



**Written by**  
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## The Trinoro merry-go-round



I love Andrea Franchetti, founder of Tenuta di Trinoro in the vinous wilds of the Tuscan/Lazio border and, subsequently, Passiopisciario on Etna. You can read why in this [2002 profile](#) of him.

He visited his UK importer Corney & Barrow at the end of November to show a succession of almost bewilderingly varied vintages of Tenuta di Trinoro that had been shipped from the estate five weeks earlier, including some precious magnums. The fact that his engineer son Ben is now based in London designing low-energy engines presumably provided some sort of draw. Andrea Franchetti himself was just back from Moscow, still bedazzled by the beautiful women and long lie-ins that are customary there.

He began his presentation of the wines by maintaining stoutly that his isolated wine property is in Lazio and borders on Umbria, 'on the verge of Mediterranean influence'. He seemed to wish to distance Trinoro from Tuscany, which he typically gnomically described as 'a sort of Germany

place compared with other places. Tuscans are extremely different from the people who live south of Tuscany. Our valley is very high. If you fly over it – which often happens on flights from Rome – you can see it's much higher than the valleys either side of it.

'Our vineyards are planted on blue clay. You need areas with a good density of rock and gravel for vines. We have a remarkably long hang time and our picking often lasts into the beginning of November. It's usually 130 days from flowering to picking.'

The tasting had been inspired by what he claimed as a recent discovery: 'that these wines age well. They switch to a different channel where a new party is going on and they ride a new fire so I expect them to last for a long time.'

He sketched out the genesis of Trinoro. 'When I went to Val d'Orcia for the first time there was just about no one living there. I fixed the small house in late 1980s. I loved the place so much that I decided I wanted to stay there. So I went to Bordeaux and learnt about vineyards and plants. I imported the plants, my favourite being the Bordeaux varieties, especially Cabernet Franc because I'd just had a bottle of Petit Cheval 1990 that was so beautiful, I thought that's what I wanted.'

He claimed that Tenuta di Trinoro is generally equal parts of Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot with about 4% Petit Verdot, and about 10 of the 20 ha are planted with Cabernet Franc. But as you can see below, the recipe changes frequently. The 2001 looks the best bet to me at the prices supplied by Corney & Barrow in early December.

Franchetti was keen to explain that he no longer follows the Bordeaux model of winemaking. 'I don't do any extraction or maceration. We run the wine off quickly and after some lees contact put the wine into French barriques and now some Caucasian wood, but only for four to five months now. Then, after blending, we put the wine into concrete. By February I know how I will assemble the blend. Only eight or nine ingredients go into the grand vin; the rest goes into our second wine. Until 2001 we used to give the wine about 18 months in barrel but we reduced it to just six months in 2001.'

Franchetti is no great fan of the dominant grape of central Italy. 'I have had some very good Sangiovese in Emilia-Romagna but it has difficulty ripening in Tuscany. Tuscany is such a big place, I don't understand why there is so much Sangiovese. I'd try Mammolo and Colorino.'

Recent vintages have done nothing to make Franchetti any keener on Sangiovese since 2013 and 2014 were so cool and wet that his Trinoro wines were only 13% alcohol – quite a contrast to the two previous vintages, described below, which were over 16%.



These wines, selected by Franchetti himself, are extremely varied as you can see from the various backgrounds spelt out below. Perhaps reflecting their maker, these reds seem to be

almost as subject to whim as to the weather.

The wines are listed in the order tasted.

- **Trinoro 2012 IGT Toscana***Peculiar in that it's almost 100% Cabernet Sauvignon which has never happened before, and he only decided to do that at the last minute.*  
Very dark crimson. Quite high in VA. Rich and sweet with depth but lots of acidity. Very young but the tannins are well covered. Very clean and brisk. The Cabernet Sauvignon mainly comes from the highest vineyards. Rather more complete than the 2011 all-Cabernet Franc wine.16%  
Drink 2017-2027  
£159 a bottle inc VAT Corney & Barrow 17+
- **Trinoro 2011 IGT Toscana***Probably Andrea Franchetti's favourite among the first six. 100% Cabernet Franc. 12 different pickings. Very hot year. 55-degree days.*  
Very dark crimson. Lovely freshness and lightly herbaceous. But the sweetness compensates. Marked acidity on the end and with a slightly green edge. Glossy and very well balanced. Slightly drying on the end. Needs lots of time. Edgy.16.5% Drink 2019-2030  
£159 a bottle inc VAT Corney & Barrow 17
- **Trinoro 2009 IGT Toscana***40% Cabernet Franc, 30% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon. Seamless but he says less expressive than the other wines. Not too hot.*  
Very dark crimson. Mellow and beautifully balanced with a hint of cold tea. The tannins are more obvious than in the 2011 and 2012. Big and sweet.15.5% Drink 2017-2030  
£141.46 a bottle inc VAT Corney & Barrow 18
- **Trinoro 2007 IGT Toscana***50% Cabernet Franc, 40% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Petit Verdot (!).*  
Very dark indeed. Superlative. A wine that stands apart because it was a very dry year. Not that hot but there was so little liquid that the pumps would stop because of lack of pressure. Sound of dry leaves being raked. Just skins really. Exceptionally deep crimson. Fantastic richness. Not uncomfortably dry despite the lack of juice. Beautifully long and fresh. Young and sweet. Very youthful and angular.14% Drink 2014-2024  
£210 a bottle inc VAT Corney & Barrow 18.5
- **Trinoro 2006 IGT Toscana***Magnum. 'Has a bit of the disease of ripeness, it has aged into something more corrupt', according to Andrea Franchetti. 'You became very relaxed and let the perfect moment for picking go by.'*  
Bit drying on the end. Hint of raisins. Not the gorgeousness of the 2007. Dried-skin taste. Hot finish. Bit fossilised.14.5% Drink 2012-2017  
£152.46 a bottle inc VAT Corney & Barrow 16.5
- **Trinoro 2001 IGT Toscana***Magnum, not decanted because Andrea Franchetti thinks it is gold and doesn't need it. 'This is the best wine I think I ever made. Perfect ripening.'*  
Very classic nose - blended and with a hint of tobacco savour. Very sweet and gorgeous. Long. Fabulous balance. So long. Yet fresh.15% Drink 2010-2025  
£155 a bottle inc VAT Corney & Barrow 18.5
- **Trinoro 1999 IGT Toscana***Magnum. Dark crimson. 'In England they would say this was ready to drink. It was a miserable rainy end of vintage. Half of the new winery was built in 1999, neon lit. I couldn't stand being there anymore.'*  
Sweet, dusty nose. A little simpler than some. I find it a little dull on the end. 15% Drink 2006-2018  
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- **Trinoro 1998 IGT Toscana***Magnum. Made in a nearby farmhouse.*  
Dark crimson. Rusty rim. Dried herbs and a hint of garlic on the nose. Exotic and rich. He castigates it because it is so like Bordeaux. Opulent and right banky. Luscious. 14% Drink

2008-2018

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- *Trinoro 1997 IGT ToscanaMagnum. First vintage made from four- or five-year-old vines in a nearby farmhouse.*

Strong cassis and firm. The acidity and tannin is a little marked. 'This year is overvalued in Italy. 2001 much better.' There is lots more potential for development here. 14.5% Drink 2007-2024

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