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WINE MERCHANTS
CORNEY & BARROW LIMITED
LONDON



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HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES
WINE MERCHANTS
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CORNEY & BARROW

INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS

Established 1780

TARDIEU-LAURENT
2009 VINTAGE, EN-PRIMEUR



The Rhône Valley

With such diversity of geography, climate, grape variety and, above all, winemaking talent, it is incredibly difficult (some would say impossible) to make generalisations about any of the great wine regions. This is particularly true for the Rhône valley, where the diversity of *terroirs* is so pronounced that any broad brush stroke would simply mislead.

Wines from the Rhône are too often perceived as big, powerful, muscular wines, with little grace and often aggressive tannins. The reality is that the region can produce finesse equalling Burgundy or the majestic complexity of the very best of Bordeaux. Today's top-end Rhône valley winemakers understand their vines and their vineyards. They have travelled and experienced different winemaking techniques, both in other regions of France and overseas. As we write, Michel Tardieu's winemaker son Bastien is working in New Zealand, once again expanding his vision and expertise.

It is to individual growers and winemakers that one must turn to unearth the very best of the Rhône. Michel Tardieu's wealth of experience and the extent of the relationships he has developed with growers over the years is staggering. There are few people in the Rhône valley who can access and energise with such an intimate knowledge, these incredible parcels of old vines – to say nothing of the bold and natural talent he has at his disposal. Our recent tasting of Michel's 2009 wines has only underlined and confirmed his total command of the Rhône in all areas.

Tardieu-Laurent

Established in 1994, the Tardieu-Laurent wines turned heads from the outset. We were fortunate enough to have been introduced to the wines by Anne-Claude Leflaive, several years ago, when Michel Tardieu was then in partnership with Burgundian Dominique Laurent. Michel is now working independently, totally free to pursue his own philosophy, to the maximum, without any impediment, alongside his wife Michèle and son and daughter Bastien and Camille. We admire his single-minded, quasi-obsessive pursuit of the perfect translation of vintage and place, a stance which he refers to as *terroiriste*.

Michel buys wine, selected according to the quality of the vineyard, and he then looks after the maturation process, blending and commercialisation of the wines. Logically, given that the accurate translation of *terroir* and vintage is fundamental to Michel's mindset, intervention is minimal.

Top quality ingredients are however absolutely essential.

To that end, a huge part of Michel's work involves building long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with a network of low-yield producers, who own specific, top quality parcels, largely of old vines. Michel works closely with them, in both the northern and southern Rhône, ensuring the very best possible vine husbandry.

It is interesting to note that an increasing number of Michel's growers are becoming organic and even biodynamic, though Michel stresses, in common with all of our principals, that this move is not commercially motivated but has been inspired by reasons of health and sustainability.

Michel knows the vineyards and the specific parcels within those vineyards which are of interest to him, by heart. Most of the vines selected are naturally low-yielding old vines, over 50 years of age and often older. The naturally-restricted volumes result in increased complexity and intensity. The strategy held out well in 2009.

2009 Vintage Notes

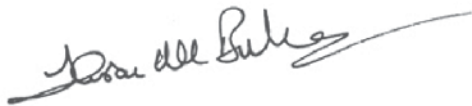
“A year for great *terroirs* and old vines”

Michel Tardieu. May 2010

Winter in 2008/2009, in the southern Rhône, was rather cold and wet – a godsend as it happens as the vines were able to conserve energy and to replenish reserves which would prove essential later in the season. The latter part of the growing season was very dry, with little rain to speak of between June and August and a two week heatwave in August for good measure. This raised concerns that the vines might simply close down as a result of hydric stress. In fact, the heatwave followed *véraison* (colouring of the grapes) so maturation, ultimately, was not blocked. Although ripening continued, it was through dehydration and concentration rather than through advancing phenolic maturity. Fortunately the vines were refreshed by some rain in the middle of September which facilitated maturation right through to harvest. Quantities were down due to a difficult flowering and some drying of the grapes.

The north enjoyed similar clement conditions, allowing for an early harvest. Just as fears were growing concerning hydric stress, rain fell mid August which really restored the balance, pitching relative success in the vintage towards the north. Quality and quantity were both good in the north.

Michel considers 2009 as absolutely exceptional in the north but more variable in the south, from average to excellent – dependent on *terroir*, age of vines, viticultural practices and vinification. Michel reflects that from cellar to cellar he might have been tasting different vintages. We are delighted with his choices.



