



TENUTA DI PASSOPISCIARO 2012 & 2013 VINTAGES, EN PRIMEUR

Andrea Franchetti, former restaurateur in Rome, turned wine distributor in New York, gradually wended his way to his spiritual homeland in Bordeaux, where the desire to make his own wine had originated. Andrea left Bordeaux brimming 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 where vines had previously been unknown. Tenuta di Trinoro was an instant success, even when the vines were extremely young and Italy gained a new, iconic name.

After a number of years nurturing Trinoro, Andrea's restless imagination began to wander further afield and he set his sights on the renaissance of formerly abandoned terraces of vines on the slopes of a live volcano, Mount Etna. These are extraordinary vineyards, positioned at varying altitudes, with different expositions and geological makeup, yet all with the backdrop of a smoke-belching, occasionally flame-throwing, lava-flowing, Etna.

At times Andrea's imagination seems to be one step beyond genius.

Reclaiming and restoring the vineyards was a challenge; so too was gaining an understanding of this strange *terroir* and, in particular, how to treat the indigenous grape variety, Nerello Mascalese.

From a region so far south, one might easily anticipate dark, intensely concentrated, alcoholic and powerful wines. In fact Andrea soon realised that a lighter hand was required here, the better to translate the subtlety of Nerello Mascalese. The name itself gives a fairly strong hint, inferring that it is "not very black". Indeed, Andrea's wines generally have an almost Burgundian hue, an inviting limpid ruby.

At Tenuta di Passopisciario (the name meaning the "fisherman's path"), Andrea's wines are rich, diverse and exceptional in every sense; from the locations of the vines through to the finished wines. We marvel at the goals Andrea sets and, more importantly, the formidable results he achieves. Corney & Barrow is delighted to represent these wines in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong and, most recently, Singapore.

In this release we are offering, *en primeur*, the 2013 vintage of Tenuta di Passopisciario's white wine. Guardiola, Andrea's extraordinary blend, Franchetti, as well as the eponymous Passopisciario from 2012.

We are also including the very rare *Contrade* wines, which essentially are different *crus* – highly individual *terroirs* created by previous lava flows. These vividly bring home the reality of their *terroir*. Etna is a live volcano and the presence of lava underfoot is a clear indication of previous devastation wreaked on the very spot where one is standing – a sobering thought.

Please do refer to the tasting notes for guidance.

ALISON BUCHANAN
November, 2014

PASSOPISCIARO, MOUNT ETNA, SICILY

Passopisciaro is situated on the slopes of the live volcano, Mount Etna. A constant plume of smoke and the odd ash-filled belch offer a constant reminder that Etna is indeed alive and active, a volcano with menace, given to relatively frequent lava spills. These “spills” devastate the landscape, instantly reducing rich woodland to a sea of solidified black ash – truly terrifying, yet Andrea Franchetti has cause to be grateful, as each flow leaves a unique mineral profile, which gives rise to individual ‘Contrada’ 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. Nerello Mascalese, the indigenous vine, is ill-disciplined and, given free rein, would produce rustic, heady wines. Andrea, however, is uncompromising in restoring order by carrying out extremely strict pruning and rigorous selection. This, allied to both high altitudes and high density, makes for a very different, elegant and balanced style with an emphatic sense of place.

The very varied soils impart a profound mineral element across the portfolio of wines. Andrea, as ever, respects and utilises 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 Nerello Mascalese generally continues well into November.

VINTAGE REPORTS

2013 VINTAGE

Guardiola, 100% Chardonnay, from 11 year old vines, is grown at 1,000m altitude on the northern side of Etna. 2013 was a cool, late year, with the harvest drawn out until late September. The resulting must was adroit and pristine and has benefited from extended lees contact, gaining richness and personality. The wine is aged in old, large, wooden ‘*botti*’ vats and in cement. Production was 33 hectolitres/hectare and 20,000 bottles were produced.

2012 VINTAGE

“2012 is an exceptional year which will be remembered as one of the best on Etna. It will age for a long time but can be enjoyed now, served at a cool temperature, like a white wine.”

ANDREA FRANCHETTI

In 2012, everyone thought it would be an early harvest, but Andrea, other than picking obviously stressed bunches early, waited. Cooler weather allowed for a little late bravado and, as always on Etna, a little hoped-for rain facilitated final ripening. It also helped to reduce potential alcohol. Andrea preferred to await a waxing moon, starting on the 18th September by which time neighbouring vineyards were finished. The 18th dawned and picking began non-stop, starting at 500m, then continuing up the mountain.

TASTING NOTES

“...a violently fruit-driven, deep wine with impressive length and a serious structure.”

