

Untold Italy Episode 76 -Prosecco Hills

Katy

This is the Untold Italy Travel podcast, and you're listening to episode number 75.

Josie

Ciao and Benvenuti to Untold Italy, I'm Josie.

Katy

And I'm Katy, and we're here to help you plan your trip to Italy.

Josie

Between us, we have many years of travel experience and we want to help you uncover your own as yet untold stories and adventures in Italy.

Katy

Each episode, you'll hear practical advice, tips and ideas to help you plan your own trips to the magical land of history, stunning landscapes and a whole lot of pasta.

Josie

We'll have interviews from experts and focus on local destinations and frequently asked questions about travel in Italy.

Katy

Thanks for listening and make sure to subscribe to our show.

Josie

Now let's get started on your regular dose of Bella Italia.

Katy

Ciao a tutti! How is everyone doing? It's Katy here and I don't know about you but I feel so much positivity in the air right now. In our Italy Travel Planning community we have seen a huge uptick in people planning their trips and asking so many great questions about their itinerary and how to make the most of their trip to Italy later this year and into 2022 and 2023. We even have some trailblazers who've taken advantage of covid tested flights from North America posting pictures of their adventures.

I've got to admit, it's been a little emotional seeing all the planning swing back into action. Helping others plan their trips to Italy is one of my favorite things to do (after eating gelato of course!) and the past year's events has largely robbed me and many of you of that joy. So I'm just so happy we're back into the swing of things.

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To celebrate I thought we'd have a chat about prosecco! Why not?! Prosecco is that fresh light sparkling wine that is perfect for any celebration, aperitivo or just because. It comes from the hills north of Venice which just so happen to be incredibly beautiful and well worth a detour for a few days should you happen to be in northern Italy. I'm joined by my friends and fellow foodies Chantelle and Giovanni from The Italian on Tour who you may remember from our episodes on Truffles and their home region of Le Marche. They have a particular love for this region and have promised to share their secrets, including a very unique way for buying your prosecco which I have become a little obsessed with. Giovanni is our resident sommelier in Untold Italy Insiders (our special group for people who love Italy and all things Italian). He guides us through the wine and what to look for and Chantelle tells about the lovely towns of the area. So let's pop those corks and get started.

Katy

Benvenuti Chantelle and Giovanni - welcome back to the Untold Italy podcast.

Chantelle

Ciao Katy

Giovanni

Ciao Katy

Katy

You're always welcome on the show.

Giovanni

Thank you.

Katy

Now, it's been a while since our listeners heard from you guys, and I think it's been about six months. So can you let everyone know a little bit about you and your story?

Chantelle

Absolutely. I'm Chantelle

Giovanni

and I'm Giovanni.

Chantelle

And we run small group tours for food and wine lovers that want to experience Italy like a local in Italy's hidden region. So right now we are based in La Marche and we do tours in Abruzzo, La Marche and Veneto.

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Katy

Wow, that's so exciting. You know, everyone (if you've been listening to the show a little while), you'll know that we've been trying to meet up in person for a very long time, but..

Chantelle

It's true.

Katy

It's very frustrating. But luckily, I get to talk to them quite often. But what I wanted to hear from you is, have you been up to. I hear you've been exploring a new region, not just Le Marche and Abruzzo.

Chantelle

So over the summer last year, we took our annual vacation to the Dolomites and we happened to drink this bottle of Prosecco called San Rocco at the hotel we were staying. So one of the owners of this Prosecco, she actually frequents that hotel. She's one of their clients that comes every year in the winter. And so we ended up tasting this Prosecco and the son of the owner, who is also because they're very much family run hotels, he told us about her and he told us "oh this Prosecco - she comes every year. And I had this really crappy Prosecco before. And she told me, oh, you have to have a good Prosecco". And that's how he started serving her Prosecco in his hotel and his restaurant. And so we ended up posting things on Instagram and we had a local guide reach out to us who does Venice, Treviso and the Veneto region. And we had thought about going there for a while. And so it was kind of like serendipity. This person had reached out to us who wanted to connect with us to go see Veneto. So we kind of made it happen. So about a month later in September, we went there and we actually went to this lady's winery. And it's a small little winery.

