



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



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HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES
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CORNEY & BARROW

INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS

Established 1780



Tardieu-Laurent

2011 VINTAGE EN PRIMEUR

EXCLUSIVE TO CORNEY & BARROW IN THE UK AND HONG KONG



*“A summer like spring,
a spring-like summer
and an optimal autumn...
This more or less
summarises the vintage.”*

MICHEL TARDIEU, JULY 2012



Michel Tardieu

TARDIEU-LAURENT 2011 VINTAGE EN PRIMEUR

THE RHÔNE VALLEY

The river Rhône travels around 150 miles as it makes its way from its confluence with the river Saône in Lyon, in the north, down to the Mediterranean coast.

During its travels, it enjoys tremendous diversity of geography, geology, topography, climate, grape variety and as ever, great diversity in the levels of viticultural and winemaking talent. It is never advisable to make sweeping generalisations about any of the great wine regions but here, arguably, we are particularly arrogant if we seek to encapsulate the enormous diversity offered by the Rhône valley and greet it as a single entity.

At the very least, it is generally accepted that the Northern and Southern Rhône vineyards ought to be considered as two distinct regions and they are, in any case, separated by 25 miles between Valence and Montelimar essentially devoid of vines.

The North, a more disciplined landscape, is marked by difficult, vertiginous terraced slopes carved into steep granite. Syrah, the favoured red varietal enjoys a continental climate here, cold winters and hot summers as well as mineral rich, granitic soils. The white varietals Marsanne, Roussanne, Roussette and Viognier also thrive.

The South, in contrast, is flatter, more sprawling, with generally hotter Mediterranean conditions. It is significantly more prolific, producing around 95% of total production. The soils are different too, granite having given way to sand, rocks and rounded stones.

As a result of the volume of Côtes-du-Rhône produced, largely but not exclusively from the south, and of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, it is easy to be lured into a false sense of a general style when in fact the region provides fiendishly intriguing contradictions, inordinate complementary styles and huge variations in attitude and ability.

Some wines offer supreme, almost Burgundian finesse, others are more structured and reveal majestic complexity which can rival the best of Bordeaux and there are examples which advance more than a passing nod stylistically to the New World.

Alison Buchanan
Associate Director, Buying
September 2012

Terroir is, as always, key but so is the producer. Top-end Rhône producers really understand their vineyards and the complex relationships between vines, soils, geology, aspect and micro-climate. Today's growers, in a change from the past, will often have travelled, amassing experience from other regions and overseas. Michel Tardieu's son Bastien has recently returned from New Zealand where he and his wife worked for a season, expanding their vision and expertise.

Such experiences will inevitably add an extra dimension to the family's vision for the future. It is to individual growers and winemakers that one must turn to unearth the very best of the Rhône. Michel Tardieu's talent is in seeking out the best parcels, best growers and building relationships in order that he can access the best potential. The wealth of experience and the extent of the relationships he has developed with growers over the past fifteen years is staggering.

TARDIEU-LAURENT

Established in 1996, 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. Fifteen years down the road this is now wholly a family business allowing total independence and freedom to pursue Michel's philosophy, to the maximum, without any impediment. Cohorts include Michel's wife Michèle and their son and daughter Bastien and Camille. This is very much a family business. We so admire their single-minded, quasi-obsessive pursuit of the perfect translation of vintage and place.

Michel is a *négociant-éleveur* which means that he buys wine, selected according to the quality of the vineyard, in its raw fermented state. The wines will undergo malolactic fermentation generally, under the auspices of Michel, who 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 mind-set, intervention is minimal. None of the wines are fined and only a few have a very light filtration.



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.

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 older. Often the size of the individual parcels is too small to be independently viable but Michel, through buying a number of them, has the wherewithal for a workable blend. The naturally-restricted volumes result in increased complexity and intensity. These are world class wines which thoroughly deserve their international acclaim.



The estate at Tardieu-Laurent

2011 VINTAGE NOTES

“a vintage saved by the months of September and October, which were exceptional”

MICHEL TARDIEU, JULY 2012

The conditions in 2011 served to remind *vignerons* that Mother Nature can sometimes be a little fickle. Spring was glorious, warm, dry and summerlike, starting the growing season off at a cracking pace. Presumptions were that the harvest would be early but a cool, relatively wet summer, more reminiscent of spring put paid to that and maturation slowed markedly – particularly in the case of Grenache. As is increasingly the case, it was autumn which came up trumps. August brought heat which, ironically led to some hydric stress but early rain in September restored equilibrium, readying the vines for a long, gradual ripening during a fine, prolonged Indian summer.

