



## The Wines of Andrea Franchetti 2010 & 2009 Vintages, En Primeur

Andrea Franchetti, former restaurateur in Rome, turned wine distributor in New York, gradually wound his way to his spiritual homeland in Bordeaux where his appetite for making his own wine found its origins. Andrea left Bordeaux with a quiver filled 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 hit 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 feels it is right to do so. In 2009, for the first time since the 1999 vintage, he produced Palazzi - a wine which we first offered in 1998. We loved the wine, as did our customers, but Andrea stopped making it as it was 'too easy' - such is the mark of the man. We are very pleased that Andrea has also released 2010.

After a number of years taming Trinoro, Andrea's febrile imagination began wandering further afield and he set his sights on the renaissance of formerly-abandoned terraces of vines on the slopes of Etna, a live volcano. Both sites are extraordinary, complex and poles apart in terms of *terroir*. Andrea's final challenge is to translate such individuality in the glass. The results are the stuff of legend.

From both his Tuscan and Sicilian estates, Andrea produces a portfolio of wines which is rich, diverse and exceptional in every sense; from the locations of the vineyards through to the finished wines. We marvel at the goals Andrea sets himself and, more importantly, the formidable results he achieves.

We are delighted to represent both the Tuscan and Sicilian estates in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong and, most recently, Singapore.

Please do refer to the tasting notes for guidance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Alison Buchanan', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Alison Buchanan,**  
**Associate Director, Buying**  
December 2011

## Tenuta di Trinoro, Val d'Orcia, Tuscany

The most important lesson Andrea gleaned from his stint in Bordeaux was the crucial role played by *terroir*. He saw, in the rough woodland that would become Trinoro, soils reminiscent of those he knew so well in Saint-Emilion, *argilo-calcaire* (clay-limestone) and gravels. The combination of the soil and high altitude pandered to Andrea's penchant for Bordeaux, being best suited to Bordeaux varietal vines, and quite unsuitable for the indigenous and almost ubiquitous Sangiovese.

This explains, at least in part, why he thought it was logical to create an estate from scratch on rough farm and woodland in the far-flung reaches of south-west Tuscany, in the remote Val d'Orcia. Of course it was the right place, higher altitude with the right soil make-up but there was just that slight inconvenience of the would-be vineyard being a clutter of scrubby woodland and ruined outbuildings. Undaunted, Andrea cleared the land, built some access roads and terraces and, flying in the face of the norm, planted vines he was certain would thrive. Soil analysis revealed clay, fossil-rich limestone and gravels which Andrea dubs the Graves and Côtes. This determined that Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Petit Verdot fitted the bill. He also found abandoned vines in Affile, near Rome, of an ancient indigenous varietal Cesanese d'Affile. Andrea began propagating it at Trinoro and he is solely responsible for protecting it from extinction. A further Italian indigenous rarity, Uva di Troia, completes the picture and perhaps allays accusations of Andrea being anti-Italian.

There is one outstanding point of difference between Andrea and the Bordeaux producers he so admires: he challenges the general disregard of Cabernet Franc by the Bordelais. In this situation, he prefers it to Cabernet Sauvignon. Likewise he is a great supporter of Petit Verdot, which does brilliantly at Trinoro, in the right climatic conditions.

The estate lies in a wide valley between 500 and 700 metres above sea level, facing west-south-west and protected by two mountains, Cetona and Amiata. The climate is continental with very hot days but cool, autumnal nights. This, allied to dry conditions, allows for a prolonged ripening period, which adds complexity and increases intensity. Picking often extends well into November as Andrea has patience in spades when awaiting optimal ripeness. The vineyard is densely planted, at 9,000 vines per hectare, which restricts yields. Andrea also prunes severely, further to concentrate the resulting wines.

Even when the vines were young and vigorous the wines from Trinoro astonished the wine world with their richness and complexity – the result of strict vineyard management. Now much more mature, the vines are really expressing their personality in the complexity of the finished wines.

