PROVINCE OF TREVISIO
THE PROSECCO AND CONEGLIANO - VALDOBBIADENE HILLS WINE ROAD
A GUIDE TO THE WINE ROUTES
In Treviso, like in many other areas of Italy and Europe, Wine Roads have become a popular destination for the attentive, demanding tourist. It's a new way of “holidaying”, in the pursuit of an itinerary devoted to the sampling of exquisite fruits of the earth.

For tourists picking the province of Treviso as their holiday destination, as well as locals wanting to rediscover their own traditions, this guide provides ideas and suggestions for an extraordinary journey along a route promising some highly emotional interaction with the region and with nature.

The rediscovery of farming and country traditions, and the wealth of wine estates complementing the environmental, artistic and cultural treasures, are essential ingredients for the tourist's journey back in time through local history and recollections, across areas whose scenery still retains enormous evocative power.

Leonardo Muraro
President Province of Treviso
Marca Trevigiana (the area corresponding to the Province of Treviso) owns its exceptional development to the efforts and constant interaction with the territory and its natural resources. This is the background of our wine-making vocation, matched by one of the most ancient Italian wine routes – previously called 'White Wine Route', it has now been redesigned into the 'Prosecco and Colli Conegliano Valdobbiadene Wine Road'.

The new route, created in 2003, is the direct heir to what was Italy's first oenological route. Large stretches of the original route have been repeated, joined by themed itineraries able to enhance the entire district, featuring ripe vineyards and a rich historical and artistic heritage still to be discovered.

Prosecco and Colli Conegliano-Valdobbiadene
Wine Road Association
FOREWORD
"Strada del Prosecco e vini dei Colli Conegliano-Valdobbiadene" (Prosecco and Conegliano-Valdobbiadene Hills Wine Road)

“We take our steps away from the Marca Trevigiana. To be precise, more that side than this side of the Piave, on the river’s left back, which is the most generous in terms of wine, finally reaching the lands beyond the boundaries, which have for a long time played a part in our wine and food destinies, in the blending of cuisines and knowledge, between Central Europe and Mediterranean routes”.

(U. Bernardi, La festa delle vigne - The vine festival)

Seen as something of a treasure hunt by those enjoying the wine road experience, this itinerary has pleasant surprises in store at every turn. Evocative sights that enrapture travellers and introduce them to the wealth of delights offered by the region they are exploring.

Our guide features a simple structure and takes you on a two-way route, made easy to follow by clear signage. For the sake of convenience, we have split the route into four main segments:

A. from Conegliano to Refrontolo;
B. from Refrontolo to Colbertaldo;
C. from Valdobbiadene to Campea;
D. from Campea to Conegliano.

We have also chosen three additional, one-way routes:

The Collalto feud - Marca Storica;
Historical-nature trail - Marca Storica;
Torchiato di Fregona.
Each segment provides an overview as well as a series of tips explaining the particular local features, intended to give you a deeper insight into the area in question. The recommended start and finish point is the Conegliano School of Wine (Scuola Enologica), where scientific research merges with age-old winemaking tradition. The three additional routes that take you off the main track can be visited on separate occasions, or you might be able to fit them all into your holiday if you have more time. Each of the four segments contains a detailed description, various factsheets, and interesting background. There is a main map intended to help you find your way around. The fine thread linking the whole wine journey unravels around the theme of the region’s evolution and alteration over the centuries. How long it takes to travel the “Prosecco and Conegliano-Valdobbiadene Hills Wine Road” is, of course, up to you, the traveller. Note, however, that true wine and food tourists with a deep interest in local produce should probably take a whole weekend to fully savour (in the literal sense of the word) the golden nectar that theMarca Trevigiana has elevated to world fame.
Treviso's piedmont comprises the wide range of hills that gently slope down in a discontinuous sequence from the rampart formed by Belluno's pre-Alps to the banks of the River Piave. Narrowing our visual field, the portion of hills belonging to the Marca Trevigiana region goes from Vittorio Veneto as far as Valdobbiadene, passing through Conegliano on the way: this land no doubt kept Bacchus occupied for a while at some point during his tireless wanderings...

The soil’s physical and chemical composition, the abundance of water, the location sheltered from cold currents and the mostly south-facing exposure have actually created the ideal habitat required to grow vines.

And what vines they are, too! Because this is the place where Prosecco is made, the Italian
Vintage takes place under the watchful eye of the “Consorzio di Tutela”, the association dedicated to the observance of Doc regulations, which, after checking the ripening of the grapes, issues the latest advice to producers and then, during the vine-growers’ meeting, gives harvesting operations the go-ahead.

Pressing
This is done with machines that process the berries in a very soft, gentle way to extract only the first press juice: the most highly valued part that comes from the heart of the berry.

Decanting
The cloudy must is allowed to stand at low temperatures (5-10°C) in steel tanks. After 10 hours or a little more, the impurities settle on the bottom of the tank. The clear part is transferred into special new containers and the fermentation process begins.

Winemaking
The yeast causes alcoholic fermentation.
The temperature of the steel tanks must be kept at a constant 10-20°C for the 15-20 days it takes to make the wine.

Second fermentation (putting in the bubbles)
This is where the oenologist and his experience, his taste and his style come into play. This is the person who samples the various lots in the winery to assemble the various blends, grouping the wines according to period, origin and organoleptic properties.

