



TENUTA DI PASSOPISCIARO

2011 & 2012 VINTAGES, EN PRIMEUR

Andrea Franchetti, former restaurateur in Rome, turned wine distributor in New York, gradually wended his way to his spiritual homeland in Bordeaux, where his desire to make his own wine originated. Andrea left Bordeaux brimming with talent, imagination and dogged determination, heading for his native Italy.

His first project was in Tuscany where he created a vineyard from scratch, in an area hitherto unknown to vines. Tenuta di Trinoro was an instant success, even when the vines were extremely young and Italy had a new, iconic name. Never one to obey convention, Andrea creates and releases wines when he, himself, feels it is right to do so.

After a number of years nurturing Trinoro, Andrea's restless imagination began to wander further afield and he set his sights on the renaissance of formerly-abandoned terraces of vines on the slopes of a live volcano, Mount Etna. Both the Tuscan and Sicilian sites are extraordinary, complex and poles apart in terms of *terroir*. Andrea's final challenge was to bring such individuality to the glass. The results are legendary.

At Tenuta di Passopisciaro, Andrea produces a range of wines which is rich, diverse and exceptional in every sense; from the locations of the vines through to the finished wines. We marvel at the goals Andrea sets and, more importantly, the formidable results he achieves. Corney & Barrow is delighted to represent these wines in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong and, most recently, Singapore.

This year we have elected to offer the two estates, Tuscany and Sicily, separately, thereby allowing each the attention they rightly deserve.

In this release we are offering, *en primeur*, Tenuta di Passopisciaro's estate's white wine Guardiola 2012, as well as the eponymous Passopisciaro from 2011.

We are also including the very rare *Contrade* wines, which essentially are different *crus* – highly individual *terroirs* created by previous lava flows. These bring home vividly the reality of their *terroir*. Etna is a live volcano and the presence of lava underfoot is a clear indication of previous devastation wreaked on the very spot where one is standing – a sobering thought.

Please do refer to the tasting notes for guidance.

ALISON BUCHANAN
December 2013

PASSOPISCIARO, MOUNT ETNA, SICILY

The Passopisciario project appears at first, and even second glance, to have gone just one step beyond genius in its conception. Passopisciario is situated on the slopes of the live volcano, Mount Etna. A constant plume of smoke and the odd ash-filled belch offer a constant reminder that Etna is indeed alive and active, a volcano with menace, given to relatively frequent lava spills. These “spills” devastate the landscape, instantly reducing rich woodland to a sea of solidified black ash – truly terrifying – yet Andrea has cause to be grateful, as each flow leaves a unique mineral profile which gives rise to individual ‘*Contrada*’ wines.

The first task was to clear and restore long-abandoned terraces of ancient vines on the northern slopes of the mountain, replanting where required, at a density of 12,000 vines per hectare, on thin lava dust. The indigenous Nerello Mascalese vine is ill-disciplined and given free rein produces rustic, heady wines. Andrea, however, is uncompromising in restoring order by carrying out extremely strict pruning and rigorous selection. This, allied to both high altitudes and high density, makes for a very different, elegant and balanced style with an emphatic sense of place. The varied soils impart a profound mineral element across the portfolio of wines. Andrea, as ever, respects and utilizes the strengths of his chosen *terroir* and here, on Etna, he produces wines of remarkable complexity and individual personality. Significant temperature differences between day and night also play an important role, necessitating a longer growing period and this, in turn, contributes complexity and intensity. The harvesting of Nerello Mascalese continues well into November.

VINTAGE REPORTS

“2011 is a very, very, great year; good average temperatures, sun ideal, hot, yet not stressing the vines – a comfortable year where everything goes your way.”

ANDREA FRANCHETTI

2011 VINTAGE

2011 was the best vintage on Etna since 2006, according to Andrea, due to the rapid growing season. This ensured that the grapes were ripe, harvested and in the vats before the arrival of seasonal rain on the 5th November. Cesanese D’Affile was harvested in three passages between 28th October and 1st November and produced highly aromatic, intense, floral musts.

2012 VINTAGE

Guardiola, 100% Chardonnay, is grown at 1,000m altitude on the north side of Etna. Andrea was even more obsessive than normal about the harvest in 2012 and was up, pre-dawn, for 20 days, marking out the parcels to be picked each day. There were 13 separate pickings harvested between 23rd August and 10th September. The wine is aged in old, large wooden vats – *botti* – and in cement. 13,000 bottles were produced.