## 2009 Vintage

*This is the second vintage that has passed Trinoro leaving us with a feeling of the tropics; each of our varietals ripened slowly and the rains let us wait long enough to pick them: that always makes a great vintage... this (the eponymous wine) is one of the best wines ever made at Trinoro.*

**Andrea Franchetti, November 2010**

**Tuscany:** The vines had enjoyed a rainy winter and were bursting with energy at the beginning of the growing season, super-fertile and overly eager to grow. A blazingly hot summer had fulfilled the forecasters' suspicions. In retaliation, Andrea sought to counteract the effects of such heat by controlling the canopy, hoping that some of the water in the grapes might be absorbed, thereby alleviating hydric stress. It was a gamble which paid off.

The year had been rather odd all round and for whatever reason the grapes doggedly refused to pick up the pace in terms of ripening. A number of rainless storms had perhaps unnerved them but, happily, the climate allowed the team to wait as long as they needed. Merlot, described by Andrea as 'wild and powerful', was harvested in October rather than September. The Cabernet Franc grapes were 'beautiful and tight textured', and Cabernet Sauvignon was 'darker and more mysterious than anything coming from a berry'. In such years Petit Verdot also finds its form and the 2009 was decidedly exotic in its aromatics. Despite Andrea's habitual, radical pruning, this 2009 was determined to be a productive vintage so Andrea chose to bleed the tanks by some 20%. The results are remarkable.

**Etna:** The winter and spring of 2008/2009 saw the vineyard's water reserves replenished as snow lay throughout winter and well into spring. The end of spring delivered the usual pattern of mixed sunshine and drizzle before settling into summer. On Etna the weather gets progressively warmer and the soils drier over about three months. Although the sun's excesses are tempered by the altitude, the vines steadily become more stressed. In line with the weather trend of the last two years, 2009 brought in rain towards the end of September and again in mid-October, with prolonged dampness and overcast skies. The earlier rain facilitated the ripening process and, in fact, Nerello Mascalese generally fares rather well in such conditions. Also, the rain slid off the impoverished thin soil, not reaching the roots. The vines which produce Franchetti are planted on high terraces nestling on pure lava. These were harvested at the end of October, allowing the vine to benefit from the vast temperature changes between day and night – often up to 20° of a difference. This made for greater intensity and certainly the explosion of aromatics on the nose and palate bears testimony to this. The Nerello Mascalese was picked from the Contrade (Crus) between the 25<sup>th</sup> October and 8<sup>th</sup> November, climbing steadily up the north side of the mountain, as the grapes gradually ripened at the steadily increasing altitudes.

### **Le Cupole, Tenuta di Trinoro 2009**

**Corney & Barrow Score 17+ - 18**

40% Cabernet Franc, 30% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Petit Verdot

A perennial Corney & Barrow favourite, Cupole tends to be the wine of choice for every in-house tasting - never failing to please. A rich ruby-garnet in colour, this offers rich cherry compote and fresh red fruit on the nose, sweet and inviting, with an intriguing, spiced, savoury edge. The palate is similarly complex, lifted, with a heady dash of pepper, revealing exuberant red fruit from the outset – rather flamboyant really but with a complementary, definitive, uplifting mineral focus. Andrea has produced a very fresh, classical wine from these Bordeaux varieties but with richness which is the hallmark of the vintage and an innate, Italianate sense of place.