Only a few rare lots (cru), which feature perfect style and balance to start with, undergo second fermentation to form the bubbles without any blending.

Bottling
Different bottles are used depending on the kind of wine. Rhenish or Bergundian for Still wine; Champagne for Semi-sparkling; and the classic Prosecco for Sparkling wine. They are all dark green in colour, thus protecting the wine from light. The wine is left in the bottle for thirty to forty days before it is ready for sale.

PROSECCO
Types and recommended accompaniments

Still
Colour: a delicate straw-yellow
Bouquet: apple, pear, almond and thousand-flower honey
Structure: soave and persistent; slightly bitterish aftertaste, hence more complex and multifarious
Temperature and recommended accompaniments: serve at 10-12°C with delicate appetizers - seafood and otherwise. Noodle soups and white meat

Semi-sparkling
Colour: straw-yellow
Bouquet: floral, fruity aromas marked by a dominant unripe apple and lemon note
Structure: (on lees re-fermented in the bottle) of wine.

Sparkling
Types: Brut and Extra Dry
Brut
Colour: straw-yellow
Bouquet: citrus fruit aroma and vegetable-like notes accompanied by an unusual and somewhat agreeable bread crust note

Brut and Extra Dry

Structure: energetic
The mousse finish assures a persistent flavour and delicate fullness of taste
Temperature and recommended accompaniments: serve at 6-9° excellent for any occasion, it goes well with meat and fish dishes alike

**Extra Dry**
Colour: bright straw-yellow
Bouquet: fruit, apple, pear, citrus fruits and flowers
Structure: smooth and, at the same time, dry by virtue of its acidity
Temperature and recommended accompaniments: serve at 7-9° with seafood, light sauces, fresh cheeses, biscuits and dry sweets

**Il Prosecco Superiore di Cartizze**
Colour: bright with golden reflections
Bouquet: ripe fruit: from apple to pear, from apricot to citrus fruits. There is an evident scent of roses and the taster is surprised by an aftertaste of sugared almonds
Structure: smooth and, at the same time, full and convincing with a light mousse finish
Temperature and recommended accompaniments: serve at 7-8° at the end of a meal with dessert, especially with short pastry, fruit tarts, homemade cakes and biscuits. Excellent for making toasts and at ceremonies served in appropriate flutes.

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*Cartizze and its wine country are covered in detail with a wealth of information in the section on Valdobbiadene*

**VARIETIES WORTH REMEMBERING**

**Bianchetta**
Mentioned in records since the sixteenth century, it would appear to come from the Treviso area. A smooth, well-balanced body, it has a slight smell of musk and is usually used to refine Prosecco.

**Perera**
Around since the 19th century, it is used in small percentages when making Prosecco, to increase its fragrance and aroma. Nobody is quite sure where the name came from: whether from the slightly pear shape of the berries or from the sweet aroma of pears (in Italian *pere*).

**Verdiso**
Grown since 1700, it is used in making Prosecco to boost flavour and acidity, and to balance out the acid component typical in warm vintages.
THE WINES

CONEGLIANO VALDOBBIADENE PROSECCO DOC

Prosecco Spumante
The best-known sparkling wine, available in two versions (Extra Dry and Brut)

Sparkling Prosecco
A dry and light wine, made for younger wine lovers

Still Prosecco
Made with the most precious parts of the grapes, harvested from more dense vineyards, with fewer racemes

Prosecco di Valdobbiadene Superiore di Cartizze
A high-quality wine, with a dense and agreeable taste from the complete maturation of the grapes

COLLI DI CONEGLIANO DOC

Colli di Conegliano Doc White and Red Wines
Two elite wine ranges, from the skilful combination of the most prestigious grapes from the Conegliano Hills

VERDISO IGT (Typical Geographical Indication)
A dry, fresh wine; currently available in the following versions: still, spumante, sparkling and passito

Refrontolo Passito Doc
A very renowned wine, produced only in small quantities from grapes selected during the harvest

Torchiato di Fregona
A wine requiring a careful vinification, obtained by Prosecco, Verdiso and Boschera grapes
“Primavera del Prosecco” (Prosecco Spring wine festival).

When the hills fill with colours and fragrances, it’s time to taste wines from the last harvest. Spring arrives, and with it the “wine festival” and Shows that, from Valdobbiadene to Conegliano, mark the “official” début of wines from the last harvest before a thirsting public. It’s a time for celebration, getting together, the collective rite of a whole region.
Located in the Veneto region, in the North-East of Italy, just a few kilometres from Venice, the Province of Treviso can be easily reached by:

**Motorways:**
- A27 VENICE-BELLUNO (exit at Vittorio Veneto North and South, Conegliano, Treviso North and South, Mogliano Veneto)
- A4 TURIN-TRIESTE (exit Cessalto)