Alison Buchanan
Associate Director, Buying
June 2010



Michel Tardieu and Tardieu-Laurent Winery

White – Southern Rhône

Côtes-du-Rhône Blanc, Guy Louis

60% Marsanne (over 50 years old), 15% Roussanne,
10% Grenache Blanc (over 60 years old), 15% Viognier

Corney & Barrow Score 17 plus to 18

This is a blend from the north and south. Only 500 cases were produced. A very pretty, shimmering gold straw in colour, this presents an attractive blend of orchard and stone fruit, delicately spiced and hinting at floral and honeyed notes. Beautifully balanced, rounded, opulent and fresh, both the nose and palate are deliciously aromatic. The Viognier component is from young Condrieu vines – something of a steal!

£125/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2011–2018 plus

Saint-Péray Vieilles Vignes

60% Marsanne (over 100 years old), 40% Roussanne (over 35 years old)

Corney & Barrow Score 17 plus to 18 plus

There were just 250 cases produced of this insider's wine. Believing this to be a rather unfamiliar appellation, we were surprised at quite how quickly it sells out. The wine had just finished its malolactic fermentation when we tasted and still was a little spritzy but this did not detract from its obvious charm. Rich gold in colour with green lights, it is immediately appealing. The nose presents lovely stone fruit, leesy and exotic, rich in old vine intensity, punctuated by mineral notes. The palate is rather sophisticated despite this embryonic phase, though there are already clear indications that, given time, it will really let its hair down, becoming something of a hedonistic bombshell – very striking and exceptional value for money.

£150/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking 2012–2020 plus

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc Vieilles Vignes

60% Grenache Blanc (over 60 years old), 40% Roussanne (over 20 years old)

Corney & Barrow Score 17 plus to 18

With only 300 cases produced, for the whole world, this is once again extremely rare. It comes from three domaines, at sites in La Crau, Les Serres and Le Belvédère. Pale gold in colour, this presents a rather subdued, refined nose at this early stage, orchard and stone fruit refreshed by floral notes. The palate is a model of youthful restraint, decorous and controlled yet there is clearly innate power and energy here which will be revealed given even a little time. The hints are in the balance and weight of the palate which is seductive and beautifully textured, offering considerable, layered complexity.

£270/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2011–2018 plus

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

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White – Northern Rhône

Condrieu

100% Viognier (over 40 years old)

Corney & Barrow Score 18 to 19

There are only 375 cases of this lovely wine for the world. Michel has sourced this from five domaines, two of which, interestingly, are organic. Michel observes, very positively, that organic viticulture is becoming something of a trend, and for the right reasons: vineyard and individual health rather than being commercially driven. The ripe intensity of this Condrieu bears testimony to the sunny slopes of its origins. Glittering gold, it is immediately enticing in its overtures, presenting a wonderfully aromatic nose – a combination of white-fleshed peach, apricot, nuts and floral notes, complemented by a refined minerality. This is no retiring violet. Opulent and bold, it quivers with intense Viognier freshness, energetic, uplifting and beautifully balanced.

£330/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2012–2020 plus

Hermitage Blanc

80% Marsanne (over 50 years old), 20% Roussanne (over 35 years old)

Corney & Barrow Score 18 to 19 plus

With just 425 cases produced, this tends to sell out immediately. Small wonder, it is always a stunning ambassador for the region. Shimmering gold, this was mid-malolactic when we tasted – so rather buttery on the nose and spritzy on the palate. Despite this, an abundance of stone and orchard fruit shows through, layered with warm brioche notes, nuts and vanilla cream, all complemented by restrained minerality and refreshing floral intrigue. The palate provides a beautiful expression of Hermitage, focused and pure, with intense mineral definition and refreshing acidity delivering energy and direction within an opulent, rounded backdrop – a gorgeous wine.

£345/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2012–2022 plus

Red – Southern Rhône

Les Becs Fins, Côtes-du-Rhône Villages

60% Grenache (over 60 years old), 50% Syrah (over 20 years old)

Corney & Barrow Score 17 plus to 18

We were delighted to restore Les Becs Fins to our portfolio last year, complete with spruced up presentation. Deeply coloured, an inky plum, it presents intensely sweet red and black fruit, warm blueberry tart notes, rich and very pure. This sees no wood so is an exceptionally honest expression of fruit and *terroir* from one domaine, planted on mineral, shingle soils, which add definition. The palate is rich and concentrated, accessible and inviting with good structure – beautifully balanced and exceptional value.

