



FAST FACTS

TOTAL AREA:	
GRAPE VARIETIES:	Chardonnay, Gewurztraminer, Moscato Giallo, Müller Thurgau, Pinot Bianco, Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon, Cabernet Sauvignon, Lagrein, Merlot, Pinot Nero, Schiava
TOTAL WINE PRODUCTION:	1,018 hl
APPELLATIONS:	Alto Adige DOC, Delle Venezie DOC, Vigneti delle Dolomiti IGT

PRODUCERS

ALOIS LAGEDER

OVERVIEW

The region of Trentino Alto Adige is geographically a single unit, but culturally it is two distinct areas. The southern half of the region, Trentino, is culturally quite Italian, even if the surroundings look more like The Sound of Music than Under the Tuscan Sun. On the other hand, the northern half, Alto Adige, is largely German-speaking and shows its strong historic ties to Austria. In fact, Alto Adige is usually referred to by residents – and you'll see this on wine labels, too – as Südtirol, the South Tyrol.

History: Of the two provinces, Trentino has a somewhat more cohesive history. It was established early in the 11th century as a new domain under the control of the Bishop of Trent (Trento) and remained so for around 800 years. What we now know as Alto Adige was part of this domain for a while, but pieces were carved away and, along with areas farther north, eventually became the County of Tyrol. The Bishopric of Trent and the County of Tyrol were both under the broad control of the Holy Roman Empire.

This situation lasted until the early 19th century, when Napoleon invaded Central Europe and redrew all the maps. After Napoleon was defeated, Italian-speaking Trentino was absorbed into the Tyrol, which became part of the Kingdom of Austria. A hundred years later, the southern Tyrol was a major battlefield between the Austrians and the Italians during World War I. When Italy's side won the war, Trentino as well as German-speaking Südtirol were given to Italy, becoming the last addition to the map of Italy as we see it today.

Geography: Trentino Alto Adige is Italy's northernmost region and one of its most mountainous. The entire region is in the Alps, and its only flatlands are the narrow strips at the bottom of the main river valleys. These

valleys, originally carved out by glaciers during the Ice Age, are pastoral and green, but the widest is only about 1½ miles across at most. The sides of the valleys are steep and tall, quickly rising a few thousand feet or more, and beyond that are mountains that rise over 10,000 feet high.

The principal river in this part of the Alps is the Adige, which is the source of the provincial name of Alto Adige the Upper Adige river valley. The Adige runs generally from north to south through the region and is joined by numerous tributaries, of which the largest and most important is the Eisack, or Isarco in Italian. The Adige passes through both Bozen (Bolzano), the capital of Südtirol, and Trento, the capital of Trentino.

Climate: Being in the Alps and at the northern end of Italy, Trentino Alto Adige's climate is naturally a bit cooler than other regions'. Nevertheless, summers can actually be quite warm, as hot air from the south is pushed up into the confined valleys. The average August high temperatures in Bolzano (83°F) are only a few degrees lower than those in Naples. Winters are colder, but not frigid, thanks to the massive barrier between the Adige Valley and the cold continental air north of the Alps.

Primary grape varieties: White grape varieties are dominant in both Trentino and Alto Adige. The most planted variety is the global favorite Chardonnay, much of which is used to make sparkling wine. Other white grapes include various international stalwarts such as Pinot Grigio, Müller-Thurgau, Gewurztraminer, Pinot Bianco, and Sauvignon Blanc, along with a few native varieties like Moscato Giallo. Indigenous varieties feature more prominently among the reds, including Schiava and Lagrein, both more common in Alto Adige, and Teroldego, found almost exclusively in Trentino. Merlot is actually the most planted red variety, though, and Pinot Nero (Pinot Noir) is also well represented.

Key wine regions: With a majority of Trentino Alto Adige's surface covered by soaring mountains, the winegrowing areas are confined to the central valley of the Adige River and a couple of side valleys. Many are sourced from small scattered vineyards, and the denominations are therefore extended to incorporate this geographic diversity. In fact, Valdadige DOC (or Etschtaler DOC in German) takes in virtually all the plantable land in the whole region, allowing the blending of grapes from both provinces. Wineries that stick to just Alto Adige province would be more apt to label their wines as either Alto Adige DOC or Südtirol DOC, alternative names for the same denomination.

In Trentino, there is a corresponding Trentino DOC, plus a separate (and easily confused) Trento DOC, which produces only sparkling wine. In addition, Trentino is included along with the regions of Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia in Delle Venezie DOC, the new powerhouse denomination for Pinot Grigio.

Cuisine: The Austrian traditions that are so ingrained in Alto Adige extend to cuisine, as well. Visiting Bolzano, expect to see sauerkraut, spätzle, dumplings (canederli), and goulash on menus and you will find these dishes in Trentino, too. Speck, the local version of smoked prosciutto, is the classic antipasto. Pasta is less common than in many other regions, but semicircular ravioli-like mezzelune (Schlutzkrapfen) are a specialty, as is the herb-infused gnocchi known as strangolapreti (rich enough to strangle even a priest). Main dishes range from lake fish to beef to game. Polenta is a popular side dish, mainly in Trentino. For dessert, think apples the main fruit crop here besides grapes as in Apfelküchel (basically an apple donut) or apple strudel.