What are bollicine good for? Experimental evidence on individual preferences on food-wine matching
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We consider a salient sample of producers of “classical method” sparkling wines – so-called “bollicine” - from Franciacorta, a hilly area close to Brescia mostly renowned as the unique Italian “Champagne-like” region. Wines are selected to encompass different varieties concerning wine-makers styles, grapes mixtures, cuvée, vintage years and fermentation processes. We ask a panel of wine-tasters - attending the professional course for sommelier qualification - to go through a blind-tasting experiment. First, each member of the panel is asked to describe the main aromatic characteristics of each wine. Then, is invited to suggest some classes of food and specific meals to accompany the wine for dinner. Finally, we elicit individual willingness to pay for each wine. The hypothesis we aim at testing are the following:

a) the effective convergence to the same aromatic sensations across wine-tasters and its degree of robustness through subtle differences in wine typologies; b) whether convergence to the same selection of classes of food and meals is as clear as for the aromas or, rather, food-wine matching is more individual-specific and idiosyncratic; c) the existence of any bias toward specific types of food-wine matching, either in sense of classes of food (namely, shellfish rather than dessert) or in terms of regional provenience of the meals; d) the more significant aromatic and food-matching determinants of individual willingness to pay.