**Recommended drinking from 2013 - 2019+**

**£115/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK**

**£120/case of 3 magnums, in bond UK**

**£82/case of 1 double-magnum, in bond UK**

### **2010 Vintage**

*2010 is a bright, profound vintage with intriguing, complex red fruit. These wines should age beautifully.*

**Andrea Franchetti, November 2011**

**Tuscany:** The vines had enjoyed a winter with a lot of rain and snow. Spring was late and May was rainy so flowering in June was rather uneven. The disjointed nature of the flowering would continue through fruit set and *véraison* (when the grapes change colour) during August. August had in fact enjoyed good, hot temperatures which continued through the first half of September. During the following weeks, up to the 16<sup>th</sup> October, temperatures fell off rapidly under clear skies with cool nights, which definitely favour improved intensity. The weather at the usual harvest time was mixed but Andrea waited. The weather turned fair, allowing a longer maturation period for Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Merlot was picked in the middle of October and Cabernet Franc between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. Both varieties produced wines with unerring freshness, purity and clarity of fruit. Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot fared less well and only the best was retained to add just 4% and 1% respectively to the blend, the remainder being 60% Cabernet Franc and 35% Merlot. All of the separate passages through the vines are vinified separately and the wine is taken off the skins immediately after fermentation to be transferred to new *barriques* made from well-aged and lightly toasted wood. The wine is fined with egg whites and remains in barrel for 8 months before being racked into cement vats (for 10 months).

**Etna:** The summer of 2010 was cooler than usual and the threat of rain meant that harvest had to be earlier than anticipated. As a result the Petit Verdot, which went into Franchetti, had an even more peppery character than normal and an endearing freshness. High altitude protects the vines from the extreme Sicilian heat further down the mountain and often the challenge is attaining ripeness. In 2010 they only managed one small barrel from the most stony, and therefore warmest, sites which basked in the warmth of a sunny July and August. September saw fair weather but with rapidly dropping temperatures. The night-time temperatures saw the most dramatic drop, starting with icy air at the

top and gradually working its way down, slowing the vines' progress. October brought much less favourable weather and eventually, after initial resistance, Andrea and his team felt compelled to pick. The blended Petit Verdot has a very specific character, fresh, peppery and headily spiced, the latter accentuated by a little new oak seasoning and richness.

### **Palazzi, Tenuta di Trinoro 2010**

**Corney & Barrow Score 18 - 19**

50 % Merlot, 50% Cabernet Franc

Tasting the 2009 vintage with Andrea last year, we were most indignant that he had denied the world this wine for over a decade. 2009 was a very fine wine and the 2010 is a sensational successor. The wine comes from a parcel high up in the hills of Tenuta. The blend, we have noted, was current when we tasted in early August 2011 but it may well change pre-bottling. A deep plum in colour, glittering and intense, it clings languidly to the sides of the glass - enticing. The nose presents heightened black fruit, *crème de cassis* and compote of cherry, layered with mocha notes, hints of tobacco and vanilla. The palate is more buttoned up and adroit than the 2009 at this stage, showing a more classical structure and definite capacity for ageing, yet opulence prevails overall. This is a powerful, muscular wine the structure of which is camouflaged by luscious fruit – phenomenal. Just 2000 bottles were produced.

**Recommended drinking from 2016 - 2026+**

**£995/case of 12, in bond UK**

### **Tenuta di Trinoro 2010**

**Corney & Barrow Score 18+ - 19+**

60% Cabernet Franc, 35% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Sauvignon and 1% Petit Verdot

Trinoro is never shy and this 2010 asserts its personality from the outset. A shimmering, jet-shot plum-cherry in colour, it presents a complex nose, a blend of predominantly red fruit with hints of tobacco, spice, wood smoke and tea, all given focus through a relentless incisive mineral seam. Andrea responds so well to vintage conditions, playing to each year's strengths - hence why it is impossible to second guess the final blend and why it can be so different year on year. The palate here echoes the aromatics presented on the nose, all set within a luscious frame, lifted by a certain acidity and clearly defined, earthy minerality. Just 590 cases were produced.

**Recommended drinking from 2017 - 2027+**

**£575/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK**

## **Passopisciaro, Mount Etna, Sicily**

Andrea Franchetti's second project seems at first and even second glance to have required just one step beyond genius in its conception. Passopisciaro is sited on the slopes of the live volcano, Mount Etna. A constant plume of smoke and the odd ash-filled belch present a constant reminder that Etna is indeed alive and kicking, a volcano with attitude, given to relatively frequent lava spills. These 'spills' devastate the landscape, rich woodland instantly given over to a sea of solidified black ash – rather terrifying really - yet Andrea has cause to be grateful as each flow leaves a unique mineral profile giving rise to "individual *Contrade* wines".