Giovanni

It's her home.

Chantelle

Yeah, it's her home. So she doesn't welcome guests. It's a very small boutique production, but she ended up welcoming us because she heard about the story and the connection. So she knew how we knew about her wine. And we got to sit in her little garden and have a glass of Prosecco with her. And that's basically how this tour was born. And we decided to start doing a tour in the Prosecco Hills because you know, Italy, everybody knows Venice. But so few people go to the Prosecco Hills. And I think it's really one of those places where you can visit Venice and then you can visit an area of Italy that's more off the beaten path. So that's why we decided to start our Venetian Epicurean is what we've called it. So it's a seven day tour where you get to go to Venice and visit the Prosecco Hills, as well as Bassano del Grappa and some of the beautiful villages around there.

Katy

Oh, sounds amazing. I love Prosecco, and I tell you what, I've loved hearing from Giovanni all about the differences of Prosecco and the evolution of that wine, because it has become so popular all around the world, but it's had its challenges as it's gone through. So it'd be interesting to hear from you - to explore the region and to really find these small producers that are really making some of the best wines that are out there. So how is it different, the mass produced Prosecco - to the boutique wineries?

Giovanni

That's that's my cue. Yes. Katy and I - you and I have talked about this in the past, too. But there's been a massive evolution in terms of quality, quantity, which normally when you get quantity, quality suffers. That's a general rule with wine. And now you can find in Italy you can find Proseccos for 3 Euros and 50 cents on the shelves, especially at Christmas. And then you can find Prosecco for 30 Euros. That's kind of - so the range that's changed. And there has been what we call appiattimento, so a flattening. So they're producing so many more bottles. They hit half a billion just two years ago, I think two or three years ago, bottles. And then there's all the table stuff that you drink in the restaurants. So the bottom stuff has been flattened, meaning quality has actually gone down. We've been told this by guides and people in the wine industry as well. When we visited and if you've been drinking for a long time, you can kind of tell. Names that we won't mention. But some of the top, top ones that do in the 10s of millions of bottles, they've decided to move that way because there's just too much demand. And one of the big things is you can't plant because they've overdone in the last 20 years. You can't plant any more Prosecco vines anymore - in the UNESCO area, which means now things are going to change. Because now there's going to be producers that are either going to leave because they want to do the numbers or they're doing it not in Valdobbiadene, they're doing it at the bottom of the hills. And the quality is different. The quality from Conegliano, Valdobbiadene and all that area on top of the hills there - that where the Cartizze is. So the smaller production. Those areas do produce higher quality because there's less of it produced. And there are smaller producers - like the producer that we just happen to visit who doesn't really even do any tourism. And they sell only to restaurants. They do less than fifty thousand dollars a year, which in that area is peanuts, because an average producer could well be in the three to five hundred thousand. Like an average winery, it would be three to five hundred thousand dollars a year.

Katy

So how many producers would there be in the area then?

Chantelle

There is a lot.

Giovanni

Yeah, so in Prosecco, in the Prosecco area because there's different areas. So the Cartizze is the middle and they only produce a million bottles a year out of the six hundred million bottles - last year, they producer two years ago. So that gives you an idea like that's the top of the top and then the DOCG - the producers are three hundred and fifty producers I've read,

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and it's going to be upwards of going over four hundred in the next few years. That said, the top five do 80 percent probably is a good guess in terms of production. And now what they've done is you will see big names, which I've realized they want higher lines and they'll go and purchase a smaller winery and they'll offer something they can't make because you either do quantity or quality is very difficult to do both. So they just literally go by smaller companies, which are very happy about it. So you'll see Cartizze line, which is their top line from main names, and that they've also realized there's a market for that. But there is a big variation in terms from the valley to the hills and to the UNESCO area and also the top names, just like for some other producers like Brunello and Borrello, like when you're hitting the price point, it's just not the same thing. So shy away as much as you can.

