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BY APPOINTMENT TO
HIS HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES
WINE MERCHANTS
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CORNEY & BARROW

INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS - 1780



GIUSEPPE
QUINTARELLI

GIUSEPPE QUINTARELLI

Our introduction to the wines of Giuseppe Quintarelli came via our good friend Gianfranco Soldera.

To his critics, Signor Soldera takes no prisoners. To us, he has been and is an angel, heavily disguised for sure, but possessed of a mission to take the unwashed and clearly unrepentantly Francophile Corney & Barrow into the beguiling arms of Italy and its greatest wines.

It was Gianfranco who said, in our first meeting, that only 50,000 bottles of truly great wine were made in the world – and that he produced 20,000 of them. Clearly this did not leave much for his old friend the late, great “Maestro Del Veneto” Giuseppe Quintarelli, but I wasn’t about to point this out as I doubt the C&B team would have got into this extraordinary estate without Gianfranco’s support...

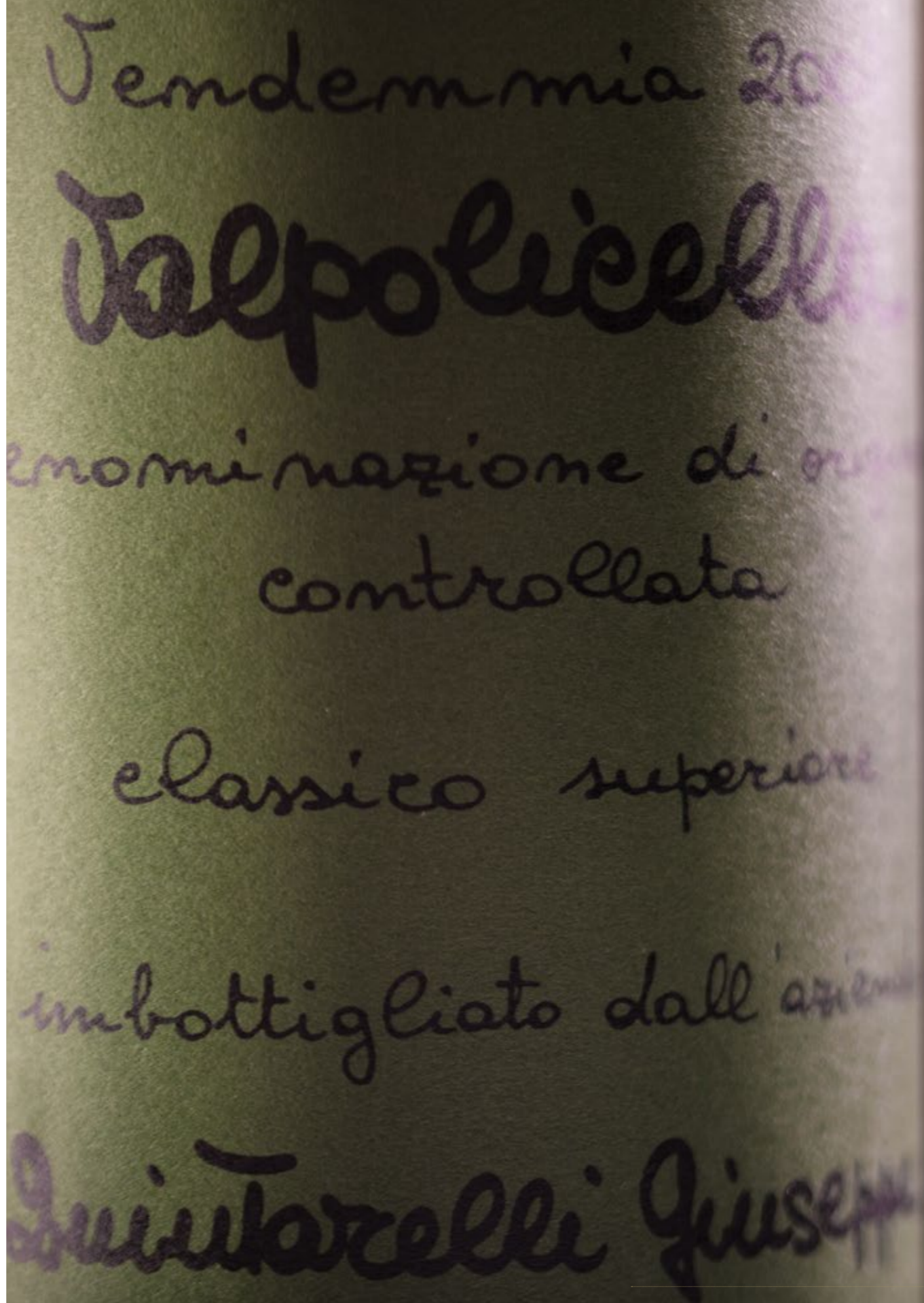
Giuseppe ‘Bepi’ Quintarelli, who died in January 2012, has a wonderful family to succeed him including his daughter Fiorenza, his son-in law Gianpaolo and in particular his two grandsons Francesco and Lorenzo.