**Airports:**
- A.Canova (Treviso), M. Polo (Venice)

**Railway lines:**
- Venice-Udine, Venice-Belluno, Vicenza-Treviso
Romans, Lombards, Franks, Venetians, none of the peoples who have spent time on this land have been immune to its charms. What nouns should we use? Sentiment, idyll, sweetness? It’s almost too little, too trite. Such is the enchantment of these places, which look like they’ve been created by a naïf painter’s brush. Corners have been chamfered, everything is made to measure, smoothed, each detail stands out on the canvas. A farmhouse, a vineyard clinging to a steep slope, a chapel, the remains of a fort, a flower-filled meadow. The combined charms of this vine-growing, agricultural, wooded, pastoral landscape reawaken slumbering emotions. Our travels along Italy’s oldest Wine Road begin in Conegliano. The original ancient road has been altered slightly to create the current route. The starting point will be the School of Wine (Istituto Enologico) founded in 1876 by Antonio Carpenè. For a few years now, it has also housed the faculty of agriculture, which does the Decree Course in Viticulture and Oenology. Once you’ve toured its Winery, take the road running past the School, which climbs up to the rural village named Collalbrigo: after travelling just a few hundred metres from the centre of Conegliano, you’ll notice how the scenery immediately flaunts its beauty. The view opens up, revealing the surrounding hills - gently rolling and covered in vines, they are dotted with trees, whilst small wooded patches can be glimpsed in the valleys. In the distance, the bell towers belonging to numerous churches become a point of reference for visitors. As you continue northwards, the road meets the original route at a place called Guizza. Continuing to the left, you enter the Feletto region. The first town
you will meet is Rua di San Pietro di Feletto, immediately followed by San Pietro. The old rural villages of Antiga, Borgo Pol, Borgo Agnese and Borgo Colle are worth a quick visit. Tip: the churchyard of the ancient parish church Pieve di San Pietro is an ideal place to stop off on a clear day and enjoy the magnificent view. The next stretch of road leading to Refrontolo affords a succession of panoramic glimpses, whilst you leave the parish church behind you, nestled amongst the extensive emerald-green vineyards set in a hill-ridge pattern. Refrontolo, which we know was once a popular holiday spot amongst the Venetian Republic’s nobles - by virtue of its healthy climate - is also home to Passito DOC, the strong sweet wine celebrated by Mozart in his Don Giovanni. Once past Refrontolo, following the road as it descends, you can see the sign for Molinetto della Croda: this is without a doubt one of the most evocative stages of the journey.
Conegliano 15 January 1877
«Ladies and Gentlemen! Italy is the land of wine and should also be ‘Europe’s leading winemaker’». «...the beneficial enlightenment of science applied to the most beautiful and lucrative of the earth’s fruits shall radiate from Conegliano like the spokes of a wheel, extending to the Veneto Region and even farther afield». These are some of the words spoken by Antonio Carpenè the day the School was opened. It was founded in 1876, the result of a rewarding joint venture between the chemist A. Carpenè and agronomist and wine expert G.B. Cerletti. With a university-like setup and significant contributions from important names in wine, such as L. Manzoni and G. Dal Masso, it has earned itself a highly prestigious place in Italy, and is still at the forefront when it comes to studies and research into vines and wine. Prestige that is further strengthened today by the fact that it is also home to the faculty of Agriculture. It is here that degree and doctorate courses are held for the university education of operators and researchers in the field of grape and wine production.

Don’t miss out on a tour of the Winery, where you will be guided by an expert through the various stages of the winemaking process.

Opening hours:
from Monday to Friday from 8am to 2pm
T: +39 0438 453617
cantina@scuolaenologica.it
CHAPINE’, the new wine produced in the experimental Winery run by Conegliano’s School of Wine, is a classic-method sparkling wine. Chapiné is the acronym of CHArdoonnay and PInot NEro: the product has indeed been made from Pinot Nero grapes with a small amount of Chardonnay added. The wine comes from the 2001 vintage. The cuvée was constituted in May 00, whilst it was disgorged in December 00. For the entire duration of its making, in strict conformity with production protocol dictated by the classic method, final-year students on the wine courses took it in turns to move the bottles (“remuage”). 950 750ml bottles were produced and twenty 1500ml bottles.

**Technical properties**

**Appearance:** bright yellow colour with golden reflections. Abundant, persistent foam with a rich, very fine string of bubbles

**Nose:** strong, complex and persistent fragrance, dominated by bread crust and yeast. Evident rose floral note and aroma of ripe fruit with scents of dry and candied fruit. These are followed by slight notes of roasting, coffee and chocolate, which grace the product with tone and elegance.

**Taste:** rich and full on the palate with bubbles creating a creamy sensation. Features acidity which is well harmonized with the salty element. Good, pleasant structure, with dry, persistent finish.

**INTERESTING NEWS: THE LASTEST NEWCOMER, CHAPINE’**

Sweet and mellow, this is a very interesting wine that has now been given the Doc label denoting government control of origin and production and is sold as Colli di Conegliano Refrontolo Passito. The vine is rough and is thought to be a native variety. Records date from the 16th century, though it appears that the strong sweet passito wine came to the area in around 1000 AD. In this area, the Marzemino grapes are left to dry on trellises in dry, well-ventilated places. Marzemino, Torchiato di Fregona and Colli di Conegliano, in their white and red versions, come from the part of the Treviso region to have been given Doc status most recently, i.e. Doc Colli di Conegliano.

**REFRONTOLO PASSITO, I.E. MARZEMINO**
**Venetian nobles and the wine harvest**
The famous Venetian playwright Goldoni tells us, in 'incriminating' detail, just how the lords from the city who came to these hills for their holidays spent their time. His plays recount their "short breaks", which inevitably became longer and turned into a "grape cure", which ended after the summer because, after all, there would have been no point going back to the Lagoon with that unbearable heat...

