

# Balestri Valda, Reliability is the Key Word

scritto da Fabio Piccoli | 28 Ottobre 2016



If you want to have a literally privileged point of view on the territory of Soave we highly recommend you to visit Balestri Valda, and before passing the gate of the winery, stop for a moment, get out of your car and turn around by 180°. What will appear before your eyes is one of the most suggestive vineyard landscapes in Italy and in the world as well.

This is not an individual opinion as the Italian Ministry of Agriculture has recently acknowledged “Colline vitate di Soave” as the first rural landscape of historical interest in Italy.

The acknowledgement finds a concrete demonstration in Balestri Valda winery which has been investing in creating and, most of all, preserving this extraordinary landscape for decades.

No one knows it better than Laura Rizzotto, owner of the winery together with her father Guido and her brother Luca. “Don’t forget to mention” Laura points out “ that also grandpa

Cirillo is still an active part of the winery. He's 95 and he punctually comes to the cellars everyday “.

Laura is 33 and is the perfect example not only of the generational turnover among Soave producers but also of the “pink” turnover in wine business management. All-around entrepreneurs, who are able to combine professionalism together with expertise, passion and intuition. Not an isolated phenomenon, but particularly evident among the women of the Soave designation, which is the proof of the more and more relevant role of women in the wine sector.

Laura has her mind set and she's not afraid to try, knowing the legacy she inherited is an important one as well as a difficult one.

“Denying Soave is facing a difficult moment in the market today would be wrong and potentially dangerous” Laura explains. “There's no doubt,” she continues “ on the one hand the actual difficulties on markets, due to the high level of competition both nationally and internationally, and on the other hand all the problematics within the designation are not facilitating our efforts, especially on sales and positioning sides”.

Though the “external” problematics don't seem to worry the young owner of Balestri Valda as much as the “internal” ones.

“I think there are going to be important opportunities on the market for Soave in the future, although it might seem hard now” Laura underlines “but in order to grab those opportunities is crucial for us to overcome this situation we're in, where we are not able to build our own identity and reputation in a clear and reliable way”.

To Laura Rizzotto the “confused” image of Soave today is due to an unclear distinction among the different types of productive structures.

“It's not about declaring a useless ideological war to cooperation” Laura points out “but certainly we can't create a reliable and economically sustainable reputation if we don't set up a clear distinction between artisanal production, by independent winemakers, and industrial production, which, at

least in Soave area, is mainly carried out by cooperatives. Not only this, I want to make it clear, the responsibility of this mixed up phase we are going through is also of those small wineries that make the mistake to surrender to low prices and never-ending sales”.

On this regard Laura underlines how “at least on the front of price protection there should be more cohesion among Soave winemakers”.

But in order to give Soave a strong reliability there are other factors involved, according to the young manager who is mainly responsible for export sales and communication.

“As a winery, for example” Laura tells us “we thought it was crucial to choose the organic way of production and we decided to guarantee our choice by gaining the organic certification. You see, I believe protecting our environment. not just as a commercial slogan, but as a concrete productive choice, nowadays is a choice we all must make in order to be reliable. In particular, vine-growing on the hills, which is already complex in itself, can only benefit by making “extreme” productive choices that stress its uniqueness” .

“We have to fully believe in the most authentic soul of Soave, and particularly we have to believe in our Garganega grape. On this matter we decided to align ourselves to the characteristics of this grape, also during the vinification process in order not to lose its identity. It’s a courageous choice, from some points of view, because sometimes it’s not in synch with market trends, but for us it’s the only way of being recognisable now and in the future”.