



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



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CORNEY &
BARROW
INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS - 1780



TARDIEU-LAURENT

THE RHÔNE, 2017 VINTAGE EN PRIMEUR



“Historically small yields... the lowest of the post-war years. These very challenging conditions gave birth to juices of such brilliant quality, which do better than merely console us: they entice!”

MICHEL TARDIEU



INTRODUCTION

Corney & Barrow started working with Tardieu-Laurent in 2002, just six years after this family operation was established. Michel and Bastien Tardieu are *négociants-éleveurs*, meaning they rely on a patchwork of longstanding relationships with small growers the length of the Rhône valley.



Although the grapes come from a 300 km corridor, stretching from Côte-Rôtie in the north to Bandol in the south, the wines are all vinified in Tardieu-Laurent's impressive modern facility in Lourmarin, which sits among the rolling hills of Provence. One of the most distractingly beautiful settings in which to make a living: I don't know how Michel and Bastien get any work done at all.

2017 was a year of low, low volumes in the Rhône, unlike Burgundy to the north, which saw its first good-sized crop since 2009. As explained in the Vintage Notes section, the reasons for this were mainly a cool spring and a very hot summer. The reds are gratifyingly age-worthy, combining substantial natural extract, in the south in particular, with tannic finesse and very pretty perfume. The whites are delectable, veering towards the

heart-on-sleeve demonstrative end of the spectrum, with taut acidity safeguarding their harmony.

The Tardieus have secured a couple of new suppliers this year (which seems astonishing in a year of such low yields). They have also produced a *Vieilles Vignes* Côte-Rôtie for the first time, thanks to some very exciting over-60 year-old parcels in Landonne and Lancement – prime Côte-Rôtie real estate. However trite it sounds, this is an offer in which there really is something for everyone, both stylistically and price-wise.

Guy Seddon

GUY SEDDON
October 2018



2017 VINTAGE NOTES

“A very warm year. Thanks to the tiny volumes, we achieved excellent ripeness.”

BASTIEN TARDIEU

2017 in the Rhône valley was marked by what Michel Tardieu calls “a succession of definitely adverse events”. An abnormally cool spring enabled frost to affect flowering, with the notoriously sensitive Grenache being particularly hard-hit. This “cruel spring” was followed by a very dry summer, meaning yields are tiny. The positive outcome was that the vines had “naturally little load” and so reacted magnificently to the summer warmth.

A year of climatic extremes in the **southern Rhône** has made for a vintage in which old vine Grenache has thrived, playing to Tardieu-Laurent's strengths, given the advanced age of many of the vines here. The wines are perfumed and aromatically delicate, with wonderfully fine tannins.

The **northern Rhône** 2017s are deeply coloured, with lots of natural body. Michel speaks of long, careful *élevage* being key to tempering the "natural opulence of a somewhat ostentatious vintage", remarking that these will be very long-lived wines. The Tardieus' Condrieu is 40% of its usual quantity this year but brims with vitality.

In a year of scant volumes, you might fear for the prospects of a *négociant-éleveur* such as Tardieu-Laurent, who depends on others for 'raw materials'. Michel's comment on this was that, "Fortunately, we were able to count on the sincere, even friendly, relationship that we have built, year after year, with each of our vinegrowing partners. They should be most sincerely thanked for this."

As for winemaking, there is a tendency towards *foudres* rather than barrels: Michel and Bastien like the elegance these larger vessels give. The white Hermitage, for example, is now entirely vinified in *foudre*, from the high-quality Austrian cooper Stockinger. Slightly fewer whole bunches have been used this year compared to 2016. Elsewhere, the winemaking remains as traditionally hands-off as ever.

OLD VINES

Several of the Tardieu-Laurent wines are labelled as 'Vieilles Vignes', sometimes abbreviated to 'VV'. Whilst there is no legal definition of this, Michel and Bastien consider an average of 40 years to be the minimum for a wine to be designated as such.

My First Impressions....

I can't think of a more diverse offer we do for a single producer, or one that spans as great a distance than this Tardieu-Laurent offer. With twenty-four wines spanning the entire Rhône Valley and beyond, the selection is immense. From Ampuis to Bandol, it would take you over three hours to drive and that is without stopping to take in the awe-inspiring views *en route*. It leads itself to being an offer for the aficionado as well as a brilliant introduction with which the relative novice could start their Rhône journey.