SOUTHERN RHÔNE

The conditions during the growing season really favoured Mourvèdre and Syrah. Grenache had a more difficult time with a combination of the cool, wet weather and potentially high yields. This is where Michel Tardieu's philosophy comes into its own. Michel's great passion is for old vines planted on great *terroirs* and these fared so much better in such conditions. In dubbing these wines “*exceptional*,” they are exactly that. They are lovely wines but they represent a tiny proportion of overall production. There are likely to be a lot of problematic 2011's, but thanks to the very low yielding old vines, not here.

NORTHERN RHÔNE

2011 got so close to being perfect – just pipped at the post when rain fell at the end of August and the beginning of September. That said even with the glass of perfection slightly clouded, this was a lovely, balanced year in the North with very good typicity.

CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE BLANC, GUY LOUIS

55% Marsanne (60 years old)
20% Grenache Blanc (70 years old)
15% Roussanne (40 years old)
10% Viognier (40 years old)

Corney & Barrow Score 16+ to 17+

This is a blend of grapes produced in both the Northern and Southern Rhône valley – named in a tribute to Michel's father and uncle. Bottled just 15 days before we tasted, this could have been a difficult tasting as wines often go into shock, youthful charm retreating into truculent adolescence, in the short term. No such problem here, shimmering gold and captivating, it has a gorgeous nose, floral notes, stone fruit and vanilla cream to the fore, with hints of warm brioche, macadamia nuts and *pain aux raisins*. The palate adds honey and fennel notes to apricot compote, refreshed by citrus and underscored by minerals. Matured in new and one year old barrels, there is added richness in the mid-palate. Always an insider's wine, over-delivering, the 2012 is even more so, Michel having elected to de-classify two barrels of Condrieu which have been added to this blend – excellent value.

Recommended drinking from 2013–2017
£120/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE BLANC VIEILLES VIGNES

50% Grenache Blanc (60 years old)
50% Roussanne (30 years old)

Corney & Barrow Score 18

This comes from three domaines, at sites in Les Serres, Le Belvédère and the celebrated lieu-dit La Crau, brought on in new and one year old barrels. Lustrous gold, this reveals a nose rich in wild herbs, white flowers and stone fruit – apricot and peach. There is a lovely lifted quality, citrus zest and minerals adding refreshment. The palate presents similar aromatics, set within a languid, seductive frame. Michel is determined to push the quality here to the limits and has arrived at a beautifully balanced, extravagant interpretation of the vintage allied to precision and focus. Exquisitely crafted, this is a rare feat of balance, warranting time – and an excellent food wine.

Recommended drinking from 2014–2019+
£275/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

SAINT-PÉRAY VIEILLES VIGNES

50% Marsanne (over 100 years old)
50% Roussanne (40 years old)

Corney & Barrow Score 17 to 17+

We used to believe that this was an insider's wine, known only to a few loyal followers. Successive vintages instantly selling out and the C&B team being unable to access any personal stock, has forced us to concede that we have been wrong. Quite how it came to capture the imagination is not clear but it seems that someone somewhere referred to Saint-Péray as a baby Hermitage and the die was cast. We buy the maximum we can every year but it is just not enough. The entire production in 2012 in just 3000 bottles, so rarity is an issue. Shimmering pale gold, with flashes of green, it reveals a wonderfully flamboyant portrayal of a quintessential top-notch white Rhône. The nose proffers a sublime blend of fresh and candied apricot and peach, warm pastries and caramel cream. Hedonistic old vine richness is complemented by citrus refreshment, grapefruit zest to the fore. This is a stunning wine offering excellent value, the only negative being the limits in production.

Recommended drinking from 2013–2018
£160/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

CONDRIEU

100% Viognier (45 years old) from parcels in Roche Courbe, Chanson and Coteaux de Chéry

Corney & Barrow Score 18- to 18.5

A burnished, glittering gold, this delivers a rather extraordinary nose in. Lemon zest, wild herb and floral aromatics make the first advances, joined by honeyed old vine fruit – both orchard and stone nuances. White peach, pear and apricot all make a play here yet, surprisingly, given how Viognier in even tiny quantities can make an impact on a red blend, its character is slightly reticent here, ceding prominence to a noble, high-toned mineral seam which extends throughout, keeping the ordinarily extravagant, lusciously textured fruit in check – just. The palate is perfumed, seductive and endearing with an understated richness from new and one vintage barrels – a lovely wine.