Katy

Yeah. So it's fair to say that with hundreds of producers, you want someone to guide you around where you should go and to have the best experience. So let's just take a step back and so, where would you start? Where do you start when you visit Prosecco? So we know that there's hundreds of producers, we know these beautiful landscapes, where do we start?

Chantelle

Well, I think it depends on - I always say choose a home base and that's kind of what we do with our tours. So if you are looking also to visit Venice, which I think a lot of people are, Treviso is a really great base because you can visit - you can take the train to Venice, you can take the train to Venice.

Giovanni

25 minutes.

Chantelle

Yes 25 minutes to Venice, then I think it's what is under half an hour to Conegliano. I never pronounce that name right, so bear with me. But Treviso is great because you can visit Venice easily and then it's also great because it's a city, right? So it still has like the canals and kind of has a bit of that Venetian feel, but being based there, you don't have to get back in the car, say per se, to go to a restaurant in the evening or stuff like that. Right? So it makes it for a more relaxing base. If you're looking to visit Venice, if you're looking to just like a lot of people love agriturismo or staying right in the hills. I would say stay more not on the side of the Valdobbiadene because that's a lot more touristy. Stay more on the side near Conegliano or near some of the beautiful, the Borghi più belli d'Italia, which there's Follina and there's Cison di Valmarino and around that area is, I find, less touristy.

Katy

I absolutely love Treviso - I was just smitten by that place. So everyone, it's a really great tip if you're near Venice to go to Treviso, because it's so pretty with its canals and it's got beautiful Venetian walls and they've got the winged lions because those Venetians went everywhere and bought their winged lions with them. So tell us a little bit more about the UNESCO area, because that's a fairly recent development, isn't it?

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Chantelle

Yes, it is fairly recent. That whole area, though, has had a wine trail for about 55 years. So they have been very much involved in wine tourism. So on one side you have Valdobbiadene and that area I'd say is more popular with tourists. That area looks over the Piave valley. So if you're visiting there, there's a lovely restaurant. It's called Trattoria alla Cima, and it's worth going there just for the view, because you can sit out on the terrace. You have a beautiful view of the Piave valley. Also, there's a cute little place that's a 19th century farmhouse that it's kind of like this unique place in Italy. It's called L'Osteria senz'Oste. Austria. It means an Osteria without a server.

Katy

Oh, you serve yourself

Chantelle

Essentially yes. Yeah. So started out this guy was making his own like charcuterie, salami and that sort of stuff, and his friends would come by and they would leave like these notes. Giovanni probably better telling the story than I am.

Giovanni

Yeah. He was a local producer of meats and some small cheeses and cured meats, and he always had people come over. He never restored the home as a 19th century casa and his friends would come over and when he wasn't there, he was making something somewhere else. They'd leave him a note saying, you know, you are not here, we wanted to have some Prosecco with you or some try some of your meats. So at some point he said, you know what, I'm just going to put a bottle of Prosecco and some glasses and then I'm just going to leave some stuff here and you just can pay ten euros. So it covers my cost and then you can kind of serve yourself and then very quickly turn into this place, which is not a restaurant, anything else, and people just going there and leaving whatever they wanted to leave. And there's only 14 seats inside. There's no server. Now he's put in a vending machine for Prosecco that I think he's had made for himself. And people would just leave a small amount of money like ten euros each, and they will just spend some time there. It's packed. When we went last time, we didn't stop inside because there was lots of people and this was in September when we went on a weekend. So if you do go to Valdobbiadene, it's obviously going to be more tourists on the weekends. So it's nice to go during the week.

Speaker 1

Well, that's good tip. But I love this guy, I mean, like, he obviously has some covid premonition because...

