



RACK & RIDDLE®
The Best of All Things Sparkling®



CALSECCO®

CREATING CALIFORNIA'S ANSWER TO PROSECCO

The Vision Behind CALSECCO

Co-authored by **Manveer Sandhu**, *Executive Director of Winemaking*
and **Kim Kulchycki**, *Sr. Director Marketing*



Why California Needs Something Fresh & New



Sparkling wine is increasing in popularity, filling more need states for consumers than almost any other type of wine. Once regarded as the primary celebratory beverage for holidays and special occasions, its market position has shifted dramatically in the last 10 years. Sparkling wine has now evolved into an everyday beverage enjoyed throughout the year.

The popularity of Prosecco has made sparkling wine accessible and popular with a new and younger group of wine drinkers — the elusive Gen Z and Millennials. The ones who grew up drinking sparkling water, seltzers and other refreshing beverages from other categories but haven't quite "gotten" wine. Well, they understand Prosecco!

Given California's popularity and appeal are undeniable and pervasive — the wines, culture, food and lifestyle — it stands to reason consumers would love a premium sparkling wine made in this style from California.

For decades, California has made traditional method sparkling wine that stands proudly beside the world's finest. California has also offered exceptional value in entry level Charmat based sparkling wines.

Even so, there was still a prominent gap on the shelf. The premium Charmat sparkling wine space was left unfilled by California, ceding to the approachable style owned by Italy with Prosecco.

When the Rack & Riddle winemaking team began thinking about creating CALSECCO, we were not interested in simply replicating an Italian wine in California. The more interesting opportunity was to understand what made that style so successful, then ask what California could bring to the conversation. We have the terroir, the grower partners, and winemaking talent. The opportunity was to put those pieces together in a way that felt distinctly Californian.

We wanted something bright, fresh, fruit-forward and approachable, but we also wanted the quality and discipline behind it to be unmistakable. The process took us from the Prosecco houses of Italy back to the vineyards of California, through dozens of blending trials and into a very different way of thinking about what the promise of CALSECCO could be.

At heart, CALSECCO is a love letter to the California wine industry, a promise made and kept to the sparkling wine category and a belief that when we build something new together, growers, producers, retailers and sparkling wine lovers will all share in the growth. A rising tide lifts all boats.

Inspiration for Making CALSECCO: Visiting Prosecco Houses in Italy, 2022

A 2022 visit to Prosecco producers gave our winemaking team an important reminder that there is no single Prosecco profile. There are meaningful differences in style, scale and expression.

Tasting the wines in their intended setting revealed their true character: their stylistic diversity, natural approachability, versatility at the table, and the fact that Prosecco is enjoyed far beyond celebrations and special occasions.

There were other important winemaking lessons learned in Italy. Prosecco is made at remarkable scale, with large-capacity presses designed to handle significant volume during a compressed harvest window. And its supply often rests on a European model of small growers and co-ops feeding programs both large and small, much like Champagne. Those observations about grape sourcing and gentle processing, and how an entire region organizes itself around a style, would shape every decision that followed once the team came home. Our own approach to coordinated sourcing, shared standards and long-term grower partnerships in California seemed well-suited to this model.

Manveer Sandhu, our Head Winemaker, came back convinced that the classic varietals used in traditional method sparkling programs were not automatically the right toolkit for CALSECCO.

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I realized very quickly from years of making traditional method sparkling wine that the varietals we currently use for those programs, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier, Pinot Blanc, although they're great varietals, may not be the right fit to work in a blend for our CALSECCO. They're a little more serious, a little more structured, and maybe the fruit profile is not as intense or aromatically available as what we would look to develop for our new wine style. I knew very quickly that we would need to look at other varietals that would not only provide the blend backbone but add additional complexity and interesting components for a finished CALSECCO blend.

—Manveer Sandhu, Executive Director of Winemaking at Rack & Riddle

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Coming Back to Cali: Cracking the CALSECCO Code

SELECTING VARIETALS

Building these new CALSECCO blends meant confronting the reality of what actually grows at scale in California. The category's growth depends on a fruit supply that can grow with it, which ruled out obscure varieties in favor of ones already planted widely across the state.

