



Andrea Franchetti 2008 & 2007 Vintages

Once again, Andrea Franchetti has produced a portfolio of wines from his two estates in Tuscany and Sicily, which are extraordinary in every sense, from location through to the glass. Andrea's driven mentality borders genius and we continue to marvel both at the goals he sets himself and, more importantly, the formidable results he achieves. This year's offering is no exception.

Tenuta di Trinoro, Val d'Orcia, Tuscany

Andrea Franchetti loves the wines of Bordeaux. When he elected to create Tenuta di Trinoro from scratch, he was not even all that keen on Italian wine. He was particularly disparaging about Sangiovese – the haloed grape variety of Chianti - which still does not feature in his wines. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot were consequently planted, alongside small parcels of indigenous vines Cesanese d'Affile and Uva di Troia, which he finds *interesting*. Tenuta di Trinoro lies in a wide valley between 500 and 700 metres above sea level, facing west-south-west, protected by two mountains, Cetona and Amiata. The climate is continental, with very hot days but cool autumnal nights. Being dry, it is perfect for prolonged ripening. Planting at 9000 vines per hectare and pruning back to five clusters per vine greatly restricts yield and concentrates the wines so that, from the outset, Andrea's wines astonished the wine world with their richness and complexity. The grapes are picked bunch by bunch with several passages through the vines to ensure optimum ripeness. The resulting wines are phenomenal.

Alison Buchanan
Associate Director, Buying
August 2009

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.

2008 Vintage notes

The particular character of 2008 has to be understood through the context of the 2007 and 2008 growing seasons. 2007 had been an extremely dry year so that the rains of the winter of 2008 were greeted with much relief. The vines clearly needed to replenish reserves. As rain and cool weather continued through spring, uneven flowering and fruit-set resulted – which impacts on the style. Summer produced the hot, dry conditions typical of the Val'd'Orcia. Perennial fears of hydric stress were assuaged until September, thanks to the replenished water table. However, at the point when picking would normally begin, heat excess in some parcels caused the vines' survival mechanism to shut further ripening down. Andrea waited.... and waited. In the middle of October, the Merlot resumed the ripening process in fits and starts, to be joined by Cabernet Franc. These make up the majority of the blend at 70% in 2008. Andrea rates 2008 as the most drawn-out and dangerous he can remember. The later in the season, the higher the chance of rain. Yet the growth cycle continued and Andrea wanted to take advantage of this, to the full. The vintage came in, tiny plot by tiny plot, in various stages of ripeness due to the uneven beginning to the season. Sun-roasted berries were brought in first, then grapes plumped up by very sudden ripeness and yet others, leaning towards over-ripeness towards the end. The later-ripening Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot really tested Andrea's patience yet 40 tanks of savagely selected wines with hugely diverse colours and aromas were finally produced – the palette with which Trinoro would be created. Only 800 cases were made in total.

Tenuta di Trinoro 2008 ★

35% Cabernet Franc, 35% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Petit Verdot

Corney & Barrow Score 18.5

Opaque deep plum with a bright cherry rim, this is stunningly aromatic on the nose, with a profusion of puréed fruit, rose and violet, an almost citrus lift and an earthy minerality. The palate offers a similarly perfumed profile, beguilingly exotic yet playful on attack, underscored by a powerful, dense and serious structure which warrants some patience. This Trinoro provides an exemplary translation of a challenging yet ultimately rewarding vintage – exciting really!

Recommended drinking from 2012 to 2022 plus

£575/case of 6, in bond UK

2007 Vintage notes

The winter of 2006/2007 was warm and dry, placing great pressure on water reserves. May was showery with periods of cold weather, resulting in uneven flowering and fruit set. This was apparent through until July, when there were still unusual differences in the size of the bunches. For Andrea, this was something of a trifling detail as he always harvests as and when individual bunches have ripened. The rest of the summer was uneventful and, by September, most of Tuscany had started picking. At Trinoro, they were not convinced that the grapes were fully ripe so they waited a full lunar cycle before starting with Merlot on the 2nd of October, Cabernet Franc in mid-October, and Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot at the end of the month. There was very little juice, but wonderful concentration and ageing potential.

Le Cupole 2007 ★

40% Cabernet Franc, 22% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot and 8% Petit Verdot

Corney & Barrow Score 17– 17 plus

An intense jet –cherry in colour, the nose here is gorgeous, hugely evocative, offering sweet, candied fruit, spiced compote and pepper, with a slight, citrus lift. The palate is very dense, darkly fruited with ripe, chewy tannins and earthy undertones. The concentration is impressive, yet a violet freshness, cassis notes and a fine minerality ensures freshness, which follows through to a prolonged, layered and complex finish. This is quintessential Cupole and a fine ambassador for a very particular vintage.