Recommended drinking from 2013–2018
£320/case of 12, in bond UK

HERMITAGE BLANC

80% Marsanne (over 50 years old)
20% Roussanne (over 40 years old)

Corney & Barrow Score 18+

A very aristocratic, lustrous gold, this attracts attention from the outset. The nose is simply gorgeous, mouth-watering and decadent, combining super-ripe fruit and cream, warm buttered pastries, white flowers, acacia and crushed shell minerals, refreshed by lime and complemented by wild herbs. This cries out for time and, in time, food. This is a very grown up white wine combining innate power with supreme, controlled elegance. The palate reflects the aromatics on the nose and hints that the currently rather buttoned up aristocratic air will give way to a rather more hedonistic, opulent style, albeit retaining benchmark drive and focus – a hugely impressive translation of the vintage.

Recommended drinking from 2014–2024+
£335/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

RED – SOUTHERN RHÔNE

CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE, GUY LOUIS

60% Grenache (over 50 years old)
35% Syrah (40 years old)
5% Mourvèdre (40 years old) from parcels
in Cairanne, Plan de Dieu and Rasteau

Corney & Barrow Score 16.5 to 17

A great deal of care goes into this wine in order to create a fitting tribute to both Michel's father and uncle, after whom it is named.

Jet-plum purple in colour, with a tight, firm rim, this has a disarmingly evocative nose, elements of white wine aromatics, quince and honey, allied to old vine red and black fruit concentration, kirsch liqueur, wild herbs and warm cherry compote. The palate reflects the complexity of the nose, warming spiced fruit supported by very well-integrated, fine tannins. Old vines have been integral in the successes of this vintage and this is a fine standard-bearer, essentially a declassified Rasteau, aged in one and two year barrels for added complexity – great value.

Recommended drinking from 2014–2020
£125/case of 12, in bond UK

RASTEAU VIEILLES VIGNES

70% Grenache (80 years old)
25% Syrah (40 years old)
5% Mourvèdre (40 years old on limestone clay
and blue clay)

Corney & Barrow Score 16 to 16.5 (+)

A deep, plum-cherry in colour, with a bright, firm rim, this was slightly reductive when we tasted – perhaps reflected a little in the score. In fact, we ought to applaud reduction as it bears testimony to the wine not having been over-worked, the better to preserve freshness. Beyond the initial reticence, the wine gradually opens up to present really intense red and black berried fruit, pepper-spiced and appetising. Aged in one year old barrels some Allier, some Tronçais oak, there is added intrigue whilst maintaining impeccable purity of fruit. Facing full south on a higher altitude, upper slope, this makes for overall balance whilst nuanced spice and cedar, wild flowers and herbs vie for dominance. This is particularly fine for a youthful Rasteau though it will benefit from a few more months more *élevage*, just to allow the individual elements to marry – great value.

Recommended drinking from 2014–2020
£135/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

VACQUEYRAS VIEILLES VIGNES

75% Grenache (over 60 years old)
25% Syrah (40 years old)

Corney & Barrow Score 17(+)

Some of the bunches here were kept intact, with no de-stemming – aiming for a traditional Southern Rhône, true to its origins and with additional freshness. It is aged in one year old Allier and Tronçais oak. An intense jet-plum in colour, this presents a bright, fresh, peppery nose, black and red fruit invigorated by white pepper. The fruit profile is extraordinary, the anticipated compote of earthy black cherry and blueberry lifted by nuances of watermelon, pomegranate and even citrus, all underpinned by a refined mineral layer. Upbeat and refreshing, a cool, bright translation of the vintage – a great success for Michel amongst his southern portfolio “*l'une des plus belles réussites du millésime*” – which Michel puts down to the age of the vines dominating the conditions.

Recommended drinking from 2014–2019+
£170/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

BANDOL

95% Mourvèdre (over 50 years old)
5% Grenache (over 50 years old) from clay
limestone soils in Le Castellet

Corney & Barrow Score 17 to 17+

Michel pronounced this to be a “*grand millésime*” – a great year – for Bandol. Inky, jet-plum, opaque to a dark cherry rim, it packs a pretty imposing punch on the nose. Sales Director Oliver Hartley was tasting the wine for the first time at this embryonic phase, “oh cripes” quoth he, staggered by the audacious intensity and flamboyance of the nose. Wines rarely taste of grapes per se but this Bandol offers the heady allure of freshly fermented grape must. The palate rises to the challenge with a heady array of red and black fruit, kirsch liqueur and fresh cherry compote, vivid and heady, complemented by wild herbs and flowers. Fathomless and full, there are however no hard edges, rather a ripe, rounded style supported by fruit-coated tannins and all the while there is a bright freshness – impressive.

