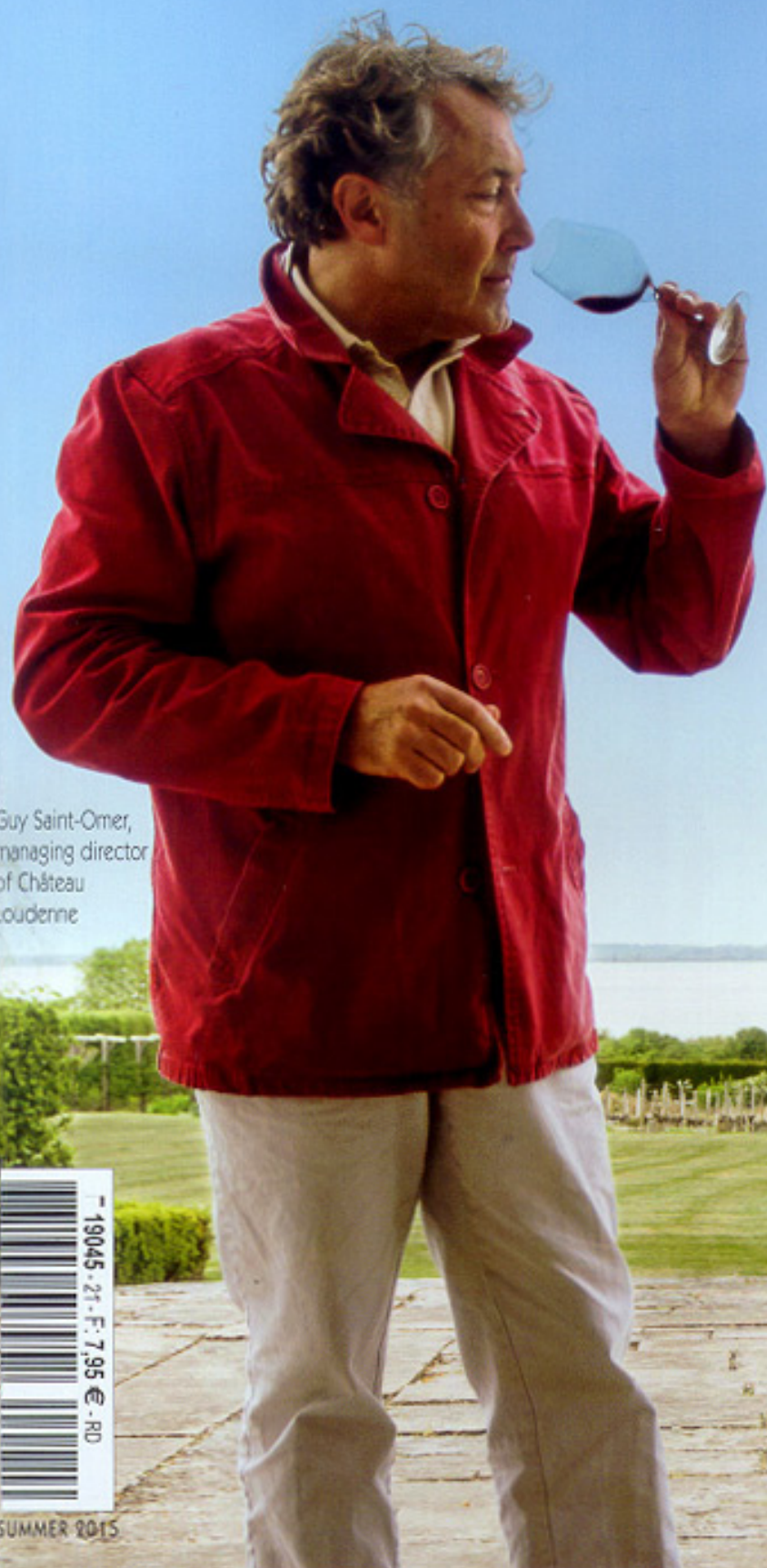


# GILBERT & GAILLARD

INTERNATIONAL



Guy Saint-Omer,  
managing director  
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Loudenne

## THE REVENGE OF THE CRUS BOURGEOIS

AFTER A SOMEWHAT TURBULENT HISTCO

## SAINT-CHINIAN AND FAUGÈRES:

TERROIR WITH A CAPITAL T

## VOLCANIC WINES:

AMAZING ITALY

## D.O. RUEDA:

THE BEST SPANISH WHITE WINE?

## STARS AND WINE:

SOFIA VERGARA AND JON HAMM



SUMMER 2015



Grassed vineyards of Cortese grapes, farmed biodynamically, in the Gaviese area in the Gaviese area.