Guy Seddon goes into the intricate detail below. All I can say is that I have never tasted any wines remotely like these and certainly no Valpolicella. They are masterpieces possessed of both a simplicity and profundity that is utterly magical. They belong in any great cellar.

C&B is very proud to be embarking on this new partnership with Quintarelli. Thank you Gianfranco and thank you to the Quintarelli family!

Adam

ADAM BRETT-SMITH



THIS IS NOT JUST
VALPOLICELLA.
THIS IS QUINTARELLI...

When did you last order
Valpolicella in a restaurant?

Be honest. The region perhaps conjures up chequered memories for some of us. The best starting point here is to wipe clean any past impressions. A sip of Quintarelli will change your mind forever about Valpolicella.

The benign, now mythical presence of the late Giuseppe Quintarelli remains at the family estate. Founded in 1924, it was taken over by the 22 year-old Giuseppe in 1950. The learning curve must have been steep for a young man, but he rapidly became the flag-bearer for the image of Valpolicella both in Italy and abroad.

A curious mixture of conservative and experimental, Giuseppe introduced non-native grape varieties to the estate. Alongside his traditional Amarone Classico, therefore, is 'Alzero', his unique Amarone-style blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot.

Similarly, the estate's Valpolicella Classico Superiore sits alongside 'Primofiore', a half-indigenous, half-Cabernet blend. Giuseppe also produced small quantities of a white wine, Bianco Secco, using a rare local grape called Saorin.

As Adam says in his introduction, since 2012 the estate has been run by the two successive generations. The future is safe in the confident hands of his two grandsons, Francesco and Lorenzo.

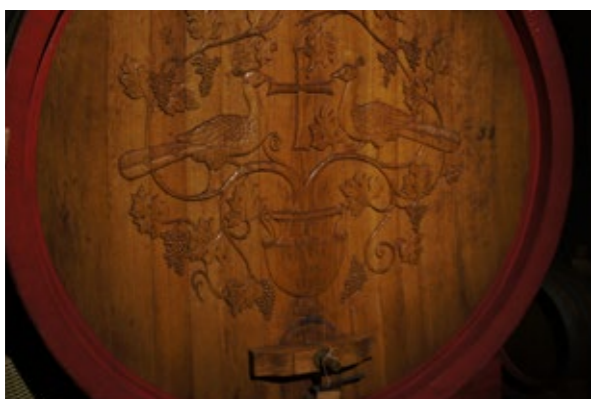
“Every wine region has its pioneers, the visionaries who set the standard for others. Valpolicella has Giuseppe Quintarelli.”

GUY SEDDON

VALPOLICELLA

Literally the valley of many cellars (*val-poli-cella*), this charmed enclave of north-east Italy lies to the north of Verona and the east of Lake Garda. The rugged Dolomite mountains jut like dogs' teeth on the horizon. On a clear day, the snow-capped peaks of the Alps are visible.