Recommended drinking from 2010 to 2014 plus

£110/case of 6, in bond UK

Passopisciaro, Mount Etna, Sicily

For a little bit of extra excitement, Andrea chose the slopes of a live volcano, Etna, as his next challenge. He cleared and restored long-abandoned terraces of ancient vines on the mountain, replanting 12000 vines per hectare on thin lava dust, on the north slopes. It is quite incongruous. The sun can be streaming down on the vineyard at the same time as skiers slalom their way down the slopes of the mountain with a constant plume of smoke rising from the top! High altitude, exposure and temperature variation between day and night, all play an important role in a very special *terroir*, which presents a unique palette of aromatics to the winemaker. Here, minerality assumes an important new dimension, with individual lava flows imparting a distinctive personality on the finished wines. The wines are a revelation.

NB. We have been extremely conservative with our drinking window as, essentially, these wines have no history and even Andrea is reluctant to hazard a guess at their potential longevity.

Passopisciario Guardiola Bianco 2008

100% Chardonnay

Corney & Barrow Score 16 plus to 17 plus

This is from young Chardonnay vines planted at 12300 vines per hectare, at between 1000 and 1100m above sea level. Production is naturally restricted this high up - just 8hl per ha - producing intense, concentrated fruit. A pretty, shimmering, green-gold straw in colour, this is very young and rather restrained initially on the nose. Delicate orchard fruit and a very pure minerality present almost Burgundian finesse. The palate maintains a measure of control but there is clear concentration of fruit which reveals itself in the glass. This is gentle and accessible, with a delicately smoked backdrop, refined balance and tremendous mineral definition – a far cry from overtly exotic, heavily-oaked Chardonnay.

Recommended drinking from 2009 to 2012 plus

£89/case of 6, in bond UK

Passopisciario 2007 ★

100% Nerello Mascalese

Corney & Barrow Score 18

This comes from various parcels of old Nerello Mascalese – an indigenous grape variety - between 30 and 120 years old. A shimmering, limpid, ruby in colour it makes an immediate impact, surprise perhaps at the clarity and lightness of colour from so far south. The nose is attractive with very sweet, summer berry fruit and cream to the fore, underpinned by a slightly smoky minerality. There is an ethereal purity on both the nose and palate, with fresh cherries, violets and raspberries vying for dominance. A delicate, breezy finesse and elegance prevails throughout swathes of ripe, fragrant fruit, supported by tannins so well integrated as to be almost imperceptible.

Recommended drinking from 2009 to 2014 plus

£130/case of 6, in bond UK

Franchetti 2008

50% Cesanese d'Affile, 50% Petit Verdot

Corney & Barrow Score 17 plus to 18 plus

Andrea was faced with 130 terraces, buried by undergrowth. He replanted, determined to grow something other than the ubiquitous Nerello Mascalese. This astonishing wine is produced from 2ha young vine Petit Verdot, a grape usually preserved for "seasoning" in Bordeaux blends, blended with 1.5ha Cesanese d'Affile. Andrea trawled Bordeaux for the Petit Verdot vines whilst the latter come from plots of Trinoro. Opaque, jet-shot plum purple, glittering and seductive, this has a very attractive nose, intense and pure, redolent of sweet berried fruits, refreshed with wild herbs. The palate, rich and silk-textured, combines layered opulence with very obvious mineral character, allied to exuberant aromatics throughout. We have secured an increase in our allocation this year, having sold out instantly in former vintages. Sadly, quantities are still very limited since

only 250 cases were produced for the entire world.

Recommended drinking from 2010 to 2015 plus

£380/case of 6, in bond UK

Passopisciario Bianco Dolce NV

A blend of white grapes: Minnella, Grecanico, Catarratto, di Coda di Volpe, Insolia and Caricante

Corney & Barrow Score 17 to 17 plus

This is very much an Andrea Franchetti indulgence – an extra challenge for a bit of a wheeze. The grapes were tied on the cellar beams at Passopisciario to dry for four to five months before extracting minimal amounts of the remaining, super-concentrated juice. Stunning, golden amber in colour, it presents an absolutely extraordinary nose, a complex blend of savoury and sweet aromatics, wild herbs and honey. The palate offers dried fruit, truffle notes with a profusion of herbs and spice not dissimilar to good vermouth. The texture is decadent, opulent and silky with an intensity high-grade Manuka honey intensity, high toned and slightly dangerous. This wine is a totally unknown quantity in terms of drinking dates. It is drinking now but we believe it has capacity to age.

Recommended drinking from 2009 to 2012 plus

£50/case of 3 50cl bottles, in bond UK

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