are every bit as good as those made in bottle, but in practice it does not. It is a bulk-production process and consequently attracts the cheapest base wines. To remedy the situation, the Italian Wine Law should require all *brut*-style DOC sparkling wines to be produced by the *metodo classico*, the Italian equivalent of *méthode champenoise*.



Ferrari, one of the few firms to use *metodo classico*, says that it delights in "conserving the original excellence of the *spumante*."

NORTHERN ITALY

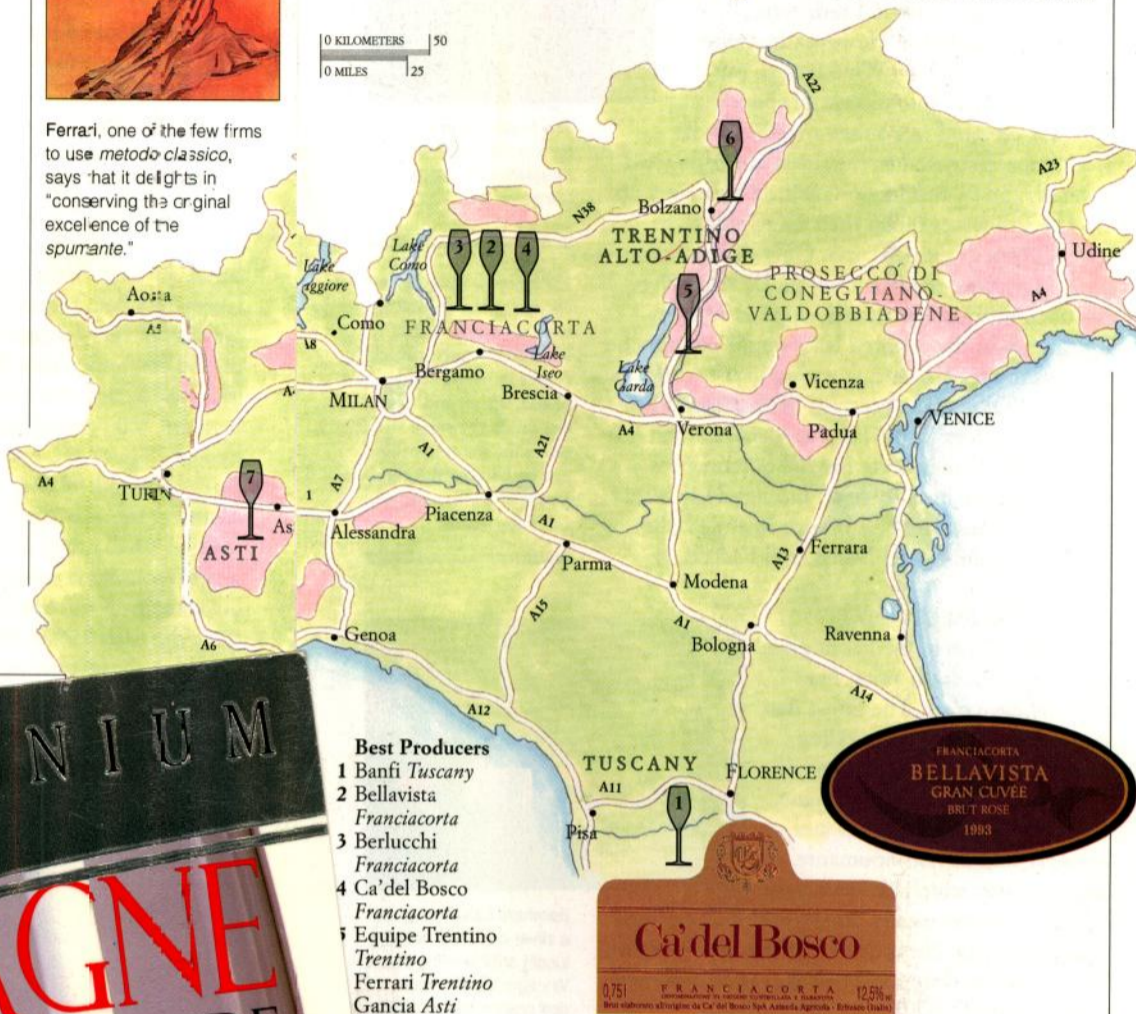
Sparkling wines are made throughout Italy, but the most interesting ones are made in the north. The best appellations are Asti, for sweet fizz, and Franciacorta, for *brut*-style sparkling wine.