The region comprises three main valleys: the Fumane, the Marano and the Negrare. Quintarelli lies in the latter, in the *comune* of Negrar. There are diverse opinions as to the origin of the name Negrar, one being that it derives from the Arusnati people who inhabited the region in Roman times. This heritage is celebrated at Quintarelli in the carved facias of their beautiful Slavonian oak *botti* (vats).



Created in 1968, the Valpolicella *Denominazione d'Origine Controllata* (DOC) covers some three and a half thousand hectares, with the theoretically superior Valpolicella Classico DOC extending to almost the same area. In this most permissive of regulatory contexts, producer is everything; there are Valpolicellas and Valpolicellas...

THE ESTATE

As is so often the case, the choicest grapes are grown on the hillsides. 'Hillside', however, fails to convey the precipitous thrill of the switchback single-track roads which snake up to Quintarelli's *cantina*. On our second visit, as Adam pushed the limits of our hire car with some relish, we shot past the extremely discreet entrance.

The estate buildings lie at the end of an innocuous driveway. Opposite the newly extended cellar and reception area is a terrace with breathtaking views of the valley and the pre-alpine Lissini Mountains. The three story edifice comprises subterranean cellars, offices and a laboratory/labelling area on the ground floor, with the grape drying rooms above. The latter is where the magic happens...

VITICULTURE

Traditional *pergola* trellising prevails in Valpolicella. Vines are trained high from the ground into long tunnel-like structures, inside which the grapes dangle from shady ceilings of foliage. This intricate system requires a similarly elaborate supporting framework. Whilst tourist brochures sensibly stick to verdant summertime vistas, in winter these trellising structures give the eerie appearance of rows and rows of crucifixes.



Quintarelli has just 11 hectares of vines, whose average age is around 30 years. Soils are limestone and basalt. The grape varieties are a true United Nations of viticulture. Black grape plantings comprise the indigenous Corvina, Corvinone, Rondinella and Croatina, alongside Merlot and Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc. There is even some Nebbiolo and Sangiovese (which clearly got lost on their way to Piedmont and Tuscany). White grapes include Garganega, Trebbiano Toscano, Sauvignon Bianco, Chardonnay and Saorin.

The aim is to have eight to ten bunches of grapes per vine. Picking is late here, usually culminating in the first two weeks of October. A well-aerated canopy and bunches are crucial in order to avoid botrytis. Multiple

passes through the vineyards are made (*tries*, as they say in Sauternes). The first selection is of the best, ripest grapes, destined for the Amarone and Alzero. The berries from the second pass will become Valpolicella. The third pass is for grapes which will be used for the fresh young wines. Average yields are around 8,000 kilograms of grapes per hectare, with the resulting volume of wine varying with the degree of raising.

THE CELLAR

All of the grapes destined for the Amarone styles (including Alzero), and some of those which will become Valpolicella, are dried on straw matting in the upper part of the *cantina*. This process is known as *appassimento*, which sounds complicated, but just means raising of grapes after picking (an *uva passa* being a raisin). This concentrates the sugars and flavours.



In addition, the *ripasso* technique is used in the Valpolicella Classico Superiore. This is another Valpolicella speciality, in which freshly fermented wine is 're-passed' over unpressed Amarone skins. This kick-starts a second fermentation which bolsters the body of the resulting wine, as well as imparting some raisined character and raising the alcohol content (although only marginally, by around 1% at Quintarelli).

Ageing takes place in Slavonian oak *botti*, for varying periods. The Amarone and Alzero spend some seven years in oak. Production is tiny: an average of 5,000 cases of 12 bottles are produced per year. The labels were previously handwritten, a tradition which has been enshrined in the *cantina's* delightfully quirky jagged-edged labels, making a bottle of Quintarelli instantly recognisable.