**Rua's hermitage sacked by Napoleon**
In 1670, the Venetian patrician Alvise Canal donated the Church of Rua to the hermit monks of San Romualdo.

The monks built 14 small cells around it, each with a garden, vegetable patch, partitions, oratory, toilet facilities and cloister walls. Alas, the whole complex was suppressed by order of Napoleon in his 1806 and 1810 provisions. Today, it's nice to relive the peace of the hermits. The cells still stand, whilst little remains of what was once the old place of prayer.

**The Parish church**
The earliest record of the parish church Pieve di San Pietro dates from 1124, though it would appear the building goes back even farther, to the 8th century. Surprisingly enough, it was most probably built on the ruins of a Roman altar used to celebrate pagan rites. A lovely flight of steps takes the visitor into the airy portico, which affords a 360-degree view of the surroundings.

The exterior is decorated with numerous frescoes, the most noteworthy being without a doubt Cristo della Domenica (Sunday Christ) portraying a monumental full-length Christ surrounded by everyday work tools, a warning to abstain from all forms of labour on the Sabbath. It stands as a valuable direct testimony to daily life and its tools in the second half of the 14th century, a prolific period for this anonymous local fresco-painter, who was inspired by the modern style of Tomaso da Modena.
Naively enough, we sometimes wonder whether painters have copied the Veneto region's landscape or whether someone has taken the time to adapt the scenery to their paintings. In Giovan Battista Cima's works, true to nature, this faithfulness blends with taste and aesthetic sense. Truth merges with beauty. The natural data available to the artist are reprocessed by means of intellectual reconsideration. On Cima's canvases, a sweet, subtle atmosphere prevails, a languid nostalgia, whether the scenery is the focus or appears just as background. The composition is determined by the landscape, which becomes its reason for being and its justification.


Although it gets very busy in summer, this mill named Molinetto della Croda, literally rock face mill, is a truly magical place. The building, partly built into the rock with the rest made of brick, is one of the rare examples of rural 16th-century architecture. The River Lierza waterfall drops 12 metres and, in the pool beneath, a whirling current prevents floating objects from escaping the water's grasp. The pool is only cleared after heavy rains. The Mill ground flour until 1953, and then fell into disuse and was left abandoned for years. Recently renovated and consolidated with painstaking care, the old mill has been faithfully rebuilt and made to work again. We thoroughly recommend a walk in the woods. Various paths lead from the Mill, some climbing up to the top of the waterfall, whilst others go off into the wood: oaks seem to embrace the wayfarer and small violet cyclamens poke out from between the fallen leaves. Fragrances and silence nourish the spirit. Brief moments of enchantment.
Leaving Molinetto della Croda, go back towards Refrontolo, without climbing as far as the town though. Head instead for Solighetto. The road runs around the foot of the hills, and if you look to your right, you can admire the contours of Mount Cisa and Mount Villa, whose summits are covered in woods, whilst the lower slopes bear vines.

You are now entering an area known as Quartiere del Piave. An area of recent history that also speaks of an ancient past - crossed by the Lombards who settled here - and lastly, today, places marked by significant urban and industrial development. The road runs along the golden coast, that splendid succession of hills wreathed with rows of vines, which make embroidery-like patterns on the sun-kissed slopes. You will come across Solighetto, the adopted home of Treviso's own opera singer Toti dal Monte, who has a museum dedicated to her. Approaching from the right, you find Villa Brandolini d’Adda, headquarters of the “Consorzio di Tutela del Prosecco di Conegliano e Valdobbiadene” association, which makes sure the local Doc zone regulations are observed. Continuing along the road, you can barely tell where Solighetto ends and its neighbour Soligo begins.

Once called Soligon, Soligo rests peacefully at the foot of the hills known as Colle di San Gallo and Col de Fer. The hermitage of San Gallo is a must-see - the earliest records of the place date from 1354. If you carry on towards Farra - whose name betrays its Lombard origins - you will see the small town spreading at the foot of the hills on the west side of the River Soligo. Not far away, you can just make out the Credazzo Towers, which get their name from
credia, an old name for clay. These ruins are all that remain of the fortified building built by the da Caminos. The fort, whose earliest records date from 1233, was handed over to the Collaltos before being destroyed in 1413 by the Hungarians who stormed through the region. Once you reach Col San Martino, we suggest you leave the road and walk to the Oratorio di San Vigilio, an oratory in a rustic frescoed Romanesque style given a characteristic appearance by its tower bearing a large white clock. The path off the road is well signposted and, although quite a steep climb, it’s worth the effort: you will be rewarded at the top by a view embracing the whole Piave valley, stretching way into the distance well beyond the town’s districts. The road from Col San Martino to Colbertaldo boasts some particularly lovely scenery: towns and villages disappear, replaced once again by the hills terraced with row upon row of vines. Small casere - stone barns once used to store hay and tools - stand out here and there against the green backdrop.
The association was founded on the 7th of June 1962 and, after seven years, was acknowledged by the Ministry of Agriculture as the body dedicated to the observance of Doc regulations for the area producing Prosecco di Conegliano-Valdobbiadene. Over the years, the Consorzio has developed various activities, concentrating above all on promoting the quality of Prosecco wine. There are three areas of development: technical and scientific; observance of regulations; and lastly promotion. Numerous exhibitions devoted to Prosecco are organized all over the Treviso region to achieve these goals.
The origin of this name, as is the case with many other towns in the area, is Lombard. The faras were the kin groups sharing a common lineage, constituting the social organization of the people. According to the history books, in 569, Alboino having lead his troops in the strenuous crossing of the Alps, chose one of these places to rest before descending onto the plains. Constituted the fara, he continued his march towards Treviso. Lombard settlements were established one after another for two centuries until the Franks came. For years, the Lombards defended the land fiercely, then they were converted to Christianity. With the aid of the Cistercian and Benedictine monks from the small local monasteries, they learnt how to till the land and turned from being warriors into farmers.