Giovanni

He was ready for anything because I don't know now, I was looking at this yesterday - how things have changed, right? But I know when we were there last September, it's been hugely popular. And you can go over a certain size because size because then you become a

restaurant, something else. So it does have limitations. But the idea itself was very, very popular.

Chantelle

Very unique. Yeah.

Giovanni

Less popular with some of the other producers and restaurants that were around there, from what we've been told.

Chantelle

They didn't really like that so much. And when he originally started, he didn't have a vending machine. No, because at one point he got basically he showed up one night and there was like a euro and 40 cents or something left. And so he stopped doing it and closed it. And then later on, he reopened it with the vending machine because somebody took it, ate the food and drank the Prosecco and left him nothing.

Katy

That's not - that's not on. Although if anyone's listening and is thinking of buying me a present, a Prosecco vending machine is at the top of my list now.

Giovanni

You can put all sorts of wines in it too - not just Prosecco.

Katy

My mind boggling, but I definitely want one of those. Oh, my goodness. All right. So that sounds amazing. And I want to do all of that. Let's take us through a few of the little villages that you mentioned to me earlier.

Chantelle

Absolutely. So in the patrimonial UNESCO, there's one village. It's called Follina, and it has a beautiful monastery there. So I definitely recommend visiting Follina. I also should mention, I don't know if your listeners know what a Borgho is. The Borghi più belli d'Italia, because there's a lot of them all over Italy. And it's something I think a lot of people maybe hear Borgho, and they just think village. But essentially it's little more than that. It's a village and most of them are like fortified villages, either from the Renaissance or the medieval ages. And to become a Borghi più belli d'Italia, you also have to have the services for the locals, the restaurants and a good way of life there. So that's also another indication of charming villages where people can stay at. So Follina is one of them and it has a stunning monastery that I recommend visiting. There's also Cison di Valmarino and that one has stunning views of the hills around there. There's also a four hundred year old mill that was used to mill flour for the Marca Trevigiana, and it's called The Molinetto della Croda. So those are a couple of the little things to visit around there. There's also a big medieval villa or castle that is now actually a hotel. It's Villa Brandolini and that's a great place to stay as well if you want a unique stay.

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Katy

That sounds magical. I think all these ruins and castles, it's kind of hard to overestimate just how charming they are because, you know, a lot of them, the big things where you have, like, you know, big palaces and people tramping in and out. But there's something really special about these smaller places and they've got their own charm and their own stories. And their own history. And, you know, often there's a ghost story or there's some sort of crazy Duke that's been running around the hills chasing people. I mean, I had some great stories just on the other side of Lake Garda in the Lombardy region around a castle like that. And it was just so fascinating. I just loved it. Do you know any stories from the region like that?

Chantelle

I don't know any stories about ghosts and castles.

Giovanni

There are a lot of like - Veneto it's famous for its villas, the Venetian style that they built because the Venetians used to build homes. You have to think Treviso is a half an hour drive back down - it was a day on the horse. So a lot of these villas you visit and there are some that are open to the public, have their own history and their own stories because they could be welcoming nobles from Venice. They could be welcome kings, old kings - I know there are some that we visited and there are very unique stories surrounding the actual villas in Veneto, which Veneto itself, the region has over the last 30 years really pushed, especially people that could afford (because it's a very expensive undertaking) to redo these villas and help them with funds from the government. Because honestly, even if it's just a photo stop, when you're traveling, if you're on a bus or a car, whatever you're doing, they're amazing. They're beautiful. Like you drive around, you see these perfect rectangular or square villas. They're very similar sizes and the very curated gardens and different. So that's something unique to there. And there's some of that, too, like Conegliano, that kind of area where you can just walk around or be in your car. And here it is, a big villa.

Katy

Yeah, it's easy to forget sometimes how powerful and how wealthy the Venetian republic was because it's obviously it's a tiny city. But back in the day, they were ruling the Mediterranean and they had so much wealth and so much prestige and the - I guess the wealthy families wanted their country escapes. And that's where that came from.