Recommended drinking from 2016–2025+
£195/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

GIGONDAS VIEILLES VIGNES

80% Grenache (70 years old)
10% Syrah (40 years old)
10% Mourvèdre (40 years old) from the Dentelles,
Garrigues and Village

Corney & Barrow Score 18

This is a perennial “insider's wine” – a Corney & Barrow house favourite – combining classical *garrigue* aromatics so typical of Provence with ripe, rounded fruit. Deeply coloured, an opaque jet-plum, it rather defies the vintage conditions. The palate is tantalising in its combination of floral notes, abundant heady fruit and a smoky, savoury backdrop. A really attractive balance emerges between fleshy opulence, bright freshness and innate finesse. Michel's Gigondas is matured in one year old Allier and Tronçais oak which adds complexity. Smoky savoury notes complement the berry and cherry profile, liberally spiced. There is a seam of briny minerality throughout which delivers focus, all supported by well-integrated, rounded tannins. 2011 saw a dramatic reduction in production here but a corresponding increase in concentration. Old vine Grenache did particularly well on the lower sites and these vines are auspiciously old. A dramatic frost in 1956 led to 40% of the vines being destroyed, necessitating replanting. The vines here were not frozen and so have the edge on the more recent plantings.

Recommended drinking from 2015–2020
£195/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK



CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE VIEILLES VIGNES

80% Grenache Noir (over 80 years old)
10% Mourvèdre (50 years old)
10% Syrah (over 40 years old) from parcels at
the top of La Crau, on rounded pebbles – Les
Gardioles, Courthézon and Mourre des Perdrix

Corney & Barrow Score 17+ to 18+

Tasted after the fathomless Gigondas, this was a limpid crimson much less intense in terms of colour. The nose is dark, smoky, brooding and savoury with complementary kirsch character. There is a lovely purity and a layered complexity which is often obscured in real blockbuster vintages. This 2011 shows restraint and character, an air of nobility reminiscent of Burgundian or Piemontese understated elegance. Focused throughout, the finish is protracted, refined and layered, underscored by minerals – a very graceful, stylish Châteauneuf.

Recommended drinking from 2016–2026+
£335/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK
£355/case of 6 magnums, in bond UK

CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE CUVÉE SPÉCIALE

100% Grenache (100 years old) on sandy soils
at the base of La Crau

Corney & Barrow Score 18 to 18+

This is *spéciale* indeed. Flying in the face of the large choice of legally possible grape varieties in a Châteauneuf blend, this is fashioned from 100% ancient Grenache Noir, whole bunch pressed with no de-stemming. The combination of old vines and sandy soils made for a winning combination in the face of the challenges of the growing season. Deep plum-ruby in colour, this reveals a ripe, headily-perfumed brew, violets, wild blackberry and raspberry to the fore, with a savoury backdrop. Elegant floral notes, summer berries and cherry dominate the palate, held in check by a persistent mineral restraint. A breezy flash of pepper adds intrigue and one year old Alliers and Tronçais barrels contribute texture and delicate spice – a lovely wine and a fine ambassador for the vintage.

Recommended drinking from 2016–2025+
£370/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK
£390/case of 6 magnums, in bond UK

RED – NORTHERN RHÔNE

CROZES-HERMITAGE VIEILLES VIGNES

100% Syrah (60 years old) parcels in Larnage
and Battis from granite clay

Corney & Barrow Score 18 to 19

This was, without a doubt, one of the highlights of the tasting. In past years we have occasionally tasted this wine whilst it was still undergoing malolactic fermentation or when it was lacking some essential element of the blend – inevitably detracting from our overall appreciation. On this occasion the Crozes-Hermitage triggered goose bumps from the outset. Inky jet-ruby it ticked box after box. Both the nose and palate provide an arresting display of wild herbs, violet, spice, tobacco, liquorice, apricot and warm cherry pie. New oak nestles in the background offering nuances of toasted brioche and vanilla – an attractive foil to a determined mineral layer. The effect was orchestral, the elements rising to a crescendo on a super ripe, focussed, peppery finish. Michel revealed that he has a new supplier – offering some of what Michel sees as the soul of the Northern Rhône – a wonderful expression of granitic minerality, high-toned and wonderfully refined – very rare in a Crozes-Hermitage.