FARRA DI SOLIGO
A NAME FROM A DISTANT PAST
Once past Colbertaldo, the road continues northwards and, after a few kilometres, takes you into the Cartizze area. There are those who reckon this wine is fit to be served at the table of the gods, and it’s hard to say they’re wrong. For the wine tourist, this is a truly meaningful stage of the journey. Here you will see that vines are grown on steeper slopes, advancing right up to the side of the road. The vineyards’ support systems are made of wood. The vines, a hundred years old, look a bit sad though they are actually strong and tough. These hills boast a rather unique morphology: steep but with vines planted on every inch of the areas getting the most sun, whilst the north-facing slopes are heavily wooded. Here, grapes are harvested later than elsewhere, giving berries time to dry naturally on the plant. Thus the resulting Prosecco will boast an even higher concentration of fragrances. This part of the journey is a real joy, in terms of both the scenery and the places of interest offered by the municipalities and districts it takes you through. Santo Stefano with the ancient village of Follo, which gets its name from the fulling (in Italian follatura) of woollen cloth, practiced since the 15th century; San Pietro di Barbozza with its characteristic “closed-court” villages, a typical example of spontaneous architecture. Then we have Saccol, the place most renowned for producing Cartizze. It’s worth stopping off in Valdobbiadene to visit Villa dei Cedri, a Liberty-style building now home to the Altamarca association, where the National Sparkling Wine Show (Mostra Nazionale degli Spumanti)
is hosted in late September each year. The Augusta-Altinate Roman road is supposed to have passed through this small town, which stands on the upland plain at the foot of Mount Barbaria and Cesen. The 18th-century church here is worth a look, with its works by Palma il Giovane, F. Beccaruzzi and Paris Bordon, as is the 15th-century church of San Gregorio, with the altar-piece by D. Brusasorzi. Once Valdobbiadene is behind you, continue towards Santo Stefano and the road will soon take you to Guia and Giuetta, where you can see some beautiful stone houses. Their names come from the Gothic word wid, also the Old English root of "wide". After Guia and Giuetta, once you reach the SP 123 regional road, turn left towards Campea. You'll find yourself enveloped again by an untouched rural environment: the valley winds its way between the two slopes. Once more, it is as though everything were part of a perfect painting: meadows, vineyards, the old barns (in Italian casere).
106 hectares of vineyards, which, on the maps, appear as a small irregular circle. Hemmed in and protected by the hills of Santo Stefano, San Pietro di Barbozza and Saccol, in the municipality of Valdobbiadene, the plants growing here are nothing less than a goldmine. This is what we call cru, borrowing a French expression indicating a great wine or vintage. The geological conformation makes this area a particularly suitable habitat for vine growing.

The soil is rocky deep down and crumbly on the surface. It is mainly composed of limestone, clay and sandstone, which trap much-needed moisture so that the plant can regularly draw constant nourishment from the earth, even when the sun is at its fiercest and in times of drought. Moreover, this area boasts a special mild microclimate. Grapes allowed to ripen slowly develop a richer, fuller store of acids.

A FAMOUS FIGURE: VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS

Born somewhere around 530 AD in an undetermined location within the Piave region, later identified as Valdobbiadene, Venantius Fortunatus is considered the last poet of Latinity and the first poet of the Middle Ages. Despite very close ties with the episcopal circles of Aquileia, he shied away from a monastic career and went to study in Ravenna. To release himself from a vow made to St Martin, who had miraculously cured him of a serious eye ailment, he decided to make a pilgrimage to Tours. However, the religious vocation was in some way already written. His meeting with Radegund, wife of Clotaire I King of the Franks, in Poitiers, and above all with their daughter Agnes, abbess of the Sainte-Croix convent, was to radically change his life. He became a member of the clergy and was later appointed bishop of Poitiers. His role was important almost exclusively as the singer of hymns dedicated to the Saints (Vita Sancti Martini, Ave Maris Stella...), whilst some secular compositions are devoted to food, namely the joys of gourmet eating, which is a distinguishing trait of the region’s culture to this day.
LAND OF LEGENDS AND GODS: THE STORY OF ENDMION

According to legend, Endymion, a simple shepherd from these hills, was a youth of exceptional beauty. Selene, goddess of the Moon, head over heels in love with him, came down every night to see him. Their love lasted so long that Selene bore Endymion 500 children.

To preserve the young man’s beauty, Jove made him immortal. His immortality did him little good, however, being plunged into an eternal sleep! Selene, hopelessly in love, had to make do with watching him during the full moon: he had become nothing more than a handsome body that could no longer return her love…

THE PROSECCO CONFRATERNITY IN SAN PIETRO DI BARBOZZA

Founded in 1946, its members are not just the vintners, but include scholars, personalities and restaurant and bar owners, too. It is chaired by a Great Master and meets in an evocative underground cellar in San Pietro di Barbozza.