THE WINES

BIANCO SECCO (The white)

Quintarelli's only white wine is a blend of Garganega, Trebbiano Toscano, Sauvignon Bianco, Chardonnay and the native Saorin. The grapes are typically harvested in late August or early September, at a yield of approximately 8,000kg per hectare. Pale golden in colour, it is gently aromatic, with notes of apricot and a little viscosity. It is given 12 hours' cool maceration before pressing and fermentation at controlled temperature. A little *bâtonnage* (lees stirring) adds weight and texture, as does a small proportion of dried grapes. 10-12,000 bottles per year are produced.

PRIMO FIORE (The young red)

This, 'first flower', is the youngest red wine made at Quintarelli. The blend is 50% Corvina and Corvinone, 50% Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Despite being 'half Bordeaux', Primofiore is unmistakably rooted in Valpolicella. The Cabernet grapes are dried for one to two months on straw matting after picking, whereas the Corvina and Corvinone are not dried. The grapes for Primofiore are generally harvested in mid-September. Primofiore is aged for two years in Slavonian oak *botti*.

VALPOLICELLA CLASSICO SUPERIORE

This is one of the flagships of Quintarelli. The blend tends to be 55% Corvina and Corvinone, 30% Rondinella and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon, Nebbiolo, Croatina and Sangiovese. It is picked from mid-September. Once picked, the grapes are dried for around two months before pressing. After three or four days of maceration, the alcoholic fermentation starts naturally, using indigenous yeasts. Fermentation lasts for seven to eight days. The wine is given two to three rackings, before being left to settle until the end of February.

After racking the Amarone off its skins, the Valpolicella is added to the marc (the Amarone skins left behind). This is the *ripasso* process, which bolsters the wine's complexity, colour and structure. A second alcoholic fermentation starts naturally, thanks to the residual sugar in the Amarone skins and the cellar's native yeast. Once completed, the wine is transferred to large Slavonian oak *botti* where it remains for around seven years. Some 20,000 bottles are produced of this, accounting for around a third of production.

ROSSO CÀ DEL MERLO (Valpolicella's fruity twin)

The Rosso cà del Merlo and the Valpolicella Classico Superiore sit hand in hand and on paper it is rather difficult to tell them apart. I asked Francesco for his take on the personalities of these two wines. He acknowledged their resemblance, saying that the Rosso cà del Merlo is made in the same way as the Valpolicella, but using slightly different grape varieties. As for style, Francesco's explanation was that the Rosso cà del Merlo "has more red fruit character" whereas the Valpolicella has "stronger spices".

The blend here is 55% Corvina and Corvinone, 15% Rondinella, 10% Cabernet (Sauvignon and Franc), 15% Merlot and 5% Nebbiolo, Croatina and Sangiovese.

ROSSO DEL BEPI (The almost-Amarone)

Amarone is only made in the best years. In vintages when it is not produced but the quality is still deemed to be high, the wine is bottled as Rosso del Bepi. In some years, neither wine is made. Given the pricing here relative to the Amarone, Rosso del Bepi can be an absolute bargain.

AMARONE DELLA VALPOLICELLA CLASSICO

Amarone della Valpolicella, usually referred to as plain old Amarone, was the saviour of the Valpolicella region. It is one of the most recognisable styles in the world of wine and Quintarelli's offering ranks among Italy's top wines.

The grapes are 55% Corvina and Corvinone, 30% Rondinella, with the remaining 15% made up of Cabernet Sauvignon, Nebbiolo, Croatina and Sangiovese. Harvested in mid-September, this is a selection of the grapes used for the Valpolicella. The grapes are taken to the drying room following harvest and immediately placed onto rush matting. It is essential that they are positioned correctly so that the raisining can take place in a complete and natural way. The first sign of noble rot (botrytis) appears in late November or early December, before it develops fully in January.

