



INDY/LIFE

UK MAY HAVE REACHED 'PEAK PROSECCO' AS SALES SLOW, REPORT SUGGESTS

Getty/iStock

Has everyone's favourite sparkling wine had its moment in the sun?

RACHEL HOSIE

@rachel_hosie

Tuesday 29 May 2018 11:32

[CLICK TO FOLLOW
INDY/LIFE](#)

The UK may be reaching “peak prosecco”, a report suggests, as sales of the sparkling wine continue to increase but at a slower rate.

Research by accountancy group UHY Hacker Young found that 35.8 million gallons of sparkling wine was sold last year, an increase of 5 per cent on the previous 12 months.

While this is still growth, it was the smallest increase since 2011, thought to be because of rising import costs from Italy and France because of sterling's weakness.



The researchers believe prosecco may be suffering from brand overexposure through overstocking at supermarkets.

Spokesman James Simmonds said: “A 5 per cent increase in sales is not at all bad but that comes after several years of double-digit growth. Unless the industry can revitalise its image this year, we may now be reaching peak prosecco.

READ MORE**Why you should drink champagne and prosecco out of a magnum bottle**

“It is hard for a luxury product to make the leap into the mass market without losing its reputation for exclusivity. A lot of English wine producers are now vying to capture the space left, as prosecco moves to the mainstream.”

Rachel Hosie tries out a champagne glass which can hold a whole bottle

Indeed, with prosecco now being seen as an almost everyday tippie for many people, consumers may be turning towards more high end alternatives to mark special occasions.

According to head sommelier at The Chester Grosvenor, Derek Scaife, prosecco will never replace champagne: “Despite prosecco’s surge in popularity, it poses little threat to champagne’s enduring, universal appeal.”

But it’s not just champagne – English sparkling wines, such as Nyetimber and Chapel Down, are becoming increasingly popular and the sales reflect that.

At the end of 2017, Liz Williams from Marks & Spencer said: “We have seen sales of English sparkling wine go from strength to strength at M&S over the past few years and we currently sell 17 English sparkling wines across our stores. Sales of English sparkling rose 15 per cent last year versus the previous year and we anticipate that this trend will continue in 2018.”

What’s more, Britons are increasingly trying lesser known sparkling wines – sales of crémant, which is produced in various regions across France, were recently revealed to be up by 28 and 16 per cent at Waitrose and Majestic respectively this year.

**READ MORE****The sparkling wine to rival prosecco**

And of course, there’s still Spanish cava and German sekt, which are typically cheaper than prosecco too.

Wine expert and presenter of The Wine Show, **Amelia Singer**: “I think a huge factor is that thanks to prosecco people realise that there are lots of other fun sparkling wine styles out there which don’t have to be as pricey as champagne and still be well made. There is also the worry of overexposure for any brand.

“Bubbles are traditionally associated with celebration, aspiration or a week highlight. Prosecco may now be seen as a less classy or at least less ‘special’ wine style due to its meteoric sales rise in the last few years.”



Despite the new figures, the UK is still the world’s biggest consumer of prosecco, quaffing a third of the total amount produced every year, and prosecco producers aren’t too worried.

“We confirm that the growth of prosecco has slowed down, but we do not consider this as a concern,” Sandro Bottega, owner and managing director of Bottega, told *The Independent*. “This is also the logical consequence of lack of produce: there is little quantity available of glera grapes, consequently production cannot be increased.

“We are confident that prosecco consumption will experience an organic increase in demand: people who routinely drink prosecco will drink a little less, while consumers who do not drink prosecco yet will start enjoying some, maybe a glass a day or on weekends. We believe that setting a limit to the production of prosecco will lead to a positive market consolidation with adequate quality levels.”

More about: | [prosecco](#) | [sparkling wine](#) | [Champagne](#)