This is where new members are initiated, wine matters discussed, bottles sampled and so on. A selection of the “Best wine of the year” is made among those produced by the Order of the owners of wine-making companies; a limited series of 5000 bottles is produced, representing the highest levels of quality achieved during a specific year, and exalting the typical features of Prosecco di Valdobbiadene-Conegliano.
The journey is coming to a close. After passing through the areas of greatest interest - Feletto, the Piave District, the Valdobbiadene area - after visiting the numerous wineries, the wine estates, sampling the various qualities of Prosecco, the road home takes you back towards Conegliano. In Campea, it’s worth calculating some extra time to enjoy a walk through the old village. This has always been a hunting area, the wild, uncontaminated nature encouraging many animals to make their homes here. In point of fact, until two centuries ago, this was where the bear shooting parties set off from. The district was also the stage of a feud between the Brandolini nobles (who played the masters in the area) and the Savoini family: rivalry was so fierce in fact that Brandolino VI died when shot by his rival's harquebus during a hunt.

Leave Campea, cross the River Soligo and, once you reach the Pedeguarda neighbourhood, continue towards Farrò. You are given an all-embracing view of the valleys below. Though the geological conformation does not differ much from the places you have just left, you will be struck by the notable difference in the scenery: the vineyards are like islands rising up from the greenness of dense chestnut forests. Further up the road, you will come across Arfanta, followed by Tarzo and, lastly, Corbanese. The chain of mountains swoops steeply.
towards the plains of Vittorio Veneto and Conegliano. You now head for Cozzuolo, then continuing towards Carpesica, before finally reaching Ogliano whose name recalls the winter of 1707 when freezing cold destroyed most of the plants growing here, including the olive trees. The intensity of the landscape, now behind you, is replaced by the gentle rolling of the low hills on which vineyards vie for space with other crops. The view once again stretches as far as the eye can see: the bell towers of the parish churches, the villas perched on the tops of the hills, the farms, the towns... the sweet region called Marca Trevigiana.
In ancient times, the woods - both the chestnut woods and areas forested with other species of trees - together with the pastureland, were all part of a large collective estate. In the 16th century, the Republic of Venice decided to hand these lands over to the community, determining that the members of the villages' indigenous families be entitled to use them as they saw fit. 65% of the local wooded surface area was covered with chestnut trees: the logs were used as firewood and to fuel the kilns, the younger branches were used as stakes for the vines, whilst the older plants were cut to make beams. All this, though, was nothing compared to the importance the fruit had. For centuries, the chestnut was a hugely important food: its picking and the way it was then divided out were governed by special rules.

From the 18th century on, until the 19th century, the collective traditions began to die out, eventually disappearing altogether when the woods became state property. During the twentieth century, the exodus towards the lower-lying lands and the cities finally put an end to this tradition.

Today, there is renewed interest in growing this fruit. Above all, with the current passion for organic produce, the cultivation techniques employed do not use pesticides, making it a highly prized fruit. The chestnut festival "Festa dei Marroni" held in Combai in October is not to be missed.
The Collalto Feud includes lands that, to the east of Conegliano, fall within the municipality of Susegana and were once the property of the Lombard family, the Collaltos, who later became counts of Treviso. Even before 1000 AD, a great deal of land was donated to the Collaltos in their capacity as imperial officials. On the left of the River Piave first, then towards the northern side of the province of Treviso. Skilled in political relations and shrewd plotters, they always managed to secure important positions and consequently play an influential role in local political life. The centre of power was concentrated around Castello di Collalto, a castle built in around 1110 by Ensedisio I, and subsequently transferred to the fortified castle of San Salvatore, which Rambaldo VIII had erected in around 1300. The itinerary indicated takes in Castello di San Salvatore - which without a doubt bears the strongest iconographic testimony of this area - before venturing further into the lands of the ancient feud. Here, amongst the gentle hills, you can catch a glimpse every now and again of the old houses once occupied by the share-croppers, typically painted yellow with two horizontal red stripes. Once you reach Collalto, you can admire the remains of the Castle, which never fail to enchant.
There isn’t enough room here to tell the whole story of the house of Collalto, though you can find fine accounts in various textbooks and specialized guides. However, perhaps the odd “tip” on how to react when you stumble across a ghost might be in order...