In late January, the grapes are transferred to the fermentation vats. After about 20 days of maceration, the alcoholic fermentation begins naturally, using indigenous yeasts. Fermentation lasts for around 45 days, following which the wine is racked into small Slavonian oak casks, where it matures for seven years. During this period, further alcoholic fermentations take place thanks to the presence of a low level of residual sugar in the wine. The result is a dry wine of quite extraordinary structure and complexity. 12-13,000 bottles are made in vintages in which the Amarone is produced.

ALZERO CABERNET (The Cabernet that looks like an Amarone)

In some ways, Alzero is the pinnacle of Quintarelli. Iconoclastic in its use of grape varieties, yet ultra-traditional in its winemaking, it marries perfectly the twin strands of Giuseppe's character.

Alzero is local dialect for slope (although in fact all Quintarelli's vines grow on slopes). The grapes are 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Cabernet Franc and 20% Merlot, which are harvested from the end of August through to mid-September. Cabernet Franc is picked first, followed by Cabernet Sauvignon ten days later.

Yields are low here: approximately 4,000 kilograms of grapes per hectare, or around half the average at the estate. There is some *passerillage* (drying of grapes), but for a shorter period than the Amarone. As the weather remains hot in August and September, the berries dry quickly in the drying rooms. Pressing takes place in November, rather than January for the Amarone, to keep the alcohol content down and to preserve freshness and fruit character.

Fermentation is slow, due in part to the indigenous yeasts, lasting approximately 50 days. Old French oak barrels are used (from the Limousin, Allier and Tronçais forests). Ageing takes place over four years in medium-sized Slavonian oak *botti*. As for the Amarone, during the maturation period, additional alcoholic fermentations take place.

RECIOTO DELLA VALPOLICELLA CLASSICO (The sweet red)

Made only once every three or four years, Quintarelli's Recioto represents something of a pinnacle of this historic wine style. Recioto was on the map in the region long before Amarone made an appearance – indeed some used to dismiss Amarones as faulty Reciotos that had fermented for too long, becoming dry.

The blend is 55% Corvina and Corvinone, and 30% Rondinella, with the remaining 15% made up of Cabernet, Nebbiolo, Croatina and Sangiovese. The grapes are harvested in mid-September, painstakingly selected from specific sites that are capable of delivering significant levels of sugar ripeness with the requisite complexity and finesse. The *passerillage* (raisining) and winemaking processes are similar to those used for the Amarone. The Recioto is aged in Slavonian oak barrels for five to six years.

Quintarelli's Recioto is a vibrant red, with darts of blue. Red cherry on the nose and then a full body of sweet, velvety and super-elegant fruit.



GUY SEDDON

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GIUSEPPE QUINTARELLI

	CASE SIZE	£ PER CASE IN BOND UK
WHITE		
Bianco Secco 2016	6 x 75cl	£150.00
RED		
Primofiore 2014	6 x 75cl	£205.00
Primofiore 2014 <i>Magnum</i>	1 x 150cl	£80.00
Valpolicella Classico Superiore 2010	6 x 75cl	£340.00
Valpolicella Classico Superiore 2010 <i>Magnum</i>	1 x 150cl	£145.00
Rosso del Bepi 2005 <i>Magnum</i>	1 x 150cl	£245.00
Rosso del Bepi 2008	6 x 75cl	£615.00
Amarone della Valpolicella Classico 2009	6 x 75cl	£1300.00
Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Riserva 2007	6 x 75cl	£2525.00
Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Riserva 2007 <i>Magnum</i>	1 x 150cl	£1005.00
Alzero Cabernet 2007	6 x 75cl	£1595.00
Alzero Cabernet 2007 <i>Magnum</i>	1 x 150cl	£620.00
RED (Sweet)		
Recioto della Valpolicella Classico 2004	6 x 75cl	£1300.00
Recioto della Valpolicella Classico 2004 <i>Half Bottles</i>	6 x 37.5cl	£655.00

TO ORDER

Please call:

020 7265 2430 (london) | 01875 321 921 (Edinburgh)

