



BY APPOINTMENT TO
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
WINE MERCHANTS
CORNEY & BARROW LIMITED
LONDON



BY APPOINTMENT TO
HIS MAJESTY THE KING
WINE MERCHANTS
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CORNEY & BARROW

INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS

Established 1780

CANTINA GIACOMO CONTERNO
EN PRIMEUR



Cantina Giacomo Conterno

Background

Roberto Conterno is firmly rooted in his native Langhe in Piedmont, north-west Italy. This is one of the most staggeringly beautiful wine-producing regions in the world; vast and breathtaking with undulating hills adorned with woodland and striking, steeply-sloped vineyards. Roberto is now at the helm of the celebrated Barolo house Cantina Giacomo Conterno, having assumed the mantle on his father Giovanni's untimely death in 2004. It cannot ever be easy to take over from an iconic figure and Roberto descends from a line of them.

Cantina Giacomo Conterno was established in 1908 when Roberto's great-grandfather, Giovanni, opened up a small family-run restaurant in the village of San Giuseppe. He produced a Barolo for the business made from grapes he sourced in the region and sold surplus on. When his father died in 1934, Giacomo Conterno took over both the restaurant and winery, having worked with his father since his return from the war. They were a pioneering partnership, producing, bottling and even exporting, well ahead of the game. Giacomo then passed the reins to his sons, another Giovanni and Aldo in 1961.

Giovanni, the elder brother, had worked with his father on the 1958 vintage and had been in charge since 1959. Perhaps influenced by his father, he elected to follow a very traditional path. Aldo however was more interested in modernising Barolo, and in 1969 the brothers went their separate ways. In 1974, Giovanni (Roberto's father) spear-headed the fortuitous and massively courageous investment in the 14-hectare *monopole* of Cascina Francia, situated at 400 metres above sea level. It is a limestone/sandstone slope facing south-west – a fabulous site.

When Giovanni bought the land originally, it must have taken some imagination to foresee vines growing on what was then a field of wheat. There had been no wine produced from Cascina Francia prior to Conterno and from their first vintage, 1978, the family stopped buying in grapes from elsewhere. This really put Cantina Giacomo Conterno on the map as quality would be, for the first time, entirely under family control from vineyard to bottle. Moreover, there have been few estates in Italy so identified with one piece of land as Giacomo Conterno.

The weight of history might bear heavily on the shoulders of Roberto – though all evidence is to the contrary. Even the tightest-lipped cynics would have to admit that Roberto has accepted the responsibility lightly. Hard work and attention to detail, allied to near fanatical traditionalism and perfectionism, has produced award-winning wines year on year.

“Hard work and attention to detail, allied to near fanatical traditionalism and perfectionism, has produced award-winning wines year on year.”



A New Vineyard

However orthodox, Roberto is not one for standing still. In 2008, in an exciting and bold move, he firmly underscored his imprint on the estate's impressive history by adding to the family holdings three hectares of fabulously-sited *terroir*; Cerretta in Serralunga d'Alba.

It is difficult to evaluate quite what this must mean for Roberto as this is the first addition to the estate since the acquisition of Cascina Francia, 34 years ago. Now at long last, armed with the combined experience of four generations, Roberto has the opportunity to translate this new, quite different *terroir*, in his own way. The property comprises two hectares of Nebbiolo and one hectare of Barbera on a unique soil; part clay, part limestone.

As luck would have it, Roberto's first vintage was to prove challenging, a tough year with rain in spring and summer and some hail for good measure – though Nature came up trumps in the end. To a degree, Roberto used the experiences presented during the growing season as an essential part of gaining an understanding of this new property. He very much feels that he has to get to grips with the personality of the vineyard, the better to facilitate its individual character. In the light of this, with a very small, severely-selected crop, he elected to delay making a Barolo, at least for another year. The Nebbiolo and Barbera, available in tiny quantities, will make people smile.



Cantina Giacomo Conterno next to the village of Monforte d'Alba

This Release

We are absolutely delighted to be releasing Roberto's two new wines from his new Cerretta vineyard for the first time and we are very pleased to announce that Roberto has granted Corney & Barrow exclusivity, along with the rest of his range. As always with this release, we are offering a mix of vintages; the Barberas and the new Nebbiolo are released younger (2008 vintage) and the Barolo, older (2006 vintage), due to the additional length of time needed to age. Excitingly, we are also releasing the exquisite Monfortino 2002 this year, which is only made in exceptional vintages.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Alison Buchanan', written in a cursive style.

Alison Buchanan
Associate Director, Buying

To order, please use the form provided or call 020 7265 2430 (London) or 01875 321 921 (Edinburgh)



These wines are released en primeur. Delivery dates to be confirmed. All prices are quoted in bond UK

Vintage Reports

2008 “*a new challenge in the history of Conterno*”

Roberto Conterno

As indicated overleaf, 2008 presented a number of challenges, most notably due to high rainfall in spring, which resulted in uneven flowering and fruit-set. The weather really did not settle down to the more characteristic hot sunshine until the end of the summer and dashed many hopes with a hailstorm in mid-July. Cerretta was amongst the vineyards hit by the hail. Delayed though it may have been, late summer was gorgeous, as was the run up to harvest, rather favouring Nebbiolo as a variety.