Tasting from the barrel, it is quite clear that 2017 should not be pigeonholed as red or white, nor Southern or Northern. I can see why customers might find this a vague answer but I think it is a blessing in disguise. With 2015 being quite clearly Northern focused and 2016 of a Southern persuasion, 2017 seems to have brought a sense of balance. This should encourage you to explore some *crus* that you might have overlooked in the past as well as stick with the trusty "selections" you have been enjoying over the last few years.

2017 was a warm vintage; this helped produce very high quality grapes, at optimum ripeness, sadly at the price of tiny yields. Overall, the wines have superb concentration, from Côtes-du-Rhône level to the top *crus*. They were harvested at the perfect ripeness and I believe it is a vintage that should prove reassuringly ageworthy.

WILL MONROE

Fine Wine Sales





2017 TASTING NOTES

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White - Southern Rhône

CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE BLANC, LES BECS FINS

Tardieu-Laurent's Beccs Fins Blanc is made from vines grown on big rounded pebbles, above limestone clay soils from Vaison, Cairanne and Rasteau. 40% Viognier, 20% Roussanne, 20% Marsanne, 10% Clairette, 10% Grenache Blanc. Firm white peach and pink grapefruit on the nose, leading into a charmingly fleshy palate of juicy acidity, pithy stone-fruit and a crisp, phenolic finish. Really excellent, this will hit the ground running. Vinified in concrete tank, with no oak.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5
Recommended drinking from 2019 – 2022

£140/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPÉ BLANC VIEILLES VIGNES

This comes from various sites around Châteauneuf, including Font de Michelle. 40% Grenache, 30% Roussanne, 20% Clairette and 10% Bourboulenc, the latter two varieties bringing freshness and moderating the overall alcohol content. This is such a chiselled, energetic wine, brilliantly focused and linear. White flowers and nervy minerality, driving through to a long, taut finish. Really exciting stuff. It is fermented in barrel with eight months lees contact, half of the Roussanne being aged in new oak barrels.

Corney & Barrow Score 18
Recommended drinking from 2021 – 2026

£360/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE BLANC, GUY LOUIS

This is a third northern Rhône and two-thirds from the south, the vast majority of the grapes coming from *cru* sites. 35% Roussanne, 25% Marsanne, 20% Grenache, 10% Viognier and 10% Clairette. The declassified *cru* grapes include a third from Hermitage, no less. Broad and quite voluminous, this is a serious, age-worthy Côtes-du-Rhône, coming to a defined point on the finish and leaving a lingering sense of peach skin grip. 100% barrel fermented, it is then aged for eight months in new, one- and two-year old barrels.

Corney & Barrow Score 17 – 17.5
Recommended drinking from 2019 – 2023

£160/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK



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Red - Southern Rhône

CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE VILLAGES,
LES BECS FINS

This comes from the big, rounded *gallets* pebbles of the Gard. It is all destemmed. 60% Grenache (60 years old) and 40% Syrah (30 years old). Kirsch and dense blackcurrant on the nose, with lifted bitter cherry aromatics. The palate is substantial, with velvety fruit, around the edges of which seeps a lovely violet perfume. The tannins are firm but supple, nicely rounded. A little more structure than usual here, in a good way.

Corney & Barrow Score 16.5 - 17
Recommended drinking from 2021 – 2026

£125/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE,
GUY LOUIS

Coming from various southern Rhône villages, including Rasteau, Vacqueras and Beaumes de Venise, this is 60% Grenache (50 years old), 25% Syrah (40 years old) and 15% Mourvèdre (30-40 years old), farmed organically. One third whole-bunches. A spicy nose, testifying to that quarter of Syrah, with undergrowth and fruits of the forest, bitter cherry and dark chocolate. The palate is chiselled and is presently defined by its firm tannins. This has serious structure, with admirable ageing potential. It is aged for 12 months in one and two year-old barrels, then for six months in *foudres*.