Or email:

sales@corneyandbarrow.com



TASTING NOTES

BIANCO SECCO 2016

A blend of Garganega, Trebbiano Toscano, Sauvignon Bianco, Chardonnay and Saorin, this is the only white in the Quintarelli line-up. There is around 1% *passito* (dried grapes) in the 2016. Whilst the 2015 was open and demonstrative at this stage, the 2016 is fresher and, in Francesco Grigoli's words, "more vertical". It has fine yellow flowers, pastry and dandelion, and is perfectly ripe, notwithstanding the cooler vintage conditions. "More my style than 2015", I scribbled. For the first time, 10% of the wine was aged in 20 hectolitre old oak *botti*, resulting in a little added richness. The rest remained in stainless steel vats, to preserve freshness and fruit purity.

Corney & Barrow Score 17+
Recommended drinking from 2019 - 2022

£150.00/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK

PRIMOFIORE 2014

This is 'half-indigenous', being 50% Corvina and Corvinone, 50% Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Interestingly, it is the Cabernet grapes that are dried on straw, whilst the Corvina and Corvinone remain 'fresh'. The drying process lasts two months and the resulting wine is aged for two years in old Slavonian oak. Both elements seem very much in evidence this year, working beautifully together. The graphite and angularity of the Cabernet tannins is fleshed out by the plusher, brighter fruit of the Corvina and Corvinone. The whole is lifted by the raisined *appassimento* character. This appears a little darker-fruited than the 2013, although perhaps it is just the stage of development. Wonderfully ripe desiccated fruit, with a deft nod to prunes and plums, whilst maintaining the overriding fruit purity and delicacy that makes this so accessible at a young age.

Corney & Barrow Score 17+
Recommended drinking from 2018 - 2022

£205.00/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK
£80.00/case of 1 magnum, in bond UK

VALPOLICELLA CLASSICO SUPERIORE 2010

2010 was Francesco's first vintage at the estate, so this is a special wine for him. It was cooler than average in Valpolicella in 2010, translating into a freshness that pervades this wine. The blend is 55% Corvina and Corvinone, 30% Rondinella and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon, Nebbiolo, Croatina and Sangiovese. Half of the grapes received two months' drying. During fermentation, a portion of the fermenting wine was passed over recently-pressed Amarone skins, the traditional *ripasso* method. The wine was then aged for six years in Slavonian oak *botti*. Lifted red cherry on the nose leads into an assertively red-fruited fore-palate, which then pulls focus on a concise, briny, tense mid-palate, finishing clipped and precise. Drinkable now, but this should soften and blossom with a couple of years of bottle age. Bottled in October 2017.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5 - 18
Recommended drinking from 2019 - 2025

£340.00/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK
£145.00/case of 1 magnum, in bond UK

ROSSO DEL BEPI 2005

Having released the bottles of this last year, we have now managed to secure an allocation of magnums. 2005 was a cooler year in Valpolicella. Whilst it was decided not to produce an Amarone, the harvest was of sufficiently high quality to warrant a Rosso del Bepi. The berries received four months' drying and eight years' maturation in Slavonian oak *botti*. In addition, the *ripasso* method is used here, re-passing and re-fermenting the wine on the recently-pressed skins of an older Amarone. Deep ruby in colour, with a pretty, lifted red cherry nose and delicate raisining. On the palate, precise acidity greets you upfront, with dark, bitter cherry fruit and sweet sucrosity. Adam's verdict last year was: "Utterly gorgeous nose, velvet-heavy, piercingly perfumed..." This year, it has resolved further and is fully in its stride, lovely wine.