Chantelle

Actually, that's interesting you say that because another Borghi più belli d'Italia Asolo, which is not in the UNESCO patrimonial but is in the Asoloni hills where they also produced Prosecco, its name comes from the Latin word asylum, but as a refuge, a refuge from the city. So it was a place where the wealthy Venetians like to go as a refuge from the city.

Katy

Well, I mean, they just had it made really. They had their beautiful seaside city and then they had the beautiful countryside as well. I mean, they knew what it was all about I reckon. So now Giovanni mentioned that if you had a car - do you think this is the best way to explore this region, because I'm not sure about the train links around there.

Chantelle

Yeah, I would absolutely say to visit the Prosecco Hills, you definitely would need a vehicle. We also saw a lot of people doing Vespa tours - so if that's something people enjoy- getting on a Vespa, there are Vespa tours throughout the Prosecco Hills and that's something fun to do. But if you're obviously looking to travel, stay at an agroturismo and have more flexibility to visit villages and wineries on your own, a car would be the best way. And that's how we do ourselves.

Giovanni

There are no trains. There are no trains within the UNESCO. I mean, I'm sure there are small lines, but Treviso is kind of the main train station and whatnot. So if you're going through in the valley, it's OK. But as soon as you climb up the hills so like Asolo, you would need to be in a vehicle of some sort.

Katy

Yeah and to reach probably some of the little wineries you would need a car as well. But see, the problem with the car is that if you wanting to try the wine... That's why I like the idea of a tour.

Giovanni

Yeah. And that's where tours come in. And I mean, obviously there's all sorts of tours, so, you know, you don't have to drive because obviously it's either that or you don't try anything. And the whole point is you're going to try all these amazing Proseccos and other wines because like there are other wines too. Like for example, you can try Tranquillo Prosecco, which people don't even know it exists. That's what Prosecco used to be, Prosecco had no bubbles. So in the 20s when it first came around and then things evolved and now it's what it is. But there are a lot of other things you can try and yeah, you wouldn't want to be driving everywhere.

Chantelle

I think that's the beauty of coming on tour. And that's what we do right? Is you get to take the guesswork out of planning your Italian vacation. You get to sit back, you get to relax, you get to drink the wine you want and eat the food you love. And that's just for me, that's vacation, relaxing, not worrying about things. And some of the foods that you should eat when you come to Veneto, there's you know, obviously we talk a lot about Prosecco, but there's also the very famous for the radicchio and risotto with radicchio and also risotto with Prosecco. They also have a pasta that is very similar to Pici. It looks like it's similar. It's Bigoli that I say right? I always say those things wrong.

Giovanni

It's very thick - like anybody was listening that's been to Tuscany. They probably are tried the Bigoli. So that's it's a very, very I don't want to say a spaghetti because it's like three times the size, but it's that kind of cylindrical, very typical, so very hardy sauces. In Veneto they make it with Bacallao, so with cod and other fishes. So that's something typical - goes perfect with Prosecco, of course. So like everything, you know, when you visit Italy and you're eating it and we talked about this in the past, people go, well, you know, I've done it at home, but it's not the same thing. It's when you're on vacation, you're on vacation, too. So, A - you're not cooking and then cleaning, somebody's making you food. And maybe you're got a great view and some great wine and that's perfect meal.

Katy

Yeah, it is really. And like, I really can't stress enough that a lot of these places, they're not really geared towards English speaking tourists actually. So it's hard to find them on the Internet. So you're not going to find them by doing an Internet search. You're really going to need someone that has insider knowledge that can take you on a tour. That can share those little gems around. And I think, earlier this year we spoke to a couple of episodes, we spoke to a couple who had spent time in the Prosecco hills, and they would tell you that themselves is that they were doing some family research and they said - we didn't know like what was going on here and you couldn't until you actually went there. So this is why it's really important, especially when you're following these routes around and really getting off the beaten track is to really get in touch with people who know and understand the area. And that's why I love talking to you two, because you do know that. And obviously, for anyone that's listening, Giovanni is obviously our wine expert in our Untold Italy Insiders Group, and he's given us a lot of rundown on all these secrets over the past six months. So if you want to join, you should, because you find out all these secrets.