£95/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2012–2018 plus

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



Bandol

100% Mourvèdre (over 50 years old)

Corney and Barrow Score 18 to 18.5

As one would expect with this 100% Mourvèdre cuvée the colour is deep and intense, jet shot and yet it sparkles with life. The nose is a little suppressed initially but this is because the wine is still going through the final stages of its malolactic fermentation. With a couple of swirls in the glass it reveals a wonderfully intense, smoky, dark cherry, plum, toasted nut and spice-tinged nose that is both alluring and enticing. The palate is mouth-coating with layers of sweet, plummy, dark fruit, plenty of *garrigue* spice and charcoal and with a delicious, sweet, nutty, Christmas cake rich finish. Beneath this opulent, pure fruit there is a powerful skeleton of ripe, rounded tannins and fresh, mineral-driven acidity that all leads through to a beautifully focused and perfectly balanced finish. Great wine.

£210/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2016–2025 plus

Domaine de la Bastide de Rhodarès, Côtes du Luberon

50% Syrah (over 50 years old), 50% Grenache (over 25 years old)

Corney & Barrow Score 17 plus

There are just 500 cases of this – a star performer for the appellation. Deeply coloured, this has a wonderfully concentrated nose, rich in red and black fruit, layered with mocha, all refreshed by citrus notes. The palate is stunning, an electric balance between innate richness and heightened purity – very lovely and fantastic value!

£55/case of 6 in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2012–2017 plus

Côtes-du-Rhône, Guy Louis

75% Grenache (over 50 years old), 25% Syrah (over 35 years old)

Corney & Barrow Score 17 to 17.5

1,000 cases here, named after Michel's father and uncle, this come from three domaines, two of which are organic. One of the Grenache vats we tasted was biodynamic, offering intense purity of fruit. Plum purple in colour, this suggests candied quince on the nose, allied to red and black fruit enriched by one-year-old oak. The palate is rounded and ripe, innate opulence complemented by a febrile energy which lifts the wine, enhancing its fresh fruit profile – very impressive.

£125/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2011–2019 plus

Rasteau Vieilles Vignes

80% Grenache (over 80 years old), 20% Syrah (over 35 years old)

Corney & Barrow Score 17 plus to 18

There are 500 cases of Rasteau 2009, for the whole world, coming from two organically-farmed domaines, planted on clay-limestone and blue clay slopes. Jet-shot plum in colour, this is enticing from the outset, concentrated, spiced black and red fruit, tobacco leaf and cedar, refreshed by haunting, ethereal citrus notes – bitter orange peel – a characteristic of old Grenache. The palate is richly textured, succulent, layered and complex with significant, well-integrated tannins. Energetic and characterful, this is a fine ambassador for a relatively unknown appellation, offering excellent value.

£150/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2012–2017 plus

Vacqueyras Vieilles Vignes

80% Grenache (over 65 years old), 20% Syrah (over 35 years old)

Corney & Barrow Score 17 to 18 plus

500 cases of Vacqueyras were produced in 2009, from five domaines, three of which exercise organic viticulture. The grapes are 50% destemmed. Jet-plum in colour, this is immediately attractive, offering rich, spicy red and black fruit on the nose, dark chocolate and bitter citrus elements adding complexity, all lifted by violet notes. The palate echoes the aromatics presented by the nose, set within a ripe, expansive palate which adds a savoury element, underpinned by minerals and enriched by ageing in one-year-old oak. This is a particularly successful Vacqueyras which will show well from the outset and always gives good value.

£185/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2012–2018 plus

Gigondas Vieilles Vignes

80% Grenache (over 60 years old), 20% Syrah, Mourvèdre and Cinsault (over 35 years old)

Corney & Barrow Score 17 to 18 plus

Here 500 cases are produced from four domaines, two of which are organic. The grapes are 30% de-stemmed. Deep plum-ruby in colour, this is something of a brooding powerhouse of a wine. There are hints of black and red fruit on the nose with wild herbs, tobacco and wood smoke adding complexity. The palate is robust and muscular, albeit retaining the aromatics presented by the nose, adding citrus notes and pepper. The wine is still evolving, gaining richness from being aged in one-year-old barrels. This 2009 is a powerful Gigondas which warrants some time to fully reveal its undeniable complexity – a very impressive translation of the appellation.

£210/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2013–2018 plus

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes

85% Grenache (over 80 years old), 10% Mourvèdre (35 years old) 5% Syrah (over 30 years old)

Corney & Barrow Score 17 plus to 18

750 cases were produced from three domaines, one of which is organic, planted on the rounded stones for which Châteauneuf is so famous, on Le Haut de la Crau. A deep-plum in colour, clinging to the glass, this is wonderfully focused on the nose, precise and fresh. Fennel and liquorice notes add complexity to a plethora of concentrated red and black fruit, punctuated by minerals. The palate provides a wonderful combination of obvious power and weight, enriched by one-year-old oak, with an extraordinary lightness of touch and an uplifting freshness – beautifully balanced.

