



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



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HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES  
WINE MERCHANTS  
CORNEY & BARROW LIMITED  
LONDON

# CORNEY & BARROW

INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS-1780



**TOSCANA**  
INDICAZIONE GEOGRAFICA TIPICA

# SOLDIERA

**100% SANGIOVESE**  
**DALL'AZ. AGR. CASE BASSE**

INTEGRALMENTE PRODOTTO E  
IMBOTTIGLIATO ALL'ORIGINE  
DALL'AZIENDA AGRICOLA  
CASE BASSE DI GIANFRANCO SOLDIERA  
MONTICCHINO - ITALIA

## SOLDIERA

2011 & 2012 VINTAGE

EXCLUSIVE TO CORNEY & BARROW IN HONG KONG, SINGAPORE,  
MAINLAND CHINA, MACAU, THAILAND, MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA



*“I make wine, above all,  
because I like drinking  
it. A great wine gives a  
sense of wellbeing.”*

GIANFRANCO SOLDERA

# INTRODUCTION

There is no spitting in Gianfranco Soldera's cellar. Descend fourteen metres from ground level, by means of a sparse steel lift, and you enter another realm.



The brilliant sunshine, the hot, dusty earth, remains at the surface and you emerge into a cool, spotlessly clean arena. A place of no photographs, no joking... and no spitting. Also a place of extensive CCTV surveillance.

The latter is readily understandable. As has been well documented, on the night of 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> December 2012, a disgruntled ex-employee opened the taps on ten large oak *botti*, causing two thirds of the wine held in the cellar to be lost. Six vintages – 2007 to 2012 – literally down the drain. If a certain aura of protectiveness pervades the estate, it is not without cause.

But then you take a sip of Soldera, from one of the glasses Gianfranco designed himself in the early 1980s, and the sunshine radiates through you. The suffering has been worth it, for here is a wine like no other. To place this in the box labelled 'Brunello di Montalcino' is to do it a ridiculous disservice. This is wine at its most starkly reductionist, its most elemental... its most profound.

These releases mark our fifth and sixth vintages representing Gianfranco Soldera across Asia. They also draw to a close the era scarred by that cruel act of vandalism. This offer is therefore a valediction of sorts, but without mourning. On a visit earlier this month, it was clear that Soldera has risen phoenix-like. The oldest vintage now in cask is 2013, and the youngest 2016. Both are sublime and are firmly on the road to plentiful (or *relatively* plentiful) magnificence.

Gianfranco's children, Mauro and Monica Soldera, are the future of this great estate and are clearly cut from the same cloth as their father. Soldera is in safe hands. We look forward to a long future by their side.

GUY SEDDON

June 2017

# BACKGROUND

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It was not just wine, but *world class* wine which was the remit from the outset...

During the 1960s, Gianfranco Soldera was an insurance broker in Milan. There was family history in wine however: his grandfather made wine near Treviso, where Gianfranco was born, and there were winemakers on his mother's side. Having earned enough to purchase a vineyard, Gianfranco scoured Italy for land where he and his wife Graziella could produce world class wine. Importantly, it was not just wine, but *world class* wine which was the remit from the outset. Soon after meeting Gianfranco, it becomes clear that he would not have settled for anything less.

After looking at the Veneto, Piedmont (a region he loves) and the rest of Tuscany, they discovered an abandoned farmhouse in Montalcino. The surrounding land was considered unsuitable for vines. Gianfranco disagreed, something he is notoriously confident in doing. Absolutely convinced by the potential of the soil and the aspect, he promptly acquired the property. He started from scratch, planting only Sangiovese, a tenet reinforced by his '100% Sangiovese' label inscription, which doubles as a neat dig at other producers in Montalcino who have been less than fastidious about this DOCG rule.



# CORNEY & BARROW AND SOLDERA

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Will Hargrove remembers our  
introduction to Gianfranco...

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*The initial introduction to this great estate was made when Roberto Conterno so very generously drove Adam, Alison and myself from his magnificent estate in Barolo all the way down to Brunello di Montalcino.*

*As a lover, some would say obsessively so, of Italian wines, to be walking through the wonderful gardens at Case Basse with both Roberto and Gianfranco was one of those “pinch yourself” moments. There is such drive, focus, energy and generosity about both men.*

*I think it is correct to say that any cellar should contain Soldera. The excitement this wine provides is extraordinary. Simply put, this is one of the world’s greatest wine estates and a wine made by one of the wine world’s great men.*

**WILL HARGROVE,**  
Head of Fine Wine



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# THE VINEYARD

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*“When he first arrived at Case Basse, he tasted the soil, as Burgundian monks are supposed to have done in the Middle Ages.”*

NEIL BECKETT,  
*Soldera: The Great Outsider,*  
*The World of Fine Wine*

One can imagine what an outsider Gianfranco Soldera must have been in the early days, an intense city boy from the north with grand ideas. An important early alliance was with the winemaker Giulio Gambelli, “*il grande maestro del Sangiovese*”. Gambelli continued to consult at Case Basse until his death in 2012. The two men discovered common ground, both ideologically and more prosaically on such topics as minimal intervention, no temperature control, no added yeasts, long maceration on skins and long ageing in large Slavonian *botti*.