Corney & Barrow Score 17 - 17.5
Recommended drinking from 2021 – 2028

£160/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE
CUVÉE SPÉCIALE

Spéciale due to its 100% whole-bunch vinification, this comes from 70 year-old vines on the border of the Châteauneuf *appellation*, towards Courthézon. It is a blend of 95% Grenache and 5% “others”, referring to the old centre of this vineyard which is planted with assorted varieties, long since forgotten. Sweet spices on the nose, and black pepper, with an attractive floral, garriguey lift. The palate is exotically spiced (those whole-bunches) with a substantial weight of tannin, competing with rich raspberry, pomegranate and blueberry fruit. This spends eight months in two and three year-old barrels, then ten months in *foudres*.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5
Recommended drinking from 2021 – 2026

£210/CASE OF 6 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

RASTEAU VIEILLES VIGNES

70% Grenache (the vines of which are a magnificent 80 years old), 20% Syrah and 10% Mourvèdre (both a ‘mere’ 40 years old). A third of the grapes were left undestemmed and fermented as whole-bunches. A dark, kirsch-inflected nose, with bitter cherries and dark chocolate. The palate, by contrast, is supple and delectable, polished and rounded: this is a wine that embraces you, with an unexpected sweetness of fruit. “Shirley Bassey”, I appear to have scribbled during my first tasting... Aged for 12 months in one and two year-old barrels, then for eight months in *foudres*. Bravo.

Corney & Barrow Score 18
Recommended drinking from 2023 – 2030

£195/CASE OF 12 BOTTLE, IN BOND UK

VACQUEYRAS VIEILLES VIGNES

If Rasteau is flirtatious, Vacqueyras is more earthy and leathered – the Marlboro man, if you will. Whilst Vacqueyras can have a certain rusticity, half of this comes from sandy soils which, in combination with cool aspects, lend a silkiness to the tannins. 70% Grenache (over 60 years old), 20% Mourvèdre and 10% Syrah (both 40 years old). 50% whole-bunch fermented. Violets and undergrowthy forest fruits on the nose. A firm sense of earth and a sweet leathered spice. The palate is more insinuating on the entry than the Rasteau, but tannic grip quickly accumulates in the mouth. This always needs long *élevage* and bottle ageing.

Corney & Barrow Score 17
Recommended drinking from 2024 – 2032

£210/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

GIGONDAS VIEILLES VIGNES

This comes from five plots in Gigondas, at around 400 metres of altitude. 80% Grenache, 10% Syrah and 10% Mourvèdre, ranging from 40 to over 100 years old. Two thirds whole bunch fermented. Laurel, *garrigue* and menthol on the nose – archetypal Provence, almost transporting you there. A little meatiness too. The palate has dark cherry, bitter chocolate, stony minerality and a plush juiciness which makes this a real winner. Complex and with lots of ageing potential, but also beautifully approachable. Aged for 12 months in one and two year-old barrels and then 12 months in old oak *foudres*.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5 - 18
Recommended drinking from 2025 – 2033

£240/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK
£255/CASE OF 6 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK





BANDOL

“The Bordeaux of the South”, as it is known in the Rhône. This comes from limestone-clay soils. 95% Mourvèdre and 5% Grenache, both of which are over 50 years old. This is always the last wine tasted in the Tardieu-Laurent line-up – and there is a reason for that... Glass-staining ruby (almost black) colour, this promises to be a big wine – and it does not disappoint. Blackcurrant and cream on the fore-palate. However, despite the massive tannins, the impressive weight, there is an over-arching lift and lightness of touch. Give this ample time, but it has the requisite balance. Aged for 24 months in one and two year-old barrels.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5
Recommended drinking from 2026 – 2031

£220/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE

This comes from four plots in Châteauneuf and is 75% Grenache, 15% Syrah and 10% Mourvèdre. The Grenache and Cinsault is 60 to 80 years old, the Syrah 40 years old. Half whole-bunch vinified. A complex nose of leather, sweet spices, meat, tobacco leaf and fresh mint. Warm terracotta tiles! On the palate, this immediately stands out for its finesse of tannins, which are equally high-level to the preceding wines, but are fine and open-weave, allowing you space to ‘breathe’. There is texture here, backed up by a firm kick of alcohol to be sure, but all is in balance, all is well. Fabulous.