Giovanni

More secrets.

Chantelle

And lots and lots of more regions.

Katy

Yeah, I know.

Chantelle

It's not just the Veneto.

Giovanni

And Prosecco is particularly interesting because - everybody kind of now knows right? And now you start seeing new things like rose Prosecco and people are asking about that. And you talk to growers and owners and they're telling you what they think, which is not necessarily what you read. So.

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Katy

That's so true. Oh, my gosh, I'll never forget when you told me about that rose Prosecco - everyone rose Prosecco is a thing!

Chantelle

It's so good. We - and I mean, some of the young producers produce these beautiful bottles and it's just as good to drink as it is to look at. And I think we saw that a lot in in Venice like people, because a lot of them used to be involved in, say, furniture. That was a big industry there. A lot of them have these beautiful tasting rooms and these families - they've gone on these people who opened these smaller wineries - they've gone on to do this because it's their passion. It's not, say, the family business, but they've taken their passion and started these wineries, which is really cool to see. I really like that here in La Marche to see the difference between the people who say have always done this - to these newer and small producers. And I think it's really nice to support these young, small producers wherever you go.

Katy

Absolutely. And one thing that I really love about Italy is you do have that tradition going through everything. It doesn't matter if it's new or modernized or someone you always have that tradition. But I love that people always innovating as well. I think that's just - it's maybe something you don't expect or people don't expect if they haven't been to Italy many times is that you have this real spirit of innovation, especially around food and wine.

Chantelle

Yes. It's really great because you can try very traditional and then also modern. And they all have a place. Right. Like we've gone to this slow food, super traditional restaurants and then we also go to, say, a Michelin starred restaurant. And you get to kind of taste everything. Like when you go to Italy, you don't have to just eat traditional. These innovative restaurants also offer like a different dining experience, but they get inspired by tradition.

Katy

Yeah, it's incredible. I love it. I love it. Now, were there any wineries that you'd recommend people have a stop at from that little one, which I don't think you can get to unless they know you?

Chantelle

No - we asked her, we were like, oh, could we bring guest? And she's like, no, it's just me and my little dog. She has a little dog named Bionda. And I wouldn't feel comfortable being there because it's just her. And she continues this winery on after her husband passed. Her children didn't want to continue the business, so it's just her continuing it, in her husband's memory. So it's such a beautiful story. But one winery I would recommend, especially for also people wanting to stay in the Prosecco Hills, is Maso di Villa. It's also an agriturismo. So you can stay there, you can eat there and you can do visits of the cantina.

Katy

Sounds good to me. I'm dreaming of these. You know that I am. It just seems like tantalizingly close and just a little bit too far away. I would love to go. When are you starting up your tours in the region?

Chantelle

So we have two tours offered in 2022. We have one date in May and one day in June. So we just do two exclusive dates per year for the Venetian Epicurean and we go - we based out Treviso and I know we didn't mention it, but Treviso actually the birthplace of tiramisu. So that's another food you have to try when you come to Veneto and we do a variety of day trips and experiences, we go to cook in the Prosecco Hills with a lovely local chef who has an agriturismo near Ponzano. We go and we get to visit cheese producers, grappa producers, because as though everybody thinks Prosecco - Prosecco Hills, there's a really big tradition of grappa as well in the area. And just outside the Prosecco Hills is Bassano del Grappa, which I really recommend visiting. It's a really cute town and they have a Ponte Vecchio. Kind of like Florence has one. There's is famous as well. And on each side of Ponte Vecchio, there's multiple small grappa producers and there's also the bigger grappa producer, which has a museum. Why don't you tell us about them Giovanni?

