



**FAST FACTS**

<b>TOTAL AREA:</b>	
<b>GRAPE VARIETIES:</b>	Chardonnay, Garganega, Glera, Pinot Grigio, Carmenere, Corvina, Merlot, Rondinella
<b>TOTAL WINE PRODUCTION:</b>	8,473 hl
<b>APPELLATIONS:</b>	Colli Berici DOC, Prosecco DOC & DOCG, Soave DOC, Valpolicella DOC, Amarone della Valpolicella DOCG, Valpolicella Ripasso DOC, Veneto IGT

**PRODUCERS**

ADAMI, INAMA, RIFF, SCAIA, TENUTA SANT'ANTONIO, DISTILLERIA DELL'ALPE, ALMARE SPRITZ, VERITÀ, KAPRIOL GIN

**OVERVIEW**

Veneto has a strong claim on being Italy's most important region for wine production. It has one of the most highly regarded red wines of Italy in Amarone della Valpolicella, which gives it points in the prestige category, but it is also home to four of the top 10 denominations in terms of volume. In all, Veneto produces one of every five bottles of Italian wine and given that it is the biggest source of Prosecco and Pinot Grigio, a very high percentage of that production gets exported.

History: The name Veneto, as well as that of Venice (Venezia), comes from the pre-Roman Veneti people who lived in this area. After the Roman Empire fell, the mainland of Veneto came under a series of rulers, mostly Germanic in origin like the Lombards. Times were unsettled, and many people moved for safety from the mainland to one of the defensible islands on the Adriatic Coast notably Venice.

Isolated from the mainland, the Venetians built up a naval force and maritime trading network that ultimately gained a near-monopoly on trade between western Europe and the East in the Middle Ages. With this came enormous wealth, and the Venetian Republic was able to remain a stable and prosperous entity for more than a thousand years. Their sea-based dominion expanded along their trade routes as far as Cyprus, and in the early 1400s the Venetians took control of modern Veneto, a fertile area that could provide agricultural land (and wine!) that was in very short supply on the islands.

The Republic of Venice lost some of its strength and possessions over time, but remained intact in its homeland until Napoleon showed up in 1797. After the Napoleonic period, Veneto, including Venice, was given to Austria. It

was a late addition to the Kingdom of Italy in 1866 as a result of the Austro-Prussian War.

**Geography:** Veneto is located in the northeast of Italy, between Lombardy and Friuli, running from the Austrian border south to Emilia Romagna. It has some 80 miles of coastline on the Adriatic Sea, and it is here that the capital city of Venice sits on an island separated from the mainland by a large lagoon.

The northern third of the region is rugged terrain of the Dolomite Alps. The rest of it is mostly a broad plain punctuated here and there with outcroppings of rocky hills, many of them the remains of ancient volcanoes. Apart from the Adriatic, the main water feature is Lake Garda, the country's largest lake, which lies between Lombardy and Veneto. In addition, the Po River forms much of the southern border with Emilia Romagna, while the Adige River flows south out of Trentino before taking a left turn at Verona and paralleling the Po all the way to the Adriatic.

**Climate:** Most of Veneto, south of the Alps, has a continental climate with hot humid summers and cool winters. Over on the western side, Lake Garda has a notable moderating effect on temperatures in nearby areas. Fog is common in winter, and rain peaks in late summer.

**Primary grape varieties:** Though a few grape varieties come to mind when thinking about Veneto, the easy winner is Glera. Thanks to the so-far bottomless global appetite for Prosecco, more than a quarter of Veneto's vineyards are planted with Glera. Garganega and Pinot Grigio are two other prominent white grape varieties. Among the reds, Merlot is the somewhat surprising leader, followed by the dominant grape variety of Valpolicella, Corvina.

**Key wine regions:** Most of the traditional wine areas of Veneto are lined up in a tight grouping in the west, starting at the Lombardy border south of Lake Garda and stretching eastward for about 30 miles. This is not coincidental, since the lake's climatic effects give this zone a longer and milder growing season that produces many of the region's finest wines.

Farthest west and actually extending into Lombardy is Lugana DOC, a suddenly very popular denomination that makes white wines from Turbiana, a close relative of Verdicchio. The primary red-wine zone of Veneto begins on the shore of Lake Garda just to the northeast of Lugana with Bardolino DOC and then continues eastward into the Valpolicella area. Bardolino and Valpolicella share the same basic blend of grape varieties led by Corvina with contributions from Rondinella and possibly other varieties. Beyond Valpolicella and the city of Verona, white wine returns in the form of Soave DOC, the primary denomination for Garganega.

Most of Veneto east of Soave falls into the huge Prosecco DOC, source of the world's number-one choice for sparkling wine, made primarily with the grape variety Glera. At the heart of this denomination is its original base in the hills near the border with Friuli: Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco DOCG. Veneto is also part of the even huger Della Venezie DOC, the main denomination for Pinot Grigio, another extremely popular Italian export.

**Cuisine:** Veneto's culinary traditions are influenced more by the Alps and the Venetian maritime trade than by the rest of the Italian peninsula. Pasta is available, of course, but the people of Veneto generally prefer rice or corn as their starch. A first course of risotto, a creamy hot rice dish, is typical of most formal meals, possibly flavored with ingredients such as shellfish, white asparagus, spring peas (risi e bisi), or Amarone. Fish dishes are also popular, including soups and various preparations of dried salted cod (baccalà). Corn in the form of polenta may be served fried as a first course, but is more likely to show up as a side dish with the main course of meat or

fish. Beef is typical for the main, but around Verona especially, horsemeat is not uncommon. The best-known dessert of the region is tiramisù.