No noble family worth its salt is without its eccentric, prominent characters, and the Collalto family certainly had its fair share. Two of the most outstanding members were Rambaldo VIII - a man wielding great political influence in the first half of the 14th century, responsible for the by-laws that governed the counties under the family for many centuries - and Rambaldo XIII, sixteenth count of Collalto. Commander of the lansquenets, this was the man accused of sacking Mantua in 1629, an event Alessandro Manzoni gives a good description of in his novel “The Betrothed”. The character arousing the most interest though is Bianca, known as Bianca di Collalto even though she was just a lady-in-waiting, around whose sad story a legend has been spun. Indeed, legend has it that in the 12th century, Tolberto di Collalto took the lunatic Aica da Camino as his wife. Aica, realizing that there was a fondness between her husband and her lady-in-waiting, didn’t miss a single opportunity to play cruel tricks on her. One day the nobleman, on the eve of a journey, whilst saying goodbye to his wife who was having her hair combed by Bianca, met the lady-in-waiting’s gaze in the mirror and Aica immediately became aware of the sentimental bond between the two, clearly in love. As soon as her husband left, she shut Bianca in a tower and the poor girl starved to death. The ghost of the unfortunate Bianca is said to have appeared to the Collaltos on various occasions and still drifts around the castle.
Once you reach Refrontolo, you can continue northwards as far as Rolle. This detour will take you to the area visited by the last segment of the main itinerary, which you instead leave straight away, heading instead for Follina. This route, which offers some charming countryside, takes you to areas of great historical, architectural and cultural interest, such as Follina Abbey (Abbazia di Follina) and, in Cison di Valmarino, the Castello Brandolini castle. The latter, originally dating from the 13th century, was largely rearranged between 1510 and 1525 by Anton Maria Brandolini in a Venetian Renaissance style, and later renovated and extended in the 18th century. Today, it is a famous hotel and conference...
centre. Following the itinerary further, you meet other towns that have preserved the flavour of bygone days, like Tovena, Santa Maria, Revine. The itinerary ends with Serravalle and Ceneda. The Wine Route is part of the wider Marca Storica route (for further information, see the Marca Storica brochure).
Follina pokes out from amongst the vineyards at the foot of Belluno's pre-Alps. The stream of the same name running through the town rises from the depths of a valley that was probably filled by a lake in ancient times. Like Follo (in the Cartizze area), Follina also gets its name from folli, the fulling mills for working wool. It would appear that this trade was introduced by the monks in the early Middle Ages and it was not until the 18th century that it really took off and became an economic resource. A great many factories indeed sprung up along the River Soligo during that period, such as the former Andretta wool mill, which harnessed the water’s motive power for its industrial production, still exploited by the Busatti-Bonsenbiante and Paoletti wool factories. Along the route, you will see the wash-houses, the Bottarel forge and Fiorin mill. In the nineteenth century, there was a lull in the wool working and dyeing industry, which instead made a recovery and prospered once again in the last century together with silk working.

Even though it is an important place of prayer and certainly a little off the wine track proper, Follina Abbey (Abbazia di Follina) is still a compulsory stop-off.

Its origins are a grey area, with its initial founding by Benedictine monks linked to a muddle of dates: some records have it as dating from about 1170, others 1145 or 1155. These dates are clearly to be considered with due reserve.

What is certain is that the monastery’s period of greatest splendour was in the interval between the 12th and 14th centuries, when the work of the monks helped elevate the area to great economic

and spiritual prosperity.

When Follina was attached to the Republic of Venice (1388), the Cistercian community was suppressed and the Abbey transferred to the Camaldolensian order in the early part of the 16th century. In the nineteenth century, the delightful place of prayer went through a cruel and sad period of decay. It was only with new renovation work in 1915 that it was restored to its former glory.

The square-shaped Cloister is enclosed by a series of elegant columns in local stone, and you find yourself wondering whether the architect who designed the Cloisters in New York (Mediaeval Art Collection at the Metropolitan Museum) had the Follina Abbey in mind at the time...
SERRAVALLE AND CENEDA, NOW VITTORIO VENETO

Not everyone knows that the ancient, elegant Serravalle was, in past centuries, a great economic power. Its strategic location made the old town an extremely important centre of trade from the Middle Ages to the fall of Venice. The great square, where craftsmen and traders did business, is even said to have become a place where goods were priced. Its importance was attributable above all to the working of iron, copper, lead and precious metals, as well as to wool and cotton working. And when it came to metals and the production of weapons, it seems Serravalle was second only to Toledo. Just think that in the sixteenth century the Borsoi firm (in fierce competition with the Marsonis' firm) could produce 12,000 swords and 12,000 harquebuses a year for the Republic of Venice! Such was the level of wellbeing and wealth that restrictions were imposed in 1600 to check the unrestrained luxury, forbidding women to dress with furs and brocades and to wear countless precious jewels (only a string of pearls was allowed). Not even the men were allowed jewels in gold and precious stones. Beautiful and rich, yet strong and generous, Serravalle is a strip of Venice on the mainland.
Anzano, Fregona, Osigo, Montaner, Anzano, Fregona, Osigo, Montaner, Sarmede and Cappella Maggiore, this loop takes in the whole area known for the wine named Torchiato di Fregona. Here the vineyards alternate with dense woods, whilst fruit trees (fig, plum, cherry, apple and pear trees) can be glimpsed between the vines. The meadows once used for pasture are instead located on the higher land. Torchiato di Fregona is a delicious yet still largely unknown wine, which certainly deserves greater renown. It is yielded by Verdiso, Prosecco and Boschera grapes and its making into wine requires all the patience demanded by the strong sweet passito wines. Grapes are harvested in October and left to “rest” in baskets. They are then hung over beams and placed on trellises in dry places so that the water in the grapes evaporates. At Easter time, the berries are selected and sent off to the crusher. They are pressed at least twice (torchiato is Italian for pressed, hence the name), releasing a dense, sugary liquid that is then left to ferment in oak, acacia or chestnut barrels. The wine is not put on the market until after the 1st of December of the year after the vintage. The sweet, precious nectar has just one flaw: so little of it is produced that it’s impossible to satisfy all its admirers. It’s worth taking the time to stop off in the village of Sarmede, known for its frescoes by Zavrel, the painter inspiring the international exhibition of children’s illustrations (Mostra Internazionale di Illustrazione per l'Infanzia). The exhibition, held each year over January and February, displays works by artists from all over the world.
We owe our understanding of the lay of the land, and how it has changed over the centuries, mainly to toponymy. Here are a few examples of revealing place names: Manzana is of Roman origin and comes from Mancius, a proper name; Sbraide is instead Lombard, from braida, an enclosed farm; Ronchel has Mediaeval origins, coming from roncare, which means to till; whilst Castagné comes from castagno, Italian for chestnut. Records predating the 16th century contain a legacy of words of rural origin: Prade, from prato, Italian for meadow; Carpesica, perhaps from carpinus, a species of tree; Maren from mara, namely marsh; Vinera from the low Latin vinarius, vintner.

