

Trifling With Prosecco

Prosecco has been in the news lately with Italy trying to ban the use of the name for anything other than the Italian sparkling wine made in the Prosecco designated area in Northern Italy. This is unfortunate for the King Valley growers in Victoria, many of Northern Italian heritage themselves, who have been hugely successful with their Prosecco. Technically I think the fact that Prosecco is the name of the grape variety, until the recent back peddling name change by Italy, gives us some legitimacy but trade negotiations are complex and open to significant compromises and trade offs. While not a trifling matter for our Prosecco producers I think we should be confident with the quality of our products by using our own regional names if we have to. In the meantime a Melbourne summer calls for some chilled Prosecco, whether as an aperitif or with a plate of Australian grilled prawns or other seafood or light salads lunches on the terrace. It's popular for a reason; it's crisp fresh taste is appealing in many situations. I have even done my bit of trifling with Prosecco and used it to make a wine sabayon (French) or zabaglione (Italian) cream. Flavoured with orange zest, chilled and folded through with whipped cream it is a wonderful dessert served in a glass with sliced strawberries or layered with sponge fingers and fruit for, you guessed it, a trifle. Serve with a King Valley Prosecco of course.

Strawberry Orange Prosecco Trifle

- 4 egg yolks
- 150 g caster sugar
- zest of an orange
- 300 ml prosecco or white wine

- juice of three large oranges
- 300 ml thickened cream
- 1 500 g packet Unibic sponge finger biscuits
- 3 punnets strawberries

To make the zabaglione place the egg yolks, 100 grams of the sugar, orange zest and 250 ml of the prosecco in a bowl that fits securely over a saucepan of gently simmering water and whisk the contents until thickened. Be careful not to overcook the cream. Cool the thickened zabaglione and place in the fridge to chill. Squeeze the oranges into a small saucepan and add the sugar. Reduce over medium heat to 2/3 of the original volume. Cool and add 50 ml prosecco to the reduced juice and pour into a flat bowl large enough for soaking sponge finger biscuits. Whip the cream to soft peaks and fold through the zabaglione. Hull the strawberries and halve them or slice the larger ones. Now you are ready to assemble the trifle. In a large deep glass bowl arrange the sponge fingers, soaking one at a time in the orange juice, vertically around the sides of the dish. Place strawberry halves, cut side facing outwards, in between the sponge fingers. Place some fingers in the base of the bowl. You may have to break them in half to do this. Place a quarter of the cream on the base followed by the strawberries and a layer of sponge fingers. Continue layering, finishing with a layer of cream on the top. You can decorate the top with more fruit if you wish but best to do that just before serving with fresh strawberries, blueberries, mint leaves or nothing at all. Ultimately you are going to serve large spoonfuls of the trifle in a bowl which will taste great but is not the most photogenic of desserts. Chill the assembled trifle overnight for best results.

