



The International Wine Review

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Report #35: The Wines of Soave

Introduction



Castello de Soave

Soave is one of Italy's great white wines. The best producers profiled in this report craft authentic and 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. Those who last tasted the lackluster wines that came from

this region thirty plus years ago will be awestruck by the new Soaves being produced today.

In this report, the International Wine Review focuses the spotlight on the new and improved Soaves and the top producers like Aselmi, Cà Rugate, Coffele, Fattori, Gini, Inama, La Cappuccina, Pieropan, Prà, Suavia and several others. Many of the producers presented here didn't exist thirty years ago—they were still producing grapes for the local cooperative or one of the large commercial producers. The 15 or 20 producers of thirty years ago now number 180. However, as least as important as the arrival of quality-oriented, independent producers is the improvement in the wines made by the largest producers such as Bolla and Cantina di Soave. The transformation of Soave is little known outside Italy, even among the wine-cognoscenti.

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As we discuss in this report, there is no great secret to Soave's success in reinventing itself. It required pioneers focused above all else on making the best possible, authentic wine that expresses Soave's unique terroir. It also called for an entrepreneurial spirit and risk taking on the part of growers to make and market their own wines, rather than continue the safe and easy course of selling grapes to the local cooperative. And it needed support from the Soave Consorzio and other producers' associations, from researchers at local universities, and from consumers willing to pay a bit more for good wine. Fortunately for the consumer, prices still remain low, especially given the quality of these wines.

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The top Soaves bring distinct advantages to the US market. They are attractive and different and excellent values in terms of the ratio of quality to price. Some Soaves are easy-drinking and would make a good wine by the glass bar drink, while many Soave Classicos and Superiores are great wines for pairing with food, as discussed later in the report. We provide reviews and ratings on 70 Soaves, most of which are available in the US market.

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with **Dana Rubsam Penso**

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