



ALBERICO

NEW EXCLUSIVITY LAUNCH

“Alberico is dedicated to my grandfather, who founded and believed in this special ‘farm’, which sits inside the city limits of Rome.”

Alessia Antinori, October 2017

Alberico Boncompagni Ludovisi, Prince of Venosa and grandfather to Alessia Antinori, inherited this breathtaking estate in 1946. It lies on Rome’s famous Appian Way – the Rome skyline is visible in the distance from the vineyard.

During the 1960s and 1970s, this estate produced wines which, in Ian d’Agata’s words, were “often in the same quality league as Sassicaia or Solaia”. There is vinous magic in the air here which, having lain dormant, is being brought back to life by Alessia Antinori.

Following an initial visit in June 2015 by Adam Brett-Smith and Will Hargrove, Adam and I returned last June to taste these current releases. Two years from first contact to first offer is fast progress in our world!

Rome was resplendent in summer sunshine as we left the scorching *centro storico* behind us. The city limits had a whiff of countryside about them, as our Alfa Romeo Giulietta started to kick up dust from the parched roads. It was hard to keep a smile from my face... Alessia met us in person, showing us around the tiny organic vineyard and its equally bijou cellar. We then tasted the wines in this offer, over an *al fresco* lunch.

We have since had a chance to verify their calibre in the reassuring sterility of the C&B tasting room. They are brilliant ambassadors for Lazio. The red is a Cabernet-Merlot blend, redolent of Bordeaux, with the heightened fruit weight of its more southerly origin and a charge of mineral tension. The white is 100% Semillon, whose varietal viscosity is given texture from old oak use and balanced by a beautifully precise acidity.

The produce of little more than eight rows of vines, planted on volcanic soils created by an ancient lava flow, this is a gem of a property. Corney & Barrow is proud to have been appointed the exclusive UK agent of Alberico.

Guy Seddon

October 2017

THE VINEYARD

The estate is planted with Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Semillon and Malvasia. Alessia produces a white and a red ‘grand vin’, offered here, in addition to younger vines *cuvées* of each. Alberico Bianco is 100% Semillon, the Malvasia is used exclusively for the younger vines white *cuvée*. Alessia’s grandfather, who she describes as “stubborn”, uprooted the majority of the vines just before his death, meaning that the heart of the estate today consists of just eight surviving rows of vines. The estate is run along strict organic lines. Soils are volcanic, rich in minerals and basalt.

ALBERICO BIANCO: 2014 GROWING SEASON AND VINIFICATION

The Semillon harvest began on the 16th September, following a growing season which is best described as challenging throughout Italy, although the late season was dry, making for good picking conditions. The grapes were harvested manually, with only the finest selected for Alberico Bianco. They were then destemmed and pressed gently before fermentation in old oak casks. Following six months’ maturation in 318 litre puncheons, the wine was bottled and given a minimum of 24 months’ bottle age. Just 560 bottles of Alberico Bianco 2014 were produced.

ALBERICO ROSSO: 2011 & 2012 GROWING SEASONS AND VINIFICATION

These were the second and third harvests of Alberico Rosso since Alessia Antinori’s revival of these eight rows of vines, four of Merlot and four of Cabernet Sauvignon. Whilst the 2011 growing season was very warm, 2012 was enlivened by some rain that fell at the very end of August, rejuvenating growth and adding some welcome freshness before harvest at the end of September.

The two varieties were vinified separately, both being destemmed and fermented in temperature-controlled cement tanks. Following fermentation, the wine is run off its skins into large oak casks for a minimum of twelve months’ maturation, before transfer to 318 litre puncheons for the final twelve months of ageing. The wines spend a minimum of two years in bottle before release. 500-600 bottles are produced each vintage.

TASTING NOTES

ALBERICO BIANCO 2014

100% Semillion, consisting of three rows of over 50 year-old vines. Green citrus, pithy white peach, orchard fruit and a touch of pastry on the nose. The palate has a wet-stone mineral aspect on the entry, with density building, the natural Semillon viscosity buoyed by a little texture and body from fermentation and ageing in old oak, through to a precise, gently grippy finish. Poised, harmonious acidity gives an overall impression of effortlessness. Drinking beautifully now, the texture here will continue to emerge.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE

17 - 17.5

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2017 – 2020)

£95/CASE OF 3 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

ALBERICO ROSSO 2012

A ruby-coloured core with a little bricking towards the edges. Lifted black cherry aromas greet you on the nose, with a little quince and exotic fruit. The palate reverberates with energy on the attack, which then melds and resolves into a gentle, red-fruited mid-palate, with tomato leaf, herbs and a touch of powdery chocolate. Firm but integrated tannins provide structure. This will improve with a few years of bottle age, but it is rather tempting to drink it now!

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE

17.5

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2018 – 2028)

£150/CASE OF 3 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

ALBERICO ROSSO 2011

Deep ruby in colour, with intense aromas of blackcurrant and raspberry, bitter chocolate and fine earthy minerality. You would be forgiven for thinking this Bordeaux on the nose... The palate has excitingly ripe, resonant dark berry fruit on the entry, with definition building on the mid-palate, guided by firm Cabernet tannins. A little fleshiness from the Merlot rounds things out nicely. Iron-clad mineral tension gives a nervy precision to the finish. Great drive and persistence.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE

18

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2018 – 2030)

£150/CASE OF 3 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.

Wines are scored out of 20. Customers seem to like it and it has the benefit of simplicity. We will often use a range of scores (e.g. 16.5 to 17) to indicate the potential to achieve a higher mark. When a '+' is shown it adds further to that potential. Wines from lesser vintages will, inevitably, show a lower overall score.

Wines are judged, in a very broad sense, against their peers. Why? Well, you cannot easily compare a Ford with an Aston Martin, other than they are both cars and have wheels. It is not that different with wine. A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes and, as always, speak to our sales team.

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