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The International Wine Review

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Report #46: The Best of Soave

A Tenth Anniversary Special Report

The International Wine Review celebrates its tenth year of publication in 2015. To celebrate, we revisit many of the regions we've reported on over the past decade. Our focus in this series of special reports and articles is our favorite producers and their wines.



Castello di Soave

As we noted in our 2013 report on *The Wines of Soave*, the Garganega-based Soave is one of Italy's best white wines. In this Tenth Anniversary Special Report we focus the spotlight on the new and improved Soaves of our favorite producers: Anselmi, Cà Rugate, Coffele, Gini, Inama, I Stefanini, Le Battistelle,

Pieropan, Prà, and Suavia. In what follows, we give our tasting notes on current releases from most of these producers and others.

The best producers make authentic, elegant wines from low-yielding Garganega and Trebbiano di Soave vines planted on volcanic and calcareous soils. Their wines show delicate aromas and flavors of almond, chamomile, stone fruit and herbs with superb acid balance and wet gravel and mineral notes. Many of these producers didn't exist thirty years ago—they were still producing grapes for the local cooperative or one of the large commercial producers.

Soave is mainly produced from Garganega, a white grape thought to be of early Greek origin. It is one of Italy's most important white grape varieties, more than two-thirds of which is planted in Soave and other parts of the Veneto. When cultivated on hillsides with restricted yields, as in the Soave Classico zone, it produces elegant, delicate wines with balance and structure. Garganega's aromas are usually delicate, recalling almonds, chamomile flowers, tea and hay scents that are also reflected on the palate.

The Soave region has about 12 thousand hectares of land, 6,583 of which are planted to vines, about 94 percent Garganega plus small amounts of Trebbiano di Soave and Chardonnay. The region is located east of Verona (see map) and comprises both the volcanic

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hills, where it has been traditionally produced, and the flat plains bordering the rivers of the region. The traditional growing area, where most of the highest quality Soave is grown, was granted the Soave Classico appellation in 1968. To further put the focus on quality, the Consorzio di Tutela Soave has undertaken an effort to

identify the best vineyards in Soave. Today, several of the best producers make single vineyard wines from these Soave crus. The first to do so were Leonildo Pieropan's Calvarino (1971) and La Rocca (1978), and Sandro Gini's La Frosca (1985). We review the latest vintages of these single vineyard Soaves below.

Soave wines reflect their terroir, especially the different calcareous limestone and decomposed volcanic



rock soils of the region. Those grown on calcareous limestone tend to be full and fruit forward with a chalky mineral edge, while those on basaltic and decomposed volcanic rock soils produce more elegant, and sometimes austere, wines with a distinct saline and smoky complexity.

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