Giovanni

Yeah, I mean, I was thinking because we're talking about how many bottles and all that earlier, but I mean, Grappa obviously is produced with what they call ??? so it's just whatever is left that doesn't have anything in it from the grape. And often in Italy, when you visit somebody who is listening and has seen this and September, October, November is you'll just see piles of these peels, grape peels that are drying outside. That now with the whole sustainability projects, especially in the wine industry in the last 20 years - everybody wants them and they're being reused. They used to be just something they put - something they use in the fields earlier, 50 years ago, they would do that - they use a small amount for Grappa. Now they're sought after. So in Prosecco they have obviously a massive amount of these fields from everything else that they do. And so some of the producers historically, that's why the producers of Grappa are in that area. There is an amazing museum from probably the most famous name, reknown name, which is Grappa di Poli, which is you'll find it I'm sure, in Australia and in the US anywhere. Grappa di Poli, they make also these amazing glass bottles. And they do - they are pieces of art they really are - the bottles themselves. And they have a museum that's incredible in the middle of Bassano del Grappa.

Chantelle

And it's free to visit. So you go inside and you can see all the kind of the history of grappa and stuff like that. So it's really good if you are on your own and you're visiting Bassano by yourself, that's something that you can go visit easily.

Katy

I've had Grappa, but I'm not sure that I've had the refined Grappa.

Giovanni

Massive difference.

Katy

Yeah, I'm sure. What does it actually taste like?

Giovanni

It's interesting because Grappa in Italy, for whatever reason, but especially in Veneto there's this association between like really old men. You see these pictures - you know what I'm talking about Katy, but there's various types of grappa. And what does it taste like? It's supposed to clean your palate in a very strong way and also to help your digestion, which it does like a lot of Amari and all like Limoncello is a sweeter, more likable version, of course. But, you know, if you're thinking of other Amari - Jägermeister, non Italian, too, and it's the same idea, but it's supposed to clean your palate and then help you digest and you're not supposed to have a lot of it. Yeah, it's a pleasant taste. Like you need to learn a little bit about it. I wouldn't say if you're a first-time drinker, maybe you don't like it, but the really good stuff.

Chantelle

It's very good, to be honest, like the place we go in the Dolomites, they bring - like one evening he actually has a grappa cart. And this was kind of my first introduction to drinking grappa. But if you have somebody who a good Sommelier, somebody who knows about grappa in addition to wine, like he asked me, well, like, have you had grappa before? Do you know a grappa is like? They'll know to give you a grappa that'll work for you. And so Giovanni had a completely different grappa than I did. And so the one I had was more mild and a little more sweet, and I really enjoyed it. So it's also like the reason why I believe, like you may think something is this way back home, but when you come to Italy, it's different. And if you have the right people to show you and guide you, then you get to taste something that you thought was one way. But is actually another way. And that's been my experience many times with foods throughout my travels in Italy. What it is in North America isn't what it is here. It doesn't have to all be super strong. It can be very delicious and very good.

Giovanni

Just not the cheap stuff. Let's be honest here. Like grappa is one of those things where you're not going to want to spend 10 Euros buying a grappa. It's going to taste very, very strong alcohol. It's like cleaner. So that's just the reality of it. But that Poli just because we're mentioning them like I tried something years ago at a show and it was seven or ten years old. It wasn't the oldest, but it was very smooth. It's still 40 percent alcohol. It's strong. But you want to have the right experience Katy. That's the answer.

Katy

Absolutely. But it's always the same, isn't it? And then you sort of become obsessed with chasing that taste and that memory that you had. I always find this. It's like, when can I go back and have that Prosecco risotto? It just becomes one of those memories and strong

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desires. And I think that's one of the incredible parts of travel. And especially in Italy when you have these very special wine and food experiences.