Colombard became the backbone of the new blends. It can flourish in cool and warmer climates and is a good producer with higher yields. This variety offers fresh citrus flavors, with high, bright acidity and is crisp and refreshing. The goal is to use the Charmat method to preserve Colombard's youthful aromatic character rather than rely on extended lees aging to develop the wine's identity.

Next, we layered in Chenin Blanc for stone fruit and citrus character; Pinot Gris for pear and melon flavors and some softer texture; Chardonnay for body and elegance; and a touch of Pinot Noir, handled as a white base, for texture and complexity.



SELECTING GROWING REGIONS

Grape sourcing for CALSECCO comes down to two things in tandem: finding regions that produce high-quality fruit and finding regions that can support long-term growth for the category, since both matter equally to the program's future. Primary sourcing comes from three key regions: the northern Central Valley, Lodi, and Solano County. We focused on regions and varieties capable of producing naturally high acidity and moderate sugar accumulation, since moderate sugar accumulation allows us to achieve the desired flavor development while retaining the natural acidity needed for sparkling wine. Consistency, availability, and long-term grower partnerships were all important factors in making our selections.

Solano County and the northern Central Valley benefit from a cool Delta influence that extends the growing season and preserves natural acidity. Lodi's warmer days build fruit concentration, while the diurnal effect of its cooler evenings allows the grapes to recover overnight, ensuring the retention of acidity and freshness. Vineyard site quality and consistent farming practices help deliver the reliable yields our program needs for consistent year-over-year production. Further south in the Central Valley, larger growers control significant volume and acreage, which supports our goal of consistent production. Harvests can be timed precisely to ideal sparkling maturity, and we have strong long-term grower relationships.

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Coming Back to Cali: SECCO Code Cracking the CALSECCO Code

PARTNERING WITH GROWERS

Jeff Bitter is the President of Allied Grape Growers, an organization that represents more than 400 grape farmers throughout the state of California. AGG is a cooperative, so the growers own the company that represents them—an arrangement built to keep these smaller, family farms economically viable for the long term. Central Valley farms typically run 60 to 80 acres, while North Coast farms are smaller, often closer to 20 to 30 acres.

Jeff has worked with Rack & Riddle for over a decade, sourcing Sonoma County and North Coast fruit. With the creation of the CALSECCO program, this sourcing expanded to include Lodi, Delta region and Central Valley fruit, as well as other white grape varietals. The diversity of growers represented gave the winemaking team at Rack & Riddle a wide variety of choices to include in this new blend.

While Chenin and Colombard were ultimately selected for the CALSECCO blend by Manveer for winemaking reasons, Jeff notes that there is an important historic thread here, too. These varietals were some of the most well-known from California and formed the backbone of the state's popular Chablis-style wines in the 1960s through the 1980s. Since that time, they have fallen out of the mainstream wine conversation, despite growing beautifully here. For the growers he represents, CALSECCO is a chance to bring them back into the spotlight, proving that classic varietals can create new product opportunities to drive market growth.



Jeff Bitter, President, Allied Grape Growers

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This is a chance for California to go head-to-head with Prosecco and show that we can do something just as exciting as what's coming from overseas. Grapes like Colombard and Chenin Blanc built California's wine history. Now they're getting a renaissance, and for all our growers, it is a huge opportunity.

—Jeff Bitter, President, Allied Grape Growers

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In the Cellar: Making CALSECCO

TIMING IS A QUALITY DECISION

CALSECCO uses much of the same discipline Rack & Riddle brings to traditional method sparkling base wine, but the production calendar creates a different challenge. Fruit for multiple sparkling programs can mature at roughly the same time. That makes timing on the crush pad critical.

The goal is to move fruit quickly from grape to juice, press gently, minimize skin contact and oxidation, preserve acidity, clarify promptly and move into fermentation. Those are not glamorous details, but they are exactly the details that protect the fresh, fruit-focused profile we've captured with CALSECCO.

To shorten the distance from vineyard to tank, Rack & Riddle also works with a vetted processing partner in the Lodi area. The protocols remain ours, and the winemaking team is present at critical points so fruit processed closer to its source is handled to the same standards as fruit processed at our own facilities. For our team, that is what a true winemaking partnership looks like: outsource to the right partners where needed, without ever compromising our exceptional attention to quality.