This is an extraordinary Dolcetto for its elegance, complexity and longevity. The wine is released later than rival bottlings and every year the property archives a number of bottles to organize vertical tastings and sell them to its best clients. We recently had the chance to taste an amazing Ninan 2003: its fresh and mineral silkiness, enriched by typical tertiary notes of undergrowth still expressed vibrant youthfulness.

#### MAGICAL CORTESE FROM THE GAVIESE AREA

Cortese has been widely planted in Piedmont since the 18th century, in Astigiano, Novarese, and especially in the Alessandrino area (Tortonese and Gaviese). It is precisely in these latter areas, in the south-easternmost part of Piedmont, very close to Liguria, that Cortese still reaches its peak in terms of concentration and repute. Denominations using the varietal include: Cortese dell'Alto Monferrato Doc, Monferrato Doc Casalese Cortese and Piemonte Doc Cortese... But the two most significant denominations are Colli Tortonese Doc Cortese and especially Gavi Doc. Bunches of Cortese grapes are medium-small sized, cylindrical or pyramidal, compact and with one or two wings. The grapes are medium-small, short, ellipsoidal, with



Left to right, Luisa and Giorgio Soldati with their daughter Chiara in front of ripe Cortese di Gavi grapes, just harvested and ready to be pressed.

San Lorenzo vineyard belonging to Rossi Contini, located on the famous "terre bianche" (white lands), which are pivotal to the quality of Dolcetto



very pruinose, yellow-greenish skin. The plant produces high, consistent yields and prefers dry climates and good aspect. It is subject to parasite attacks because of the fragility of its skin. It is harvested quite late, during the last fortnight in September. Cortese produces wines revealing a straw-yellow colour of varying intensity, fairly strong scents of flowers, white fruit, fresh almonds and mineral hints. On the palate, it displays a full, dry, harmonious taste, with clear fruit suggestions and a slightly bitter finish of almond.

By far the most important denomination, where Cortese shows at its very best, is Gavi Docg. The production area includes, in addition to Gavi, 10 other localities all situated in the southernmost part of the province of Alessandria, on the border with Liguria. All wine styles - Tranquillo, Frizzante, Riserva, Spumante, Spumante Riserva Metodo Classico - use single varietal Cortese. Vineyard density is a minimum 3,000 vines/ha with a maximum yield of 95 q/ha (85 if the cru is stated on the label), dropping to 65 for the Riserva and Spumante Riserva Metodo Classico versions. Minimum alcohol content is 10.5%, 11% for the Riserva and Riserva Spumante Metodo Classico versions. Gavi Riserva has to be aged for at least 12 months, of which 6 in the bottle. Riserva Spumante Metodo Classico needs at

least 2 years ageing, including 18 months ageing on yeast in the bottle. Tranquillo has to mention the year of the harvest on the label; Spumante (if Metodo Classico) has to mention the date of disgorging, whereas the year of harvest is optional, but compulsory for Riserva Metodo Classico.

#### SCOLCA, THE QUEEN OF GAVI

The company that transformed Gavi into a great wine is most certainly La Scolca. The winery, established in 1919, boasts the richest history in the area, and has brought international fame to this white wine from Piedmont. It has been a family business for over eighty years and it has been capable of renewing itself without losing sight of tradition and territory.

Luisa Soldati, at our request, told us about the trend for the best vintages of her Riserva d'Antan and Gavi di Gavi Docg, underlining the fact that the company has always had consideration for the storage and marketing of old vintages, just like in France "The 1989 vintage", says Mrs Soldati, "was a perfect vintage: high sugar concentration, healthy grapes, high acidity. It is one of the most suitable harvests for prolonged ageing". D'Antan (a particular Gavi Riserva Tranquillo), is partially macerated on its skins, left in contact with indigenous yeasts for many years in steel tanks, then bottled without being filtered. It is scented with dried fruit, toasted hazelnuts, flint and candied citrus, confirming the exceptional standard of this extraordinary vintage. 1999, thanks to perfectly favourable weather conditions, promoted excellent ripening in the grapes, which since early September had already shown good sugar levels and solid acidity. In 2000, a rainy spring was followed by a long sunny period; from mid-August until mid-September dry, windy heat set the tone for the harvest, producing a balanced and structured D'Antan, intensely perfumed and persistent.

Regarding Gavi di Gavi Docg, "2005 required careful vineyard management with drastic pruning". This wise decision, together with the favourable location of the vineyard, kept the grapes healthy and allowed ripening to occur unhindered. In 2006 there was a high percentage of unpollinated flowers, which caused sparse, yet healthier bunches. Finally 2007: still young but already memorable as it heralded in structured, concentrated Gavi wine.



A portrait of the Soldati family; from the left, Chiara, Giorgio and Luisa