ANDREA FRANCHETTI

FRANCHETTI 2013

70% Petit Verdot, 30% Cesanese d’Affile

It was already November when the Passopisciario team began picking the Petit Verdot and Cesanese. The vines simply needed time, retaining inherent freshness and good acidity right through to this very late harvest. 1/3 of whole bunches went into the blend, adding depth, then the run-off wine rested on a thick layer of lees in new oak barrels to gain complexity. Pepper-spiced fruit prevails on the nose, with upbeat suggestions of wild herbs complementing intense and focused cherries and berries. The palate is richly-textured and, even at this very young stage, shows real character and depth. Rich and rounded, it is supported by a firm tannic structure, well-integrated, and crunchy minerals. Stylish, this remains poised and fresh throughout a protracted finish.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE

18

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2017 – 2023+)

£295/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

GUARDIOLA, TENUTA DI PASSOPISCIARO 2013

100% Chardonnay

Pale gold in colour, this presents a blend of citrus and orchard fruit, exotic passion fruit, melon and peach, all underpinned by a persistent, refined minerality. The aromatics are similar on both the nose and palate, with the latter running the gauntlet between a luscious opulence and lithe elegance, all enhanced by an innate, refreshing energy. This is a very particular Chardonnay, true to both the vineyard site and the vintage.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE

17.5

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2015 –2016+)

£110/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND

£115/CASE OF 3 MAGNUMS, IN BOND

PASSOPISCIARO 2012

100% Nerello Mascalese

Grown so far south, Nerello Mascalese is often presumed to produce a dark and fathomless wine when, in reality, the indigenous Sicilian grape is rather pale, a fact which belies the inner power and complexity of the finished wines. Andrea admits that when he started to produce here, he initially sought a level of power and intensity which just did not work for the varietal. Nerello Mascalese needs to be allowed to remain fresh, accessible and easy-drinking, showing well even slightly chilled. Both the nose and palate offer delicious, exuberant red fruit character - summer pudding, with a very gentle level of pepper and spice. Passopisciario 2012 is an extremely elegant wine, underpinned by a very mineral, energetic seam.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE

17

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2015 –2020+)

£110/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

£115/CASE OF 3 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

£90/CASE OF 1 DOUBLE-MAGNUM, IN BOND UK

CONTRADA CHIAPPEMACINE 2012**100% Nerello Mascalese**

Chiappemacine lies at 550m altitude and is planted on the furthestmost stretch of very thin, black, Etna lava and limestone, a site which attracts cooling breezes. This presents sweet, almost candied berry fruit on the nose, glacé cherry, strawberries and raspberries, perfumed with floral aromatics. Nicely rounded, yet focused throughout, this has a poised, protracted finish.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE**17.5****(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2016–2020+)****£170/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK**

CONTRADA GUARDIOLA 2012**100% Nerello Mascalese**

This *contrada* is between 800m and 1,000m above sea level, planted on deep gravel. The vineyard, an amphitheatre, is between 80 and 100 years old. The 2012 vintage presents a lovely, inviting nose, combining primary fruit, both candied and fresh, together with citrus notes, allied to a rather more earnest, almond-scented, savoury layer. Poised and balanced throughout, this is an impressive ambassador for both the *contrada* and the vintage, finishing with a flourish, long and layered, with good mineral focus.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE**18 - 18+****(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2016 –2020+)****£205/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK**

CONTRADA SCIARANUOVA 2012**100% Nerello Mascalese**

At 850m, on rich new lava gravels, with day-long sun exposure, this Sciaranuova is an intense, though limpid, jet-ruby in colour. The nose and palate present really attractive depth of fruit, headily aromatic and rounded. There is exemplary balance with well-integrated, significant tannins and refreshing underlying acidity. This, once again, has a clearly defined mineral focus which directs the palate through to a protracted, assertive finish.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE**18****(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2016 –2018+)****£195/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK**

CONTRADA RAMPANTE 2012

100% Nerello Mascalese

At 1,000m altitude, on sandy lava, this *contrada* produces fine, aromatic wines with a very clear mineral component. Picked last of all, to ensure total ripeness, this 2012 is a lustrous, intense plum in colour. The nose offers a splendid rush of red fruit, bramble and wild blackberry, complemented by an almost citrus fresh note. Refined, with crushed stone minerals, this has real personality and innate energy – very attractive.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE

17.5

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2016–2020)

£155/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

CONTRADA PORCARIA 2012

100% Nerello Mascalese

This *contrada* is between 600 and 700, planted on brittle lava which splinters easily. This is a hearty rounded wine rich in primary and candied fruit, liberally spiced and underscored by earthy minerals. Powerful and masculine in approach, the palate nonetheless tempers towards caramelised fruit, dark muscovado and hints of the exotic, finishing long, layered and pure.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE

17.5 - 18

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2017 – 2022+)

£225/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, 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, e.g. *Villages, Premier Cru, Grand Cru*. A definitive score of a young wine is almost impossible.

We usually offer a spread (e.g. 14-16) that 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.

TO ORDER

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