□ Main wine regions

0 KILOMETERS 50
0 MILES 25

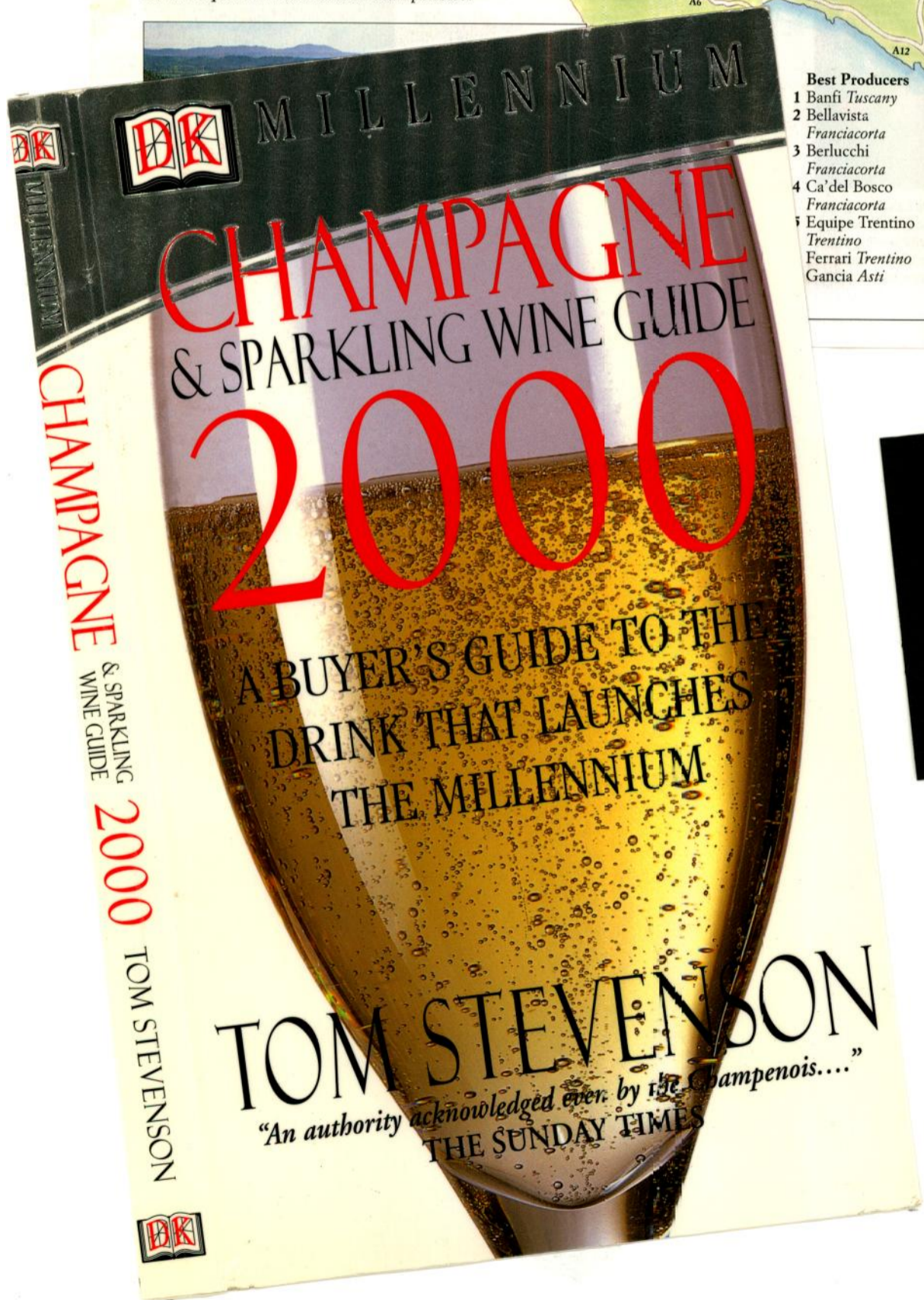


Sophia Loren drinking classic Italian *brut* at the Venice Biennale.



Best Producers

- 1 Banfi Tuscany
- 2 Bellavista Franciacorta
- 3 Berlucchi Franciacorta
- 4 Ca' del Bosco Franciacorta
- 5 Equipe Trentino Trentino
- Ferrari Trentino
- Gancia Asti



85	€€€	Ca' del Bosco 1992 Cuvée Annamaria Clementi, Brut
78	€€	Ca' del Bosco 1995 Brut, Franciacorta
76	€€	Ca' del Bosco NV Brut, Franciacorta
76	€€	Gatti NV Franciacorta Brut
75	€€	Ca' del Bosco 1995 Dosage Zero, Franciacorta