Recommended drinking from 2014–2020+
£155/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

SAINT-JOSEPH LES ROCHES VIEILLES VIGNES

100% Syrah, including Serine (Syrah 60 years old and Serine 100 years old) in Saint Pierre de Boeuf, Mauves, Chavannay, Sainte Epine from granite clay soils

Corney & Barrow Score 16+ to 17+

Opaque plum in colour, this was rather strident on the nose at first, very markedly reductive but, as remarked upon earlier, this is a good sign, proof of a light hand on the tiller. Michel does not rack his wines (transfer from barrel to barrel, leaving sediment behind with resulting oxygenation), the better to retain the wines' individuality. Beyond the impact of reduction, sweet, berried, red and black fruit allied to savoury, meaty notes stake their claim on both the nose and palate. Dark chocolate and cherry liqueur on the finish, give some indication of the old vine fruit influences which will extend through a mid-term future – really rather fine

Recommended drinking from 2015–2022+
£195/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

CORNAS CÔTEAUX

100% Syrah, including Serine (60 years old)
in Les Chaillots, Saint Pierre and Les Savaux.

Corney & Barrow Score 17(+) to 18

Jet-bramble in colour, inky and intense, the nose here offers a surprising marriage of delicacy and complexity. Cassis, wild blackberry, stone fruit and flashes of citrus rub shoulders with briny smoked ham elements, complemented by toasted oak – rather delectable. The palate rises to the challenge, further emphasising the intricate balance of the individual elements. Attractive and upbeat, the juxtaposition of sweet and savoury, offset by minerals is a delight – really impressive.

Recommended drinking from 2017–2026+
£260/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK



CORNAS VIEILLES VIGNES

100% Serine and Syrah (from 80 to over 100 years old) in Les Eygats and Patou

Corney & Barrow Score 18 to 18+

This is from two parcels of ancient vines, matured in 100% new Tronçais and Alliers oak. Opaque jet-ruby, silk-textured and clinging to the glass, this has a beguiling nose, dark, smoky, spiced and peppery. Warm fruitcake comes to the fore, inviting and haunting, reflected on the palate which has a lovely concentration, black fruit compote, cassis and fennel, complemented by a persistent, clearly defined, briny, mineral focus. Power and elegance make for a heady combination, stylish throughout. A very fine Cornas which owes much to that old vine fruit concentration.

Recommended drinking from 2018–2028+
£380/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

CÔTE-RÔTIE

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

Corney & Barrow Score 17+ to 18

This incorporates parcels from the celebrated Côte Brune, Landonne, Chavaroché, Rozier and les Rochains. A higher than usual proportion of whole bunches was used and the resulting wine was matured in 100% new Tronçais and Alliers oak. Shimmering jet-plum velvet in appearance, with a tight, firm pink rim, this has an extraordinary nose – a blend of fresh fruit, warm plum compote, crushed stone and briny minerals, wild herbs and heady violet freshness. The palate echoes the aromatics presented on the nose, complex, intricate and slightly reticent in the embryonic phase. Dark fruit, with a slightly savoury edge strikes an engaging, impressive balance – a lovely Côte-Rôtie which has defied the challenges of the vintage – great *terroir* and old vines once again confound nature's idiosyncrasies.

Recommended drinking from 2020–2028+
£395/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK
£415/case of 6 magnums in bond UK

HERMITAGE

100% Syrah, including Serine (60 years old) in Rouméas, Murets, Beaume and Pierelles

Corney & Barrow Score 19 to 19+

Jet-plum, with a tight, bright, fuchsia rim, this presents a rather decadent display of heady black berries, cassis and caramelised dark fruit with more unusual hints of apricot, liberally spiced. Mineral rich, there is a real sense of direction throughout – precise and focused. The palate reflects the aromatic complexity of the nose, delivered by stealth, orchestral in its emotive force, rising to a protracted, mocha-rich, purposeful denouement – a lovely wine, warranting a little patience.

Recommended drinking from 2020–2030+
£495/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK
£515/case of 6 magnums, 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

A definitive score of a young wine is almost impossible. We usually offer a spread (e.g. 14–16) which 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.

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