Corney & Barrow Score 18+
Recommended drinking from 2024 – 2034

£325/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE
VIEILLES VIGNES

From five old-vine plots, this is 80% Grenache (80-100 years old), 10% Syrah (50 years old) and 10% Mourvèdre (60 years old). A third whole-bunch vinified. Aged for 12 months in one year-old barrels, then for 12 months in *foudres*. Menthol and sweet spices on the nose, vanilla pods, with raspberry and a nod towards raisined fruit. The palate is dense, swaggering and virile, with tannins from the Mourvèdre and a substantial depth of flavour. A big wine, with a lot of ageing potential. Despite the slightly lower whole-bunch element this year, there is a lot of exotic spice.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5
Recommended drinking from 2026 – 2036

£395/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE CUVÉE
SPECIALE

Made from century-old vines at the base of La Crau on sandy soils, this is effectively a Grenache-only Châteauneuf (it contains 1% “other varieties”). 100% whole-bunch fermented. Blueberry aromatics on the nose, this is a close as you may get to a communion with Grenache in its pure form – warming and generous, hedonistic, something ever so slightly dangerous... The palate has very supple tannins, although there are a lot of them. Bitter cherry, lifted nectarine peel and orange blossom, with that core of glycerol. A long wine, which expands on the finish – warming and cossetting.

Corney & Barrow Score 18
Recommended drinking from 2026 – 2036

£445/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK
£460/CASE OF 6 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

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White - Northern Rhône

SAINT-PÉRAY VIEILLES VIGNES

Bastien Tardieu calls this “the little Hermitage Blanc”. 50% Marsanne (50-100 years old) and 50% Roussanne (over 40 years old – the finicky Roussanne is rather uncommon in the northern Rhône so this is a treat). A wonderfully spicy/smoky nose, with pastry notes and a nutty breadth. Yellow flowers. The palate is tangy and concentrated, combining impressive weight with a high-line of acidity. Tangerine rind, orange zest, with salty, oyster shell minerality. A big wine this year. It is aged for 12 months in a mixture of new and one year old barrels.

Corney & Barrow Score 17+
Recommended drinking from 2020 – 2024

£245/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

HERMITAGE BLANC

Bastien was proud to announce that his white Hermitage is now vinified entirely in Stockinger Austrian *foudres*, in order to retain freshness. 80% Marsanne and 20% Roussanne. The Marsanne is over 50 years old, whilst the Roussanne is over 40 years old. A complex nose, of peach fruit and beeswax, honey, walnut, acacia and yellow flowers. Furniture polish, I scribbled (a good thing!) The palate is both broad-boned and pithy, with zesty orange rind, tangerines and plump peaches, leaving a firm sensation of grip on the finish. Again, this is a substantial wine which deserves some bottle age.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5+
Recommended drinking from 2022 – 2027

£425/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK
£440/CASE OF 6 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

CONDRIEU

2017 was a fraught year for volumes in Condrieu, as 40% was lost due to *coulure* and drought. 100% Viognier, from four plots in Condrieu: Paton, Chanson, La Côte and Vernon. The latter, a new addition last year, is famous for its high acidity and loess soils and represents half of the blend. 45 year-old vines. Apricot, peaches and yellow flower aromatics on the nose. The palate retains a wonderful core of fresh acidity, around which sits a cushion of ripe stone fruit. The body is viscous yet lithe – a sense of volume with freshness. Aged for 10 months in new and one year-old barrels.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5
Recommended drinking from 2020 – 2024

£385/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

Red - Northern Rhône



SAINT-JOSEPH VIEILLES VIGNES

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100% Syrah and Serine, Serine being an ancient clone of Syrah. The former vines are over 60 years old, the latter 100-120 years old! A third whole bunch fermentation. Blood oranges, violets – this is both floral and peppery, with a touch of meatiness. The palate is well-defined, with firm tannins asserting themselves early on. There is a lovely lightness of touch here, an upbeat acidity and a soaring floral component which pervades the palate. Taut rather than plump, but with such attractive perfume.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5
Recommended drinking from 2023 – 2028