Chantelle

I think Italy is very unique in that way, because not only you go to this - for us, when I think about places and we talk about 'the best meal of your life' moment, and there's really no best meal, because it's like, well, this was the best for this type of food or this type of experience. It's also about the people, the place, the timing, who you were there with. I mean, you can find good food, right? But it's also about the whole experience. And when you travel, that's really where you create those types of memories because they kind of hit all the senses. It's not just taste and smell, it's sights and sounds. And there's the emotion of the people you were there with. And for me, that's really what travel is.

Giovanni

Like when we moved, because we're talking about food here, obviously we remember everything we eat - I do! So when we went to Prosecco last year we had every day we eat somewhere and there's so many different places like any anybody who's been to Italy. It doesn't have to be a fancy Michelin star for you - actually a lot of people say they've had the best experiences in families in homes not in restaurants because it's just the way it is. I know I have in my travels when I've been to Australia, I think I told you this, but I had this amazing meal on Christmas and it was all different. It was summer. I have this amazing Shiraz that I never found again. It was the best Shiraz I've ever had. I'll never have one like that again. It was very good. Now that I look back, it's a very good wine, but the whole thing surrounding it was perfect. So then the wine became perfect.

Katy

Yeah, absolutely. Oh my gosh, my feet are so, so, so itchy. I just cannot wait to get on a plane and have these travel experiences again. It's starting to become a little bit unbearable, I have to say. So, anyway, this is amazing. I really want to go to Prosecco Hills. It's just one of those dreams. I've been talking about it with one of my girlfriends for a while, fellow Prosecco lover. We just feel like it's just it's calling to us.

Chantelle

You definitely have to go. It's beautiful - beautiful. We went in September. It's beautiful right now in spring and spring, they even have like Prosecco Primavera, which is like a festival in spring. So one of the villages that I mentioned, Follina, the one with the beautiful monastery, they're part of that event. So that's a place you can visit if you're coming in the springtime.

Katy

Sounds beautiful. And I know everyone, if they want to stay in touch with you because you're always giving it really useful tips, etc., you're so generous with your knowledge and your time and I really appreciated. How can everyone stay in touch with you and learn more about the tours?

Chantelle

You can find us at www.theitaliantour.com. You can also find us on Instagram where I share moments in La Marche, experiences on tour - basically what your life will look on tour with us and you can find all of that a @theitaliantour and we're also on Facebook but I'd say the best place to connect with us is either on our website or on Instagram.

Katy

Yeah, I can attest to the fact that Instagram is something that just - every time it pops up on my - I'm like "god these guys, I have to get there and see them". I can't wait. Oh, my goodness. Well, this has been absolutely divine and I can't wait to go and see how I can source that Prosecco vending machine. Oh, it's been so great to talk to you again. And I can't wait to see the photos from the Prosecco tours and hopefully I'll get on one of them one day. Thanks for joining us. Grazie.

Chantelle

Thank you for having us.

Giovanni

Thank you.

Chantelle

Grazie mille.

Giovanni

Ciao.

Chantelle

Ciao

Katy

I love prosecco! Taking a road trip through those hills is my idea of bliss. Even better to be in company with Chantelle and Giovanni. And I definitely want one of those vending machines. I think it would be a very popular and fun addition to our neighborhood. Chantelle mentioned many small towns and where you can find the prosecco vending machine in our chat. You can find the names of those places and all the details of the Italian on Tour's Venetian Epicurean adventure over on our show notes at untolditaly.com/76 for episode 76.

The Italian on Tour have 2 tour dates available in May and June 2022 departing from beautiful Treviso, home of tiramisu and pretty canals. They take only take very small groups so you'll have to act quickly to secure your spot.

If you know someone else who has a particular love of prosecco and is dreaming of Italy we'd love you to share our show. We're on a mission to help as many people as possible plan their dream trips to Italy and maybe they could think of nothing better than sipping prosecco

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overlooking the stunning vineyards of this region. Grazie, thanks for listening and we'll see you next week with another virtual trip to bella Italia

Ciao for now

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