Corney & Barrow Score 18
Recommended drinking from 2018 - 2023+

£245.00/case of 1 magnum, in bond UK

ROSSO DEL BEPI 2008

As is customary for Rosso del Bepi, the grapes were dried for four months and then aged for eight years in Slavonian oak *botti*. The freshly fermented wine then goes through the *ripasso* process, re-passing and re-fermenting it on the recently-pressed skins of an older Amarone. The 2008 has a lovely ripe, dark-fruited, cherried nose, leading into a briny, taut palate, on which there is quite beautiful bitter cherry fruit, expressive but refined. So nicely pitched. As for all vintages which result in Rosso del Bepi rather than Amarone, 2008 was a cooler year in Valpolicella, conferring this wine's signature upbeat freshness. (For the Quintarelli geeks out there, 2001 was last vintage when neither Rosso del Bepi nor Amarone were made – just Recioto.)

Corney & Barrow Score 18+
Recommended drinking from 2019 - 2024+

£615.00/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK

AMARONE DELLA VALPOLICELLA CLASSICO 2009

This is a blend of 55% Corvina and Corvinone, 30% Rondinella, with the remaining 15% made up of Cabernet, Nebbiolo, Croatina and Sangiovese. A fabulous, intricate nose of flinty, crushed-rock minerality, mingling with politely assertive red and black berries, high-toned and ever so slightly creamy. Vivacious acidity on the joyously-fruited palate is held in check by firm, fruit-infused tannins, which channel the raspberry flavours through to a coffeed, nuanced back-palate and on, and on... to the finish, which recedes slowly into the distance... This is all but dry, having a mere three grams per litre of residual sugar. Bottled in September 2017.

Corney & Barrow Score 18+
Recommended drinking from 2018 - 2028

£1300.00/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK

AMARONE DELLA VALPOLICELLA CLASSICO RISERVA 2007

The Riserva is made only three times per decade on average. The grape blend here is identical to the 'basic' Classico bottling, but this superior *cuvée* is given an additional two years' ageing in *botti*, making an impressive total of nine years in oak. Again, therefore, we have 55% Corvina and Corvinone, 30% Rondinella, with the remaining 15% made up of Cabernet, Nebbiolo, Croatina and Sangiovese. The personality of the 2007 Classico bottling is very much in evidence here – finely raisined, almost toffee'd, with a soaring taffeta-textured rose petal perfume – but the overall impression is more intense, more "explosive", to use Francesco's word. Just 5,839 bottles were made, each of which was numbered by hand.

Corney & Barrow Score 18.5
Recommended drinking from 2020 - 2035

£2525.00/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK
£1005.00/case of 1 magnum, in bond UK

ALZERO CABERNET 2007

40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Cabernet Franc and 20% Merlot. Sweet spices and dried fruits on the nose, pretty and with a promise of power in the background. A refined and confidently understated nose. The palate is something else altogether: sandalwood and eucalyptus, exotic and flamboyant, with full-bodied sweet fruit and the tannic clout to back it up. The polished richness drives through to the finish, which is sweet-fruited and protracted, with lingering dark cedary spice. Sweeter than the Amarone, coming in at a technically off-dry 13 grams per litre residual sugar (although the sensation is one of body rather than a sense of sweetness).

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5 - 18+
Recommended drinking from 2018 - 2028

£1595.00/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK
£620.00/case of 1 magnum, 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. You 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

RECIOTO DELLA VALPOLICELLA CLASSICO 2004

55% Corvina and Corvinone, and 30% Rondinella, with the remaining 15% made up of Cabernet, Nebbiolo, Croatina and Sangiovese. Aged for six years in Slavonian oak *botti*. Deep ruby in colour, with a blue hue. The nose has dried fruit and dark lifted cherry. Pure primary red fruit on the palate, with seams of dark slaty minerality and liquorice traversing the lush raspberry fruit, enlivened by crisp, upright acidity. Think of this as an Amarone which has not completed its fermentation, remaining sweet (70 grams per litre of sugar), decadent and extravagantly fruited. The tannins keep the natural ebullience in check, framing the palate in a firm grippy embrace. Simply wonderful, somehow marrying hedonism and precision.

Corney & Barrow Score 18
Recommended drinking from 2018 - 2025

£1300.00/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK
£655.00/case of 6 halves, in bond UK

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.