Although the estate is referred to as Case Basse, the name of the *Azienda Agricola*, it is composed of two vineyards, Case Basse and Intistiesti, of which Case Basse is the smaller. The vineyards lie on the southern side of Montalcino, facing southwest. They are separated by some 400 metres. Case Basse, covering two hectares and planted in 1972, is about ten metres higher in elevation than Intistiesti, which is twice the size at four hectares and was planted in 1973.

The planting density is around 3,300 vines per hectare, the vines being planted on limestone and schist. Gianfranco has gone to great lengths to foster a symbiotic relationship between the vines and their surroundings. The vineyards are set within eight hectares of woodlands, with Graziella’s bucolic two hectare garden adjacent to the estate buildings (complete with a panoply of bees, which rise from the

ankle-level lavender rather alarmingly as you brush past it). Case Basse is constantly evolving as Gianfranco looks for ways in which to encourage a bird- and insect-rich environment. Oat straw is scattered between the vines, revitalising the soil, allowing it to breathe and protecting the roots. Totally organic, Gianfranco is convinced that foreign agents ultimately end up in the wine.

The vines themselves are tended to with extraordinary attention to detail. Everything is done by hand, pruning hard and short in winter, with a further green pruning during the season. The vines are cordon-trained (a mixture of single and double cordons) and spur-pruned. The canes are allowed to grow as long as they can, unimpeded, Gianfranco believing that they should never be cut. Indeed, in the entrance to the cellar, there is a wall-mounted cane of vast proportions as a clear statement of best practice. 118 leaves and 300 grams of grapes per cane is the average.

There are several academic studies underway at the estate. On our recent visit, we received a morning of presentations by Professor Annalisa Santucci of Siena University on the role of yeast at Soldera, and by Professor Massimo Vincenzini of Florence University on the relationship between wine and health, which is clearly close to Gianfranco’s heart. The meta-message of the paramount seriousness of all aspects of Soldera, both wine and man, was received loud and clear.

# THE CELLAR

“Everything works best when nature is left to itself.”

GIANFRANCO SOLDERA

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Gianfranco is clear that great wine is made through ruthless selection in the vineyard. By contrast, there is a total absence of intervention in vinification. The extraordinary cellar, designed by architect Stefano Lambardi, has an innate beauty in its contrived simplicity. It is completely cement- and plaster-free, the walls having been built with stones wedged into wire netting. This is all to allow the building to breathe and the wine to mature even more slowly than in the past.

The wine is bottled unfiltered, direct from the *botti*, the absence of an intermediary holding tank meaning there may well be some variation between different groups of bottles. Gianfranco would not have it any other way. The bottles, unique to Soldera, have been chosen for optimal wine conservation, dark in colour to protect against the light, long-necked in order to take supreme-quality corks. Once bottled, the wine is given time to acclimatise. The label features a dolphin, sacred to Dionysus, god of wine and fertility, which is also to be found in statue form in the centre of Graziella's wonderful garden.



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# THE 2011 VINTAGE

After the superlative 2010 vintage, the 2011 growing season in Montalcino was precocious, thanks to largely warm, dry weather. Whilst there is variability across the region, the potent Soldera terroir has rendered a wine of lithe resonant fruit, whose open-weave structure makes it disarmingly approachable now, although there is abundant ageing potential.

## SOLDERA 2011

Bright, delicate ruby in colour, this has a finely perfumed nose of crushed rose petals and violets, the pure raspberry fruit offset against a savoury leafiness and gentle herbal, dried fruit aromas. The palate is wonderfully inviting, shot through with luminous red cherry, adroit, incisive acidity and powerful chalky tannins which provide structure whilst exerting minimal sense of grip. Were your head not to tell you that this is a wine in its early infancy, your heart would demand that you drink it right now.

Corney & Barrow Score 18,5 - 19  
Recommended drinking from 2019 - 2039+

Price On Application

# THE 2012 VINTAGE

A warm, dry growing season which produced Brunellos of abundant fruit and rich phenolic matter. Compared to the open, balanced, accessible 2011, Gianfranco's 2012 feels like it needs greater bottle age in order to find its harmony. The raw components are exceptional, with a brightness of juicy red compote prevailing. Into the cellar with it: one for the longer haul.

## SOLDERA 2012

Luminous ruby in the glass, the 2012 Soldera is assertively fruited on the nose, sweet red berries and a hint of phenolic gloss holding sway over the fine earthy minerality which lurks beneath. The palate is exuberantly bright and still very much in its primary phase, a thrilling forthrightness of fruit, detailed by white flowers and some dark spices, firm and perfectly ripe tannins providing the chassis. Achingly long and persistent on the finish, sustained by a beautiful arc of acidity which will ensure a long life ahead.

Corney & Barrow Score 18,5+  
Recommended drinking from 2023 - 2043+

Price On Application



## ORDERS & ALLOCATIONS

We are very proud to have exclusive representation of Soldera, Case Basse in Hong Kong, Singapore, Mainland China, Macau, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia.

We anticipate that demand will be high for these wines. Combined with the severely limited production, this may mean that we have to allocate the wines. Please bear with us whilst we gather requests – we will endeavor to confirm your order by 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017.



# TO ORDER

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