TASTING NOTES

GUARDIOLA, TENUTA DI PASSOPISCIARO 2012

100% Chardonnay

Pale gold in colour, this presents a blend of luscious, ripe, leesy stone and orchard fruit, complemented by berry character and minerals with aromatics of Peach Melba. The palate is similarly complex, refusing to conform to any one particular style, but full of energy and drive. Once again high altitude defies the general climatic conditions and very black, powdery lava soil is responsible for a clear mineral seam throughout, extending through a long, aromatic, rather smoky finish. A unique style of Chardonnay, this is very true to both the vineyard site and the vintage.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2014 – 2015+)

17.5

£98/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

PASSOPISCIARO 2011

100% Nerello Mascalese

Grown so far south, Nerello Mascalese is often presumed to produce a dark and fathomless wine when, in fact, the indigenous Sicilian grape is rather pale, a fact which belies the inner power and complexity of the finished wines. Andrea admits that when he started to produce here, he initially sought a level of power and intensity which just did not work for the varietal. Nerello Mascalese needs to be allowed to remain fresh, accessible and easy-drinking – showing well even slightly chilled. Both the nose and palate sit at the red fruit end of the spectrum - summer pudding, with a very gentle level of pepper and spice. Picking over 15 days, starting at the bottom of the slope and working towards higher altitudes, secures freshness and optimum ripeness. Passopisciario 2011 is a very elegant wine, poised, with obvious mineral undertones and possessing energy, subtlety and personality - impressive.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE

17.5+

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2014 – 2019+)

£110/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

£115/CASE OF 3 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

£90/CASE OF 1 DOUBLE-MAGNUM, IN BOND UK

CONTRADA CHIAPPEMACINE 2011

100% Nerello Mascalese

Chiappemacine lies at 550m altitude, planted on the furthestmost stretch of very thin Etna lava and limestone. This offers sweet, rather candied fruit on the nose, glacé cherry, allied to floral notes of violet and rose. The palate is silky-rich, rounded and ripe, seductive with no hard angles, focused throughout with a protracted finish.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE

17.5 - 18

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2015 – 2019+)

£160/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

CONTRADA PORCARIA 2011

100% Nerello Mascalese

This *contrada* is at 650m, planted on brittle lava which splinters easily. It is readily sought after by those who favour luscious, robust wines. The 2011 is lovely, offering a focused, pepper-spiced nose, candied and fresh, primary fruit, toast and jam with pretty punchy, earthy minerals. The nose is so inviting and accessible, it ill-prepares the taster for the rather robust, muscular attack of the palate. Suddenly however, there is a move towards full, ripe and luscious fruit, layered with caramelised notes of rose, liquorice and nashi pear - wonderfully complex, long and extraordinarily pure.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE

18 - 18.5

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2016 – 2020+)

£215/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

CONTRADA SCIARANUOVA 2011

100% Nerello Mascalese

At 850m, on rich new lava gravels, Sciaranuova generally produces deep, fiery wines. This is really intense jet-ruby, still limpid. The nose presents delicious sweet fruit depth, pink peppercorns and minerals, all echoed on a richly-textured, beautifully weighted palate. Long and layered, this, once again, has wonderful focus which drives and lifts the palate – plenty of energy here.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE**18 - 18+**

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2015 – 2017+)

£185/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

CONTRADA GUARDIOLA 2011

100% Nerello Mascalese

At between 800 and 1,000m, the Guardiola *contrada* in 2011 has produced a lustrous plum-ruby intensity, offering rounded, caramelised red fruit, orange zest freshness and almond notes. There is a passing nod to warm fruitcake richness, before a sweet, layered, complex finish – really intriguing, in this its debut year for us.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE**17**

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2014 – 2018)

£195/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

CONTRADA RAMPANTE 2011

100% Nerello Mascalese

At 1,000m altitude, on sandy lava, this *contrada* produces fine, aromatic wines. This 2011 is a deep, limpid plum in colour. The nose presents a blend of bramble and kirsch, spiced with white and pink peppercorns. The palate is at the red fruit end of the spectrum, fine and perfumed with mineral undercurrents throughout – sweet, ripe, soft and energised, with a focused finish.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE**17.5**

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2015 – 2019)

£145/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

TASTING GUIDE

Our tasting notes provide full details but, at your request, we have also introduced a clear and simple marking system. We hope these guidelines assist you in your selection.

14 - 16 A VERY GOOD TO EXCELLENT WINE

16 - 18 AN EXCELLENT TO OUTSTANDING WINE

18 - 20 AN OUTSTANDING TO LEGENDARY WINE

Wines are judged within their peer group, eg. *Villages, Premier Cru, Grand Cru*. A definitive score of a young wine is almost impossible.

We usually offer a spread (eg. 14-16) that relates to a potential to achieve a higher mark. A '+' adds further to that potential.

A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes.

TO ORDER

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