£375/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2012–2019 plus

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Spéciale

100% Grenache (80 to 100 years old)

Corney & Barrow Score 18 to 18 plus

1,000 cases are produced of this, the Cuvée Spéciale, and “*spéciale*” it certainly is. Ancient vines from two organically-managed domaines are planted on the sandy soils of the Bas de la Crau. Whole bunches are vinified, no de-stemming. Jet-shot, inky-plum in colour, this presents an extraordinary nose, extremely floral with violets and roses complementing red berries. Wonderfully intense and bright, the palate is supremely focused throughout with rich, pure fruit refreshed by bitter marmalade notes – very satisfying indeed.

£395/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2012–2020 plus

Red – Northern Rhône

Crozes-Hermitage Vieilles Vignes

100% Syrah (50 years old and older)

Corney & Barrow Score 18

Just 500 cases were produced, from two domaines. Inky jet-plum, this offers exceptional intensity on the nose, bright and vivacious, wild blackberry and raspberry with hints of stone fruit. The palate mirrors the aromatics presented on the nose – a real explosion of fruit, tremendously ripe and opulent yet with so much energy and pizzazz. Effortlessly pure and fresh, this is beautifully balanced, with fennel notes and refined mineral backbone – very fine.

£165/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2012–2018 plus

Saint-Joseph Les Roches Vieilles Vignes

100% Syrah, including Serine (50 years old and older)

Corney & Barrow Score 18 to 18 plus

This is a blend of Syrah and Serine from three estates, two of which are organic. 500 cases are anticipated. This presents a very honest, particularly vinous nose – which is not always the case amongst very young wines. It demands attention from the outset with its opaque plum colour, clinging persistently to the glass. The palate is incredibly appetising, with succulent fruit, ripe and playful complemented by an energising mineral depth. Michel has fashioned a Saint-Joseph of impeccable balance, no hard edges, refreshing, bright and faithful to its origins – sprightly.

£210/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2013–2020 plus

Cornas Coteaux

100% Syrah, including Serine (50 years old and older)

Corney & Barrow Score 18 plus to 19

Just 375 cases are expected from this, a blend of three estates. Intense plum-cherry in colour, this presents an intriguing iodine-rich minerality on the nose, a savoury depth and richness which is echoed on the palate. The balance between innate concentration and power, at one level, and complementary uplifting freshness creates a real tour de force – tantalising the taster. An effortless silky structure completes the seduction – a gorgeous wine which Michel feels may be his greatest with this vintage.

£270/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2014–2022 plus

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Côte-Rôtie

100% Serine and Syrah (50 years old and older)

Corney & Barrow Score 17 plus to 18

With a mere 500 cases to meet the world's demands, this, inevitably, will be over subscribed. It comes from three estates, incorporating parcels from Landonne, Chavaroche, Moulin, Rozier and Champon. Gorgeous jet-plum velvet in appearance, this is something of a bombshell. The nose and palate both express a febrile energy, focused and determined, intense, smoky dark fruit complemented by a strident, granitic minerality. 30% of the grapes are not de-stemmed, contributing vigour and pace. This is a very grown-up, noble Côte-Rôtie – an excellent ambassador for the appellation.

£430/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2019–2025 plus

Hermitage

100% Syrah, including Serine (50 years old and older)

Corney & Barrow Score 18 to 18 plus

Two estates provide just 400 cases here. Deeply coloured and clinging to the glass, this presents a staggering array of red and black fruit, violets, iodine notes and wild herbs, laced with delicate spice. Ripe and opulent, silk-textured, this is rather decadent, tannins obscured by supple, succulent fruit. Liquorice notes add a savoury dimension, all complemented by a refined, clear minerality – a very fine Hermitage.

£525/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2019–2025 plus

Vin Doux Naturel Rasteau Vieilles Vignes – 2006 (now in stock)

100% Grenache (over 80 years)

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5 to 18

We were delighted to discover last year that Michel had experimented with a red dessert wine, made similarly to port – a vin doux naturel. Here fermentation is stopped prematurely by the addition of alcohol, thereby producing a full-bodied wine, with some residual grape sugar. Oliver Hartley and I were immediately hooked but were a little reticent as to how such an offbeat wine would be perceived. In fact it flew out the door – and not just to Oliver's or my cellar. Jet-plum in colour, peppery and fresh, this has a very attractive, inviting, sweet nose, exuberant and berried initially, developing rich, heady old vine fruit with nuances of dark chocolate and a marmalade intrigue. This feels more like wine than Port and is much less spicity, with 16.5% rather than 20% alcohol. This is one of the few wines which will complement mocha and chocolate desserts, festive puddings and blue cheese. Drinking beautifully already. This will age well under the correct cellar conditions.

£165/case of 12, in bond UK

Recommended drinking from 2009–2025 plus

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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.*



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