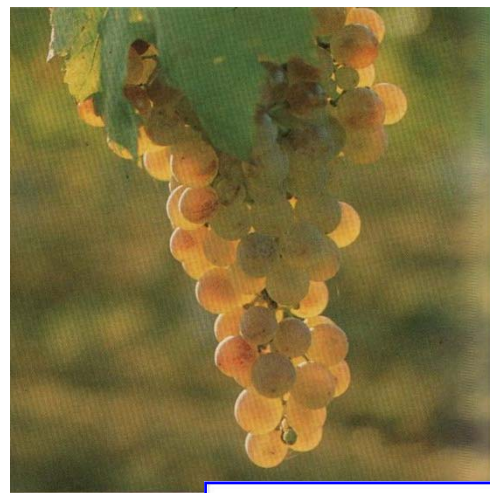
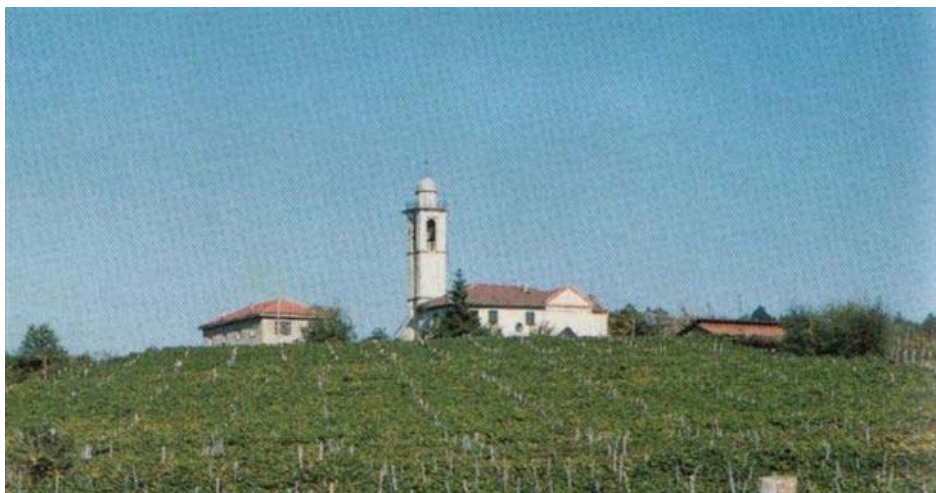


PICOLLO

Going north from the city of Genoa, from Liguria into Piedmont, roads twist and wind up the precipitous slopes of the Ligurian Apennines from the Mediterranean Sea and then level off into rolling hills of the region around the town of Gavi. The region benefits greatly from its proximity to the Mediterranean Sea. Maritime breezes are able to enter into these hills, creating a more Mediterranean climate, whereas further north in the famous Langhe hills (home to Barolo and Barbaresco) the climate is decidedly continental.

Gavi is also called Gavi Ligure and as the name implies, it once belonged to the powerful city-state of Genoa in Liguria. Gavi, the eponymous wine made within the zone, is based on the Cortese grape, and its style is perhaps more reminiscent of the wines of Liguria. The history of the Cortese goes back centuries in the region. As its name implies, the Cortese (courteous or courtly) grape produces a wine that has impressive structure and elegance, and whose powerful acidity and mineral character makes it an excellent wine for seafood, especially shellfish. It prefers a dry climate, meager soils and good sun exposure. All of these conditions come together at their best around Rovereto.

The soil of the entire Gavi region is a mix of sand and clay. Around Rovereto there tends to be more clay than sand. This helps to create a deep reserve of water that benefits the vine during the very dry months of summer, when the sandier soils of the rest of the zone get very dry. The vineyards in Rovereto also get full southern-exposure, which also benefits the ripening. In fact, the harvest in this area usually begins an average of ten days earlier than in the rest of Gavi. Within the Gavi region, Rovereto is not so much a town as a cluster of houses. It is the home to most of the largest and most commercially known producers, like La Scolca, who in the sixties and seventies was the uncontested flagship winery. More recently, several smaller producers have emerged within Rovereto. Such is the case with the winery of the Picollo family. Lorenzo Picollo founded their winery in 1945. Today, Lorenzo's son Ernesto takes care of the winemaking, and Ernesto's son Gianlorenzo manages both the nine hectares of vineyard and the administrative end. Their vineyards lie mostly in the Rovereto zone, though they also recently acquired a new 2-hectare vineyard, to the north, in Tassarolo, which they use for the production of their basic Gavi. Their range of wines includes three Gavi: the basic Gavi, Gavi del Comune di Gavi and the single vineyard "Rughè", where the vines are over 50 years of age. In the winery, Ernesto is very careful to give maximum expression to his vineyards and to the Cortese grape. To this end malolactic fermentation is allowed, but only on a partial basis. The "Rughè" sees some barrel fermentation, but only 20 percent. Gianlorenzo, also a trained enologist, will someday take the reins to the winemaking from his father, but he also is reluctant to 'reinvent the wheel', emphasizing the importance of letting the wine of Gavi remain Gavi.



Above, left: The hamlet of Rovereto peaks over the sloped vineyards that surround it.

Above, right: A shot of the Cortese grape cluster.

Below, left: An aerial shot of the Picollo winery and residences, all right within the hamlet of Rovereto.

Below, right: The label of Picollo's Gavi del Comune di Gavi "Rovereto", just so you know what to look for the next time you're out shopping!