2006 “*a classical style in the making*”

Roberto Conterno

2006 was also a relatively challenging season. Winter and spring were relatively uneventful and the vineyards fared well, but the summer was tricky, lurching from hot temperatures to significant rain. Temperatures really were high at the beginning of July but in August conditions became uncharacteristically cool and damp. September offered both sunshine and intermittent showers. As harvest approached, the evening temperatures dropped, such cool evenings and nights making for greater complexity, more intense colour and expressive aromatics. 2006, in the right hands, produced classically-balanced, powerful wines with good potential for ageing.

2002 “*power in its pure state*”

Roberto Conterno

The pundits were pretty tough on 2002 as a vintage, affording less attention to detail and fact than to sweeping meteorological generalisations. True, the growing season was atypically cold and wet and many parts of Barolo suffered violent hail not long before the anticipated harvest. The Conternos’ guardian angels must surely have been looking over them as Cascina Francia was unscathed. Many growers lost 100% of their crop – perhaps a reasonable foundation for the anti-2002 rumours – but an unfair guide to the fortunate few. Following the hailstorm, a penitent Mother Nature reversed the trend, delivering benchmark conditions for the rest of the season, right up to harvest.

Particularly important for late-ripeners Nebbiolo, the favourable conditions held until the grapes attained optimal maturity. Roberto and his father had been assiduous in mastering vines turned wayward by a difficult climate. They had carried out a particularly severe green harvest in August, for example, to allow the remaining fruit a better chance to ripen.

In the end, as Roberto set out to identify the best parcels which would become Monfortino – a task left to just days before harvest – he discovered that nothing stood out from the crowd. Against all odds, all the parcels had produced extraordinary fruit; big, structured, ripe grapes with enormous potential. Father and son decided that with such regularity and power this was no longer a potentially good vintage but a great vintage. No Barolo Cascina Francia was produced as a result – just the Monfortino.

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.
- A definitive score of a young wine is almost always impossible. We usually offer a ‘spread’ (e.g. 14–16) which relates to the potential to achieve a higher mark. A ‘plus’ adds further to that potential.
- A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes.

The Wines of Cantina Giacomo Conterno

Barbera d'Alba DOC Cerretta 2008

Corney & Barrow Score 17 to 18

Production of a mere 31 hectolitres per hectare saw only 4,000 bottles being produced in 2008, Roberto's debut from this vineyard. Whatever sacrifice had to be made to produce this level of quality was worth it. The wine is a distinctive jet-plum in colour, with a very precise focus. The palate is really ripe, plump and accessible, perfumed with violets and roses. Flirtatious and delectable, this has a lovely sense of direction, an innate elegance and so much charm – a lovely Barbera.

£315/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2011–2018 plus

NEW
WINE

Barbera d'Alba DOC Cascina Francia 2008

Corney & Barrow Score 17 to 18

This is a much more sedate, serious, brooding style of Barbera, offering both spiced, dark fruit and a certain savoury element, underscored by a marked ferruginous minerality. The palate is restrained, a ripe tannic structure and mineral layer controlling a wealth of black fruit, cherries and blueberry notes. Concentrated and full, this shows elevating freshness and real staying power – deeply impressive.

£315/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

£345/case of 6 magnums, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2011–2020 plus

Langhe Nebbiolo DOC Cerretta 2008

Corney & Barrow Score 17 plus to 18

The later-ripening Nebbiolo grape really benefited from the end of the season, with its fair, sunny days and cool nights – ideal conditions for the grapes to gain complexity and intensity as they attain optimal maturity. 38 hectolitres per hectare were produced, making for 5,000 bottles. Limpid plum-ruby, this is enticing from the outset, presenting an almost Burgundian nose, rich in violets, roses and summer berries. This has a lovely, breezy freshness that is mirrored on the palate, which is poised and elegant. A very exciting debut from this vineyard – really lovely wine.

£495/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2012–2020 plus

NEW
WINE

Barolo Cascina Francia 2006

Corney & Barrow Score 18 to 18 plus

Limpid ruby-garnet in colour, this presents a restrained, dark, brooding nose of dark fruit and violet pot pourri, complemented by a determined, ferruginous minerality. This is no retiring violet, structured, sedate yet ripe and richly textured, autumnal fruit lifted by an attractive acidity – a rather noble translation of the vintage – beautifully balanced and extraordinarily long.

£1,095/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

£220/case of 1 magnum, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2017–2028 plus

Monfortino 2002

Corney & Barrow Score 19

Roberto believes 2002 to be the greatest vintage of Monfortino ever – though “great,” sadly, does not refer to quantity. Jet-shot garnet in colour, this offers an outstanding benchmark Nebbiolo nose – cherry compote, delicate spice, faded violets and intense minerality. Really fine, this has consummate poise. Focused throughout, it reveals incredible power, intensity restrained by forceful tannins which will allow, indeed demand, mid-term cellaring. This is a very classical, traditional Barolo – an outstanding ambassador for the estate.

£1,500/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK

£550/case of 1 magnum, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2016–2030 plus

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