Charmat: The Base Wine Does the Heavy Lifting

Traditional method sparkling gives a wine months or years on the lees to develop additional structure and complexity. Charmat works differently. Since Charmat has a short fermentation period, the base blend has to do more of the heavy lifting when it comes to expression of blend personality.

The winemaking team ran dozens of blending trials over multiple months and conducted a series of small-scale secondary-fermentation trials to assess flavor development and expression for the final blends of CALSECCO. Unlike traditional method, the base blend needed to be closer to its intended final sensory balance before secondary fermentation, with less reliance on extended maturation to soften or reshape the wine.



CALSECCO: Creating a Multi-Channel Wine Category

A GROWTH SPACE FOR MULTIPLE BRANDS

The wine industry does not need another product that only makes sense inside one company.

Growers, wineries, retailers and consumers need to all be able to share in a new wine style. What began as a question and concept, has now strategically evolved into a limitless mission: The creation of a uniquely California sparkling wine style that is fresh, approachable and scalable — empowering interested partners to launch CALSECCO under their label, making it their own.

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We are still learning, which is exactly where we want a project like this to be. The best new categories are not invented in a conference room and handed to the market fully formed. They are built through partnerships, trials, tastings and a willingness to keep refining the original concept. CALSECCO is our contribution to that process, and I am excited to see where California takes it.

—Jeff Tuttle, CEO Rack & Riddle

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Opportunities for Wineries & Retailers

HOW EASY IS IT TO LAUNCH YOUR OWN CALSECCO?

Rack & Riddle makes it very easy!

HOW DOES LAUNCHING A CALSECCO BENEFIT YOUR WINERY?

DRIVE MORE TASTING ROOM TRAFFIC. MORE GUESTS. NEW EXPERIENCES. STRONGER CONVERSIONS.

CALSECCO is a fresh, approachable sparkling wine that delights guests of every generation, bringing more traffic to your tasting room and creating memorable experiences.

Attract more guests and younger wine drinkers looking for an enjoyable and approachable pour. Perfect for welcome pours, wine club offerings, by-the-glass experiences and tasting room flights, CALSECCO appeals to Gen Z, Millennial and Gen X drinkers alike.

This high-margin, easy-to-sell California sparkling wine, with distinctive packaging, stands out on the table and in your tasting room. Offer your guests a premium wine and story at an accessible price.

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CALSECCO is how wineries are winning over Gen Z and Millennial drinkers who want something fresh, easy, and fun to sip. It's a simple way to bring new faces, and new energy, into your tasting room.

—Kim Kulchycki, Sr. Director Marketing, Rack & Riddle

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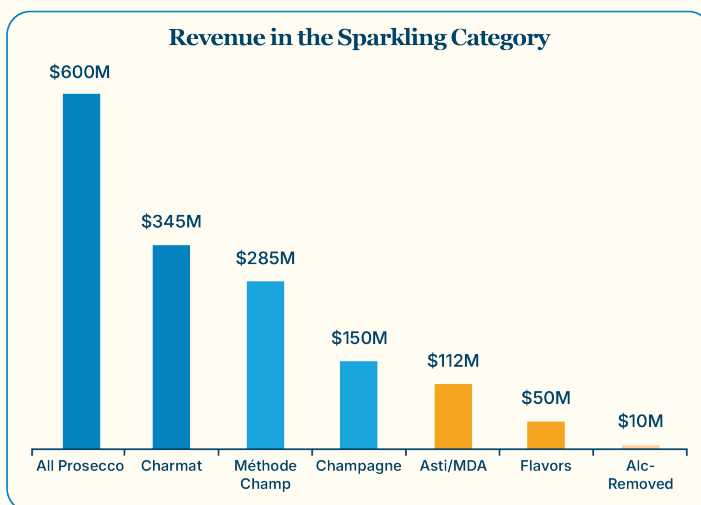
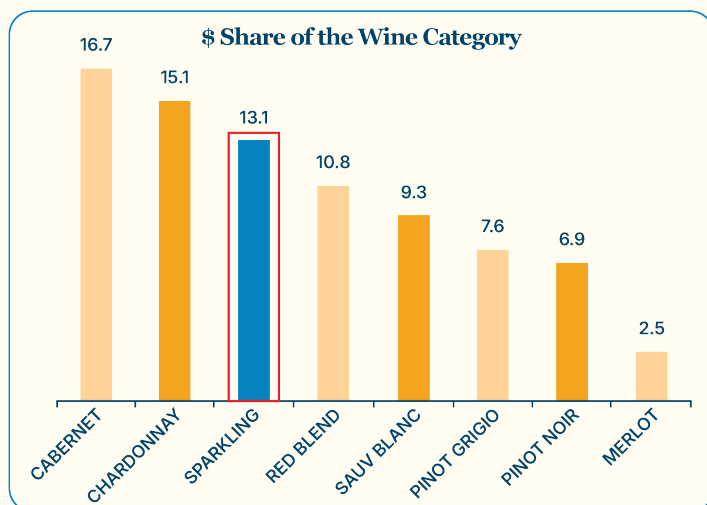
HOW DOES LAUNCHING A CALSECCO BENEFIT RETAILERS?

