

Perfect Prosecco

As leaders in Australian Prosecco, Brown Brothers continues to innovate with its range of the delicate sparkling wine style that is growing fast across the globe...

WHEN AUSTRALIAN winery Brown Brothers planted Prosecco cuttings in the King Valley in north east Victoria more than a decade ago, it marked the beginning of what would become a popular new category for the family-owned wine company and a consumer love affair with the fresh, delicate, easy-drinking wine style in Australia and New Zealand.

“Right from the beginning people got really excited about these light, bubbly wines that can be enjoyed anytime,” says Brown Brothers winemaker and ambassador, Katherine Brown. “It’s that idea of being able to have a glass of Prosecco sitting outside in the sunshine, or with friends after work. Champagne is for a special occasion but Prosecco can just be celebrating that you survived till Wednesday!”



Brown Brothers began exploring the potential of Prosecco after seeing its growing popularity in the UK in the early 2000s. “We were travelling quite a lot and saw that in London people kept ordering Prosecco and Prosecco Spritz and Bellinis and there was this real groundswell,” says Katherine. “They were drinking this sparkling wine casually. Seeing our climate was perfect for Prosecco it was something that we jumped onto and thought this could be something for us.”

After trials in Brown Brothers ‘Kindergarten’ experimental winery, the first commercial release came out in 2008 and it soon became clear the hunch had paid off, with the winery’s Prosecco range cementing itself as a firm favourite with Australian and, more recently, New Zealand consumers.

The rise of King Valley Prosecco

North east Victoria has a strong Italian connection dating back to the 1920s, when immigrants arrived to farm tobacco in the area. The Dal Zotto family planted the first Prosecco in 1974 and Australia’s first Prosecco was released in 2004.

Retail sales of Australian Prosecco now make up nearly two thirds of total Prosecco sales in Australia at AUD\$60M, with the King Valley region accounting for the majority of that at AUD\$37M¹. In fact, King Valley Prosecco retail sales have surpassed those of Italian Prosecco in Australia for the past two years, indicating a consumer desire for a premium local product and connection to the growers and producers.

Buoyed by the early success of its own Prosecco in Australia, Brown Brothers

What is Prosecco?

- Prosecco is a sparkling wine with Italian origins. It is delicate and fresh with apple and citrus notes.
- An easy drinking sparkling wine that is ideal any time – for brunch, served with Mediterranean platters, or as an aperitif to start an evening.
- Prosecco is the name of an appellation in north-east Italy as well as being the name of an historically recognised grape variety, used to produce sparkling wine in many countries across the world.
- Italy has registered Prosecco as a Geographical Indication (GI) in the EU, however this does not apply in Australia, where winemakers have defended their use of Prosecco as a grape variety domestically and internationally.
- The best examples of Prosecco come from cooler regions, like Brown Brothers’ Banksdale vineyard in the upper King Valley in the north east of Victoria.

launched its Prosecco NV in the New Zealand market in 2012, followed by the Prosecco Rosé in 2015. The wines have proven hugely popular with Kiwi consumers too, who enjoy the light, fresh style and relaxed everyday celebration that Prosecco offers.

Prosecco is now the fourth most popular type of sparkling wine in New Zealand and one of the fastest growing. Brown Brothers is #2 of the three main players that represent over half of the Prosecco consumed in New Zealand.

New Zealand's love of Prosecco follows international trends - it is the fastest growing sparkling wine category in the USA, while in the UK Prosecco now outsells French Champagne² (within the sparkling category), consumed by three-quarters of the sparkling wine drinking population.

From grape to glass

Winemaker Geoff Alexander has been involved with Prosecco at Brown Brothers since those first cuttings were planted and says the King Valley is key to its success: its cool climate is ideal for retaining the acid and freshness needed for sparkling wine, yet it's warm enough to ripen the relatively high cropping Prosecco vines. In the winery, Geoff uses the Charmat method of sparkling wine production (secondary fermentation in tank), which he says is crucial. "It creates a delicate, young, fresh wine but with premium cues like beautiful mousse and really long acid. What I look for in our Prosecco is very delicate aromatics: floral notes with citrus and apple on the nose. The palate needs to be quite light, fresh and crisp and a little bit of residual sugar for balance."



Katherine and Caroline Brown of Brown Brothers

Tasting notes

Brown Brothers Prosecco NV

A refreshing sparkling made to drink now while light and fresh. It has a straw colour with subtle green hues, a delicate nose displaying apple and pear characters and a palate full of crisp citrus notes.

Brown Brothers Prosecco Rosé

A beautiful soft, rose-gold hue, this fresh sparkling has a delicate nose displaying strawberry, watermelon and apple. It retains the freshness and vibrancy that Prosecco is known for and provides a subtle hint of berry on the palate.

Brown Brothers Prosecco Spritz

A fresh twist on the traditional Prosecco style, ideal for pouring over ice with a slice of fresh orange as an aperitif. A vibrant blood orange, with classic pear aroma of Prosecco and the citrus and bitters flavours creating intrigue.



Brown Brothers Vintage Release Prosecco – available Oct 2019

The premium expression in the Brown Brothers Prosecco range. The colour is bright and vibrant with a youthful green hue. The nose shows lifted Granny Smith apple and pear notes along with a citrus undertone. The wine's tight natural acidity from the cool climate fruit makes it perfect for drinking young.



Why King Valley Prosecco?

The terroir is ideal for the variety: a cooler climate is vital for the retention of fresh, zesty flavours and fine acidity.

It is recognised as a premium product, from a cool climate region, produced in accordance with traditional methods.

It targets the 'higher end' of the Prosecco market while remaining very accessible in the Sparkling wine category.

A Brown Brothers Prosecco for every occasion

Brown Brothers added further excitement to its range for Summer 18/19, launching Prosecco Spritz, a blend of Prosecco with orange and aromatic bitters that demonstrated the company's commitment to quality and innovation.

"We developed our own in-house blend of bitters for the Spritz," says Katherine. "We wanted a bitters that we saw as unique to our character, so we worked with really beautiful bitter orange and a nice background of spice."

The Prosecco Spritz was a hit, and the next launch for the New Zealand market will be the Brown Brothers Prosecco Vintage Release in October 2019. For this, Geoff Alexander selected the best parcels of grapes from the Brown family-owned Banksdale vineyards in the far reaches of the King Valley.

Katherine Brown says it's been hugely popular in Australia on-premise and in high end bottle stores as a step up from everyday Prosecco. "We talk about Prosecco being that 'casual drink' - then this is the casual drink you might serve at a wedding or birthday party."

She says there's excitement about where the Prosecco category is heading and its future is bright at Brown Brothers. "In Australia and New Zealand the enjoyment of wine is becoming a lot more casual. We're seeing the growing trend for people - and not just women - to kick back and enjoy a daytime sparkling wine, and we think that's going to continue."

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¹ IRI Aztec Scan MAT 06.01.19 (retail sales only, excludes on-premise)

² Wine Intelligence Sparkling Wine in the UK Market 2018.