Andrea's 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 is ill-disciplined and produces rustic, heady wines. Andrea is rigorous in restoring order with strict pruning and selection. This, allied to high altitudes and high density, makes for a very different, elegant and balanced style with an emphatic sense of place borne of the volcanic soils. These soils impart a profound mineral element across the board. Andrea, as ever, respects and plays to 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 the indigenous Nerello Mascalese continues well into November.

### **Guardiola, Tenuta di Passopisciario 2010**

**Corney & Barrow Score 17+**

100% Chardonnay

Guardiola is produced from 4.5 hectares of Chardonnay vines planted on the arid, powdered volcanic lava of north Etna at an altitude of between 1,000 and 1,100 metres above sea level. These were planted by Andrea at 12,000 vines per hectare and are now reaching a respectable 8 years of age. The yields are low at this height on such poor soils where the nights are cold, with the temperature dropping significantly to a mere 10 degrees. The harvest is consequently rather late, allowing for increased intensity without amassing overly high sugar (and therefore alcohol) levels. Pale golden straw in colour this has immediate appeal. The nose presents a harmonious blend of orchard and stone fruits with a rapier of citrus, all complemented by a more languid opulence. The palate reflects the aromatics presented on the nose and delivers the promised richness but there is a very attractive linear mineral streak which adds focus. Fermented in stainless steel and brought on in neutral oak and concrete, this is a very pure translation of Chardonnay.

**Recommended drinking from 2011 - 2015**

**£98/case of 6, in bond UK**

### **Passopisciario 2009**

**Corney & Barrow Score 18+**

100% Nerello Mascalese

Passopisciario 2009 comes from parcels of various *Contrade* (crus) – Malpasso, Guardiola, Santo Spirito and Arcuria, on the northern side of Mount Etna. The Nerello Mascalese, from vines between 60 and 120 years old, was picked between the 25<sup>th</sup> October and the 8<sup>th</sup> November, dependent on altitude. The sites are at 500, 600 and 800 metres above sea level so harvesting involves a steady ascent of the volcano. Very pretty, dark, limpid ruby this has a lovely purity from the outset, a slightly camphorous nose also revealing cherries and red fruit compote. This is a wine which will rejuvenate a listless, jaded or cynical palate, lifted, unusually for a red, by hints of elderflower. We taste, knowing that we are on an island to the southwest of Italy yet there are intermittent, lacy traces of burgundy here though a persistent, very particular minerality takes us back to its smoky origins. This is very original, characterful and very fine with an underlying structure that packs quite a punch.

**Recommended drinking from 2014 - 2019+**

**£120/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK**

**£125/case of 3 magnums, in bond UK**

**£95/case of 1 double-magnum, in bond UK**

### **Franchetti, Tenuta di Passopisciario 2010**

**Corney & Barrow Score 19**

100% Petit Verdot

The vineyard here is planted at 1,000m above sea level, upon lava flows above the vines which produce the estate's eponymous wine Passopisciario. Franchetti is a tiny production made from around 130 terraces reclaimed from undergrowth and planted with Petit Verdot and Cesanese d'Affile. Opaque, jet-shot plum-ruby in colour, this is immediately attractive. The nose continues the seduction; intense, sweet, berried fruit to the fore, refreshed by floral and herbal notes all underpinned by significant mineral intensity. The palate is decadent, layered and complex, generous dark fruit giving a mineral focus, with intriguing hints of the exotic adding to the charm. What is truly remarkable here is the prevailing freshness, an exuberance which lifts the palate – a very fine wine produced in, sadly, very limited quantities.

**Recommended drinking from 2012 - 2020+**

**£350/case of 6, 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.
- 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 '+' 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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