



OVERVIEW

Piedmont's largest denomination in terms of production is Asti DOCG, which is world renowned as a source of sweet white wines. In general, Asti wines are not dessert wines per se, although they do pair well with many desserts. They are low in alcohol and effervescent, though, putting them in a different category altogether from, say, Sauternes or Port. The reduced alcohol level, which can be as low as 4.5%, makes them a reasonable choice before dinner for those who prefer a sweeter aperitif or throughout a meal when paired with the right dishes. Asti wines are made from 100% Moscato Bianco, a grape variety that is widely used around the world for sweet wines due to its characteristic floral aromatic profile. The Moscato aromas provide a perfect match for many Asian recipes, and the sweetness of Asti is ideal for dishes that have some spicy heat. There are two distinct styles of wine made in the Asti denomination. One, which is labeled Asti or Asti Spumante, is a sparkling wine. The other, labeled Moscato d'Asti, is frizzante slightly fizzy. Even without seeing the label, you can tell the difference by the bottle, because the fully sparkling Asti requires a heavy bottle with the usual caged mushroom cork. Asti is a fun wine, like all sparkling wines, but Moscato d'Asti with its rich sweetness yet light body is dearer to the winemaker's heart.