DRIVE REVENUE AND GROWTH WITH A NEW SPARKLING WINE STYLE CONSUMERS WILL DISCOVER AND REMEMBER.

Sparkling wine continues to fuel category growth, and CALSECCO delivers the fresh, approachable style preferred by younger and modern consumers. Sparkling wine is now the #3 wine category, and Prosecco-style sparkling is driving nearly 90% of that growth.*

As a modern sparkling wine innovation, CALSECCO helps retailers create excitement in the wine category, differentiate from traditional sparkling offerings, and drive incremental category growth and consumer engagement.

Charmat-style sparkling wines are driving category revenue and growth. Expanding beyond traditional sparkling segmentation with new offerings can unlock stronger shelf velocity and sales growth. Consumers love California wines. CALSECCO will help you trade up consumers in the style they want from the region they love.

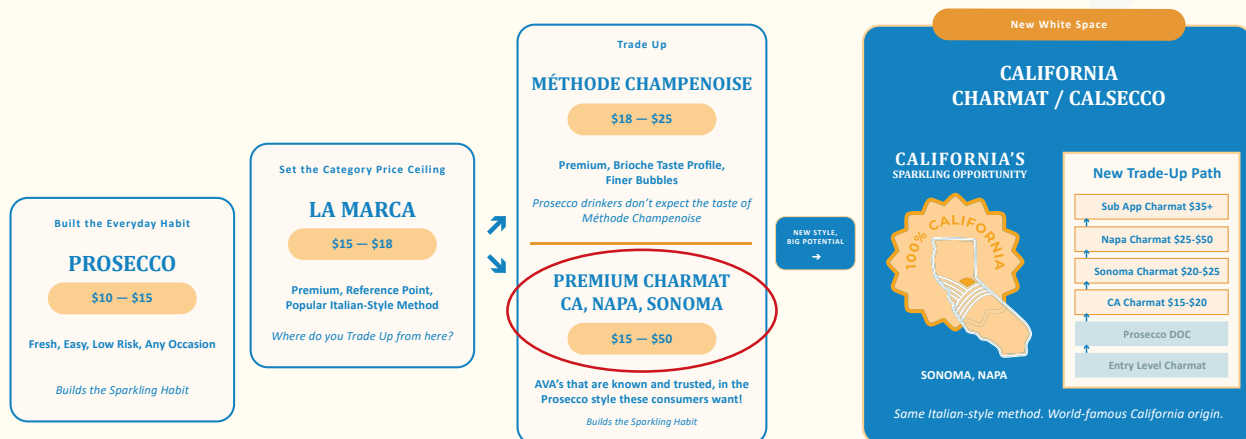


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For retailers, launching your own CALSECCO is easy and we partner with you every step of the way. You can bring your own brand name, or we can handle that for you. Our winemaking team ensures you get the taste profile your customers seek. We also manage label design, compliance, bottling and operations support. You get a private label sparkling wine that's ready to sell, without having to become a winemaker to do it.

—Kim Kulchycki, Sr. Director Marketing, Rack & Riddle

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WILL CALSECCO WORK WITH MY BRANDING?

CALSECCO is a versatile mark that works with any wine brand. We provide the logo and the rest is up to you!

Please visit CALSECCO.com to learn more.



[VISIT CALSECCO.COM](http://CALSECCO.COM)