This kind of information helps us understand how the hills were used for pasture and for producing timber, whilst farming was concentrated in the fortified complexes or towns and villages. Between 1400 and 1500, various pictures show how, in addition to small woods and considerable stretches of pastureland, small plots of land were planted with vines and sown with other crops. They were adjacent to a number of homes built outside the towns. On the higher areas of the hills, the woods and pastures were the uncontested rulers. Very few portions were specialized in growing vines, whilst the vineyards were mainly to be found inside the defensive walls. Between 1600 and 1700, houses were once again distributed along the old Roman roads, though a number of rural villages began to take root.

By 1700, the landscape typical of hillside vine growing was a common sight. However, the region was greatly affected by irrational forms of exploitation. Records from the period point to an almost total absence of trees, not just on the hills’ lower regions, but even on the more mountainous slopes. Hence we are given a variegated and at the same time controversial picture: little intensive growing of vines and other crops, expanses of pastureland as far as the eye can see and hardly any trees. 19th-century iconography again reveals bare hills and only a scattering of trees. Specialized vine growing in the mid-19th century was limited to the Valdobbiadene area alone. It wasn’t until the 20th century - until the ’60s and ’70s no less - that the real vine-growing boom hit the whole of Treviso’s hill region.
A feast of poetry and prose

It's hard to choose a piece of literature, to decide which author best expresses the sentiment for his land. It’s hard because there are a thousand quotes we’d like to include. We’d like to take quotes from people who’ve recounted their native town, as well as from people writing about wine and vintages; authors writing of inebriation; authors who are accomplished in elegies; authors recounting the legends; authors of refined verses. Not to mention those who have described the countryside and who have recounted the exploits of commanders; those who have told love stories and who have written autobiographical novels. To mention the classical authors, those from the past, those from the last century and their contemporary counterparts. But it’s just not possible. So in the end we’ve chosen a poem by Andrea Zanzotto (Pieve di Soligo, 11) and a page of literature by Giovanni Comisso (Treviso, 1 - 1). We find that these two choices cover everything.

Ormai

Ormai la primula e il calore ai piedi e il verde acume del mondo I tappeti scoperti le logge vibrate dal vento ed il sole tranquillo baco di spinosi boschi; il mio male lontano, la sete distinta come un’altra vita nel petto
Qui non resta che cingersi intorno il paesaggio qui volgere le spalle

From «Dietro il paesaggio» (1940-1948) by Andrea Zanzotto, one of the greatest living Italian poets, who has always been very close to his native land of Treviso.
“When Autumn came, the meadows immediately turned a bright, moist green. All of a sudden, a shot would hang in the air, from the rifle of some hunter walking along the hedgerows, where hares escaping the first chills would hide in their burrows. In the fields, where the corn had been harvested, sparrows fluttered, pecking at the fallen kernels. The strong smell of must came from the houses.”

“As soon as the summer heat begins to wane, the grapes are harvested. That day, the boys, who have inevitably been warned by their fathers not to hang around the vines plucking off berries, can eat the grapes that have fallen onto the ground, and quickly steal the odd bunch from the shoots. Even the old women greedily come to help. It’s a slow job that follows the dieing of the sun. As murmured words are exchanged between the rows, there is always someone who conveniently falls victim to the practical jokes of all the others. The tub fills as a continuous stream of baskets is emptied into it, and is then pushed under the porch ready for treading to start. The boy whose body has filled out that year into a more manly shape and whose voice has broken wants to try at all costs: you can see the excitement of the novelty in his eyes. They take off their shoes, pull up their trousers, wash their legs in the fountain and get in to do the treading, immediately attracting the bees with the sweetness. The jet of liquid is dense, reddish and foamy. And like the bees, the women buzz about, breathing in the smell, watching and, finally, with glass in hand, overcome their shyness and fill it ‘til their hands are red, gulping down the liquid because, you know, it’s good for you. The people doing the treading also want to try, and in the end all the others do, too. The treaders, though, become slowly inebriated by the smell that rises ever stronger from under the pounding of their legs and the drunkenness tames them into industrious silence. Then, suddenly, the larking starts as they splatter the cheeks of anyone passing near enough with red. The shortening autumn day draws to a close and the vines in the fields are left thinned out and lighter.”

Giovanni Comisso, “La mia casa di campagna” (My country home), Milan 1984, Longanesi & C