£275/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

CROZES-HERMITAGE VIEILLES VIGNES

100% Syrah, from 60 year-old vines. There is one third whole-bunch fermentation here. *Garrigue* spice on the nose, minty and peppery. The palate is sinewy, herbaceous, dark-fruited and admirably fine. This is a masterclass in Syrah, with refreshingly restrained alcohol. Medium-bodied, but supremely balanced. It comes from four sites: Larnage, Battis, Gervans and Coteaux de Mercurol. Following fermentation, it is aged for 12 months in new and one year-old barrels, then spends six months in *foudres*.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5+
Recommended drinking from 2023 – 2028

£225/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK
£240/CASE OF 6 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

CORNAS COTEAUX

Cornas is known as the “*vin noir*”, and you can see why as soon as you pour it – inky and glass-staining, with a bright purple rim. 100% Syrah-Serine, 60 to 100 years old. A half whole bunch fermentation. The nose is *sauvage*, animalistic, leathered and spicy. On the palate, the tannins appear finer than the nose suggests, aided by an acidic lift and lovely dark spicy fruit, before asserting themselves properly on the back-palate. A wine which demands patience. From plots at the base of the slopes. This is aged for 12 months in new and one year-old barrels, then spends 10 months in *foudres*.

Corney & Barrow Score 17+
Recommended drinking from 2024 – 2034

£325/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

CORNAS VIEILLES VIGNES

If Côte-Rôtie and Hermitage are the go-to northern Rhône *appellations*, Cornas is the insider’s choice. 100% Serine-Syrah, ranging from 80 to over 100 years old. 50% whole bunch fermented. Inky-dark in the glass, with a bright ruby rim. Granite and ‘hot-rock’ on the nose, high-toned and dangerous. The palate is much firmer and more assertively tannic than the Coteaux, with a finesse of tannins which will enable this to age majestically and a lovely balancing acidity, which lifts the aromas beautifully. Ferrous and animalistic on the finish. This comes from mid-slope plots of Les Eygats and Patou. Aged for 24 months in new and one year-old barrels.

Corney & Barrow Score 18
Recommended drinking from 2026 – 2036

£460/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

CÔTE-RÔTIE

This comes from Landonne, Côte de Rozier and Rochains. 100% Syrah-Serine, over 40 years old. One third-whole bunch vinified. Wonderfully lifted and aromatic on the nose, spicy and peppery but with a perfume and a delicacy which is so refined, so polite, especially when tasted after the wilder Cornas. Everything in proportion. On the palate, it is red-fruited and delicate on the entry, with perfume-coated tannins and a brightness and roundness of fruit which suggests this will be approachable young. Aged for 12 months in new and one year-old barrels, before 10 months in *foudres*.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5
Recommended drinking from 2026 – 2036

£395/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

CÔTE-RÔTIE VIEILLES VIGNES

This is a new wine in the Tardieu-Laurent line-up, due to a new supplier with vines in the prime vineyards of Landonne, Lancement and Chavaroché. The vines here are 60-70 years old on average. 100% whole-bunch vinified. Moderate-intensity ruby-purple colour. Struck flint on the nose, this is intensely mineral, with pretty floral detailing. The palate is insinuatingly fine on the entry, with a weight of liquorice and blackberry building in a crescendo, in tandem with a prodigious density of tannins. This is much more substantial than the ‘basic’ Côte-Rôtie, in a great way. The tannins are fine, but there are lots of them, giving a sense of massive concentration.

Corney & Barrow Score 18.5
Recommended drinking from 2028 – 2040

£545/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK
£560/CASE OF 6 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

HERMITAGE

From Le Méal, Pierrelles and Les Diognères. 100% Syrah and Serine, 60 years old. 100% destemmed. Dark berries and sweet spice on the nose, a touch of new oak still discernible. The palate is sweetly fruited and quite polished, with firm, ripe tannins, which leave a sense of broad grip on the finish. Blackcurrant, blueberry pudding, a rich line of redcurrant and raspberry compote, with a creaminess of texture. Aged for 12 months in new and one year-old barrels, then 12 months in *foudres*. I think this could be excellent, but it needs a little longer to gel.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5 – 18
Recommended drinking from 2026 – 2036

£525/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK
£540/CASE OF 6 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

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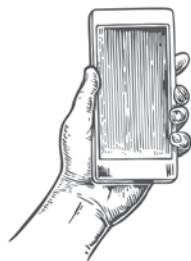
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