

Soave, Province of Verona

Established: 1890

Owners: Pieropan family

Winemakers: Andrea & Dario Pieropan

Production: 400,000 bottles

Hectares of vines: 45

Viticulture: Organic

Vegan Friendly



Soave, in Italian, means gentle, soft, suave – an appropriate name for this small town east of Verona, encircled by the original enclosures of the town and dominated by a 13th century fortress. At the heart of the Classico zone is the Pieropan property, which dates back to 1890.

Leonildo 'Nino' Pieropan, who sadly passed away in 2018, was the first to show the world just how great Garganega, and Italian white wine, can be. He recognised the importance of terroir early on, acquiring various hillside vineyards (including Pigno, Becco, Boiolo, Tondo, Palestrello and La Santa) and expanding the prestigious Calvarino and La Rocca vineyards, first made as single vineyard crus in 1971 and 1978 respectively.

Today, sons Dario (winemaker) and Andrea (viticulturist) continue the family tradition. The brothers have converted all of their vineyards to organic and are overseeing the new winery being built amongst the vineyards just outside the village.

Soave Classico DOC

Mostly Garganega with about 10-15% Trebbiano di Soave, this is wonderfully aromatic - not a common feature of Soave - with floral notes (cherry blossom), citrus, stone fruit and almond. The palate is delicate and focussed, with excellent depth and lovely overall balance.

Soave Classico DOC Calvarino

The Calvarino vineyard, purchased in 1901, was the historical nucleus of the estate. This cru, made from 70% Garganega and 30% Trebbiano grown on volcanic soil, produces a refined and elegant Soave with mineral driven fruit and a chalkiness reminiscent of fine Chablis. The crisp fruit (green apple, citrus and stone fruit) preludes a fine and complex palate with piercing clarity and a long finish. First made in 1971, Calvarino has a track record of a long cellar life, up to 15 years, in the finest vintages.

Soave Classico DOC La Rocca

La Rocca, first made in 1978, is named after the medieval castle and fortress overlooking the town. Made from 100% Garganega, grown on calcareous soil (the only soil of its type in Soave) and harvested quite late. Following a brief skin maceration, fermentation takes place in tonneaux before transfer to 20hl barrels, where it is aged on fine lees for one year. Intense, sunny yellow in colour, the nose recalls ripe exotic fruit and roasted nuts, the multi-layered palate is complex with beautifully balanced richness and outstanding length. Cellar life is 15 plus years and the wine is great with rich seafood dishes, white meats such as rabbit, pork and chicken and mature cheese.

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Recioto di Soave DOCG 'Le Colombare'

It was Leonildo Pieropan Senior who founded the family winery that invented Recioto di Soave. The top parts (*recie*, meaning ears) of each select Garganega bunch, with the ripest and best exposed grapes, are dried for about 5 months on bamboo canes in the traditional method, the natural environment allowing the grapes to dehydrate and concentrate and encourage the development of botrytis. The shrivelled grapes are then pressed and the wine is aged for 2 years in oak. Ripe tropical fruit with candied peel, the palate is round and generous with a long finish.

Pieropan in Valpolicella

In 1999 the Pieropan family bought a property in Val d'Illasi in Valpolicella zone. The property, situated on Monte Garzon at 300-500m above sea level, was previously uncultivated and required an enormous amount of work before planting. The soil here is particularly rich in limestone and clay and the vineyards, farmed organically, were planted with indigenous red varieties; Corvina, Corvinone, Rondinella and Croatina Veronese. The yield is about 1 kg per plant.

Valpolicella Superiore DOC 'Ruberpan'

Ruberpan is made mostly from Corvina, with smaller amounts of Corvinone, Rondinella and Croatina Veronese. In keeping with the Pieropan style, it is elegant and perfumed with cherry and blackberry fruit, the palate complex and elegant with lively fruit and silky tannins.

2019 *The 2019 Valpolicella Superiore Ruberpan from Pieropan lifts from the glass with an aromatic mix of dusty dried flowers, peppery wild berries and savory herbs. This is like pure silk on the palate, lifted and finessed, with brisk acidity motivating its mineral-tinged red fruits and exotic spices. It tapers off lightly structured, leaving hard candy and licorice notes to linger through the classically dry finale. The Pieropan style shines bright through this highly characterful Valpolicella Superiore, making a case for why this classification and style is crucial to the region. 93 points, Eric Guido*

Amarone della Valpolicella DOCG 'Vigna Garzon'

Made from 60% Corvina, 25% Corvinone and 15% Rondinella, the grapes are placed in trays and dried in the cellar using fans to avoid disease and botrytis and, after drying, the yield is a miniscule 300 grams per vine! Following pressing the must is fermented for approximately 30 days with daily punching down and it is then aged for three years in tonneaux plus one in the bottle prior. The wine has a heady perfume of black cherries, blackberries and plums, the palate round and complex with a powerful structure and a lovely freshness on the finish.

2017 *A blend of cherry sauce and sweet herbs is complicated by cocoa and clove as the 2017 Amarone della Valpolicella blossoms in the glass. It washes across the palate with velvety textures contrasted by zesty acidity and tart wild berry fruits, coming across as more savory than sweet and decidedly spicy. The 2017 lingers impossibly long, mixing bitter hints of dried orange rinds with licorice and pretty inner florals. While the child of a warm vintage, this is beautifully harmonious from start to finish. 95 points, Antonio Galloni*

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