



Written by
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Trinoro embraces Merlot again



8 August 2017 I have just received this report from Franchetti on this year's exceptionally dry growing season in Tuscany (friends staying on Etna have been wilting in the exceptionally high temperatures being experienced on his other wine estate):

The freeze of the spring passed over a land that was already completely dried out, as from December through today, it has not rained. It's 45 degrees Celsius, and there's a copper light dancing in the distance above the clay earth. For the drought as for the freeze, the remedy comes at night. The leaves open their pores in the darkness, so for 60 days, we sprayed a mist of water over the fields; the machines worked until we woke at dawn. The drought has left the lakes at Trinoro, from which our water comes, low, and these are our last drops. Could we please, this August, have a little rain?

After this work, the entire estate shows its green vines against the stunning skies, fields

encircled by dark trees and sparkling, golden light. I walk above it, thinking it looks like a little opera, something precarious, its setting about to collapse, the stage about to crumble into dust.

4 August 2017 Andrea Franchetti, owner of Tenuta di Trinoro in an isolated valley in southern Tuscany and Passopisciaro on Etna in Sicily, has made so many appearances on this website that he probably deserves his own article tag. I will create it as soon as I have finished writing this dreadfully late report on a tasting he organised at the luxurious wine retailer Hedonism in London at the end of last year.

His excuse for the tasting was the fact that Franchetti is once more producing a varietal Merlot on his Tuscan estate, having turned his back on it in favour of the Cabernet Franc of which he now makes several single-vineyard examples, as described below and in [My lunch with ??](#). My excuse for having tarried so long before publishing these reviews is very much lamer.

Palazzi, Franchetti's Merlot-based wine, was made in 1997, 1998 and 1999 but abandoned between 2000 and 2008 inclusive because, although it was enthusiastically received, he felt it was a bit facile. However, the quality of his 2009 Merlot inspired him to begin making it again. On the basis of this tasting of various vintages of Palazzi, the Trinoro flagship blend and those single-vineyard Cabernet Francs, I must say I was underwhelmed by the 2009s, which seemed a bit overripe to me - indeed the alcohol levels of these Merlots are sky-high, but then so they are for [Masseto](#), [Tuscan Merlot de luxe](#), the outstandingly commercially successful Tuscan Merlot.

The 12 Franchetti wines described below are listed in the order I tasted them. Do click on the Franchetti article tag for more on this eccentric wine producer. See, for starters, [My lunch with ???](#)

- [Trinoro, Palazzi 1997 IGT Toscana](#) *75% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Sauvignon. Magnum.*
Dark ruby and an aged rim. Super-ripe tomatoes on the nose. Then lovely freshness. Racy and slightly furry. Very good acidity as well as the plushness of the Merlot. Mellow, almost faded tannins. 14.5% Drink 2007-2022
17.5
- [Trinoro, Palazzi 1999 IGT Toscana](#) *50% Merlot, 50% Cabernet Franc. Merlot harvested 2-3 October, Cabernet Franc harvested 5, 9-11, 14-17 October. Magnum.*
Fully mature dark ruby. Less intense nose than the 1997 and more evolved. Very sweet and more obviously ripe, even overripe, fruit than the 1997. But it finishes lively and the tannins are just slightly drying. 15% Drink 2005-2018
16.5
- [Trinoro, Palazzi 2009 IGT Toscana](#) *100% Merlot. Harvested 28 September - 1 October.*
Dark and deep crimson. Very rich and intense nose. Pretty Pomerol-like. Round and luscious with a very sweet start. Pure hedonism! Slightly dusty tannins on the end, then good acidity but it may take a while to throw off those tannins. A hint of raisins but still quite a bit of acid on the end. 16% Drink 2018-2030
17
- [Trinoro, Palazzi 2010 IGT Toscana](#) *100% Merlot. Picking started 5 October.*
Deep dark crimson. Starting to show some real complexity. Very rich and sweet but with attractive grittiness and freshness on the end. Slightly inky. But more refreshing and finer than the 2009 and 1999. More sophisticated. 15.5% Drink 2016-2032
17.5
- [Trinoro, Palazzi 2011 IGT Toscana](#) *100% Merlot. Picking started 5 October.*
Very deep crimson. Nose is both savoury and sweet. Nervy, almost fizzy! Drying on the finish

but lively. Much less sweet than earlier vintages. Quite polished tannins. Something quite minerally. Very bordeaux. More bordelais than some vintages.16% Drink 2020-2035
17+

- *Trinoro, Campo di Magnacosta Cabernet Franc 2014 IGT Toscana 100% Cabernet Franc. Harvested 10 October. Magnum.*

Transparent ruby with some garnet. Racy and lifted, really stony. So much more energetic than the Merlot Palazzis! Very 21st-century wine – very very fresh.15% Drink 2021-2033
17+

- *Trinoro, Campo di Tenaglia Cabernet Franc 2014 IGT Toscana 100% Cabernet Franc. Harvested 13 October. Magnum.*

Very bright crimson. Sweet start. More of a hark back to the Palazzis on the front palate. Then very dry tannic grip on the end. Elderberries. Dry and quite demanding. Long. Lots of acidity. Bone dry!14.5% Drink 2023-2035

17+

- *Trinoro, Campo di Camagi Cabernet Franc 2014 IGT Toscana 100% Cabernet Franc. Harvested 18 October. Magnum.*

Very dark crimson. Heady, complex, polished – intense Margaux-type nose. Very very sweet and full. Very very sweet and full. Polished and very bordelais. Massively sweet, ripe fruit. Lots of polished tannins. The most youthful of the three Campo 2014 Cabernet Francs. Bright and energetic but with a layer of ripeness and lots of tannins. Almost austere but all the ingredients for a great, long life.14.5% Drink 2022-2040

17.5

- *Trinoro 2000 IGT Toscana 55% Cabernet Franc, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Petit Verdot. Cabernet Franc picked 5-6, 10-14, 18-19 October. Cabernet Sauvignon picked 16 and 19 October. Petit Verdot picked 13 October. Magnum.*

Dark and lustrous, really glowing! Evolved nose. Some mintiness on the nose but great polish. Rich and all the sumptuousness of a great Napa Cabernet but no obvious sweetness. Lovely freshness on the end. Racy. Great stuff!14% Drink 2010-2030

18

- *Trinoro 2005 IGT Toscana 63% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Franc, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Petit Verdot. Merlot harvested 2, 4 and 5 October. Cabernet Franc picked 6-8 October. Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot picked 28-30 October.*

Dark crimson. Very evolved, pretty and complex – fully ready on the nose. A little heat on the end but masses of pleasure now. Just slightly dry tannins on the end. Not the most intense on the mid palate.14.5% Drink 2010-2020

17

- *Trinoro 2009 IGT Toscana 42% Merlot, 42% Cabernet Franc, 12% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Petit Verdot. Merlot picked 27 September to 1 October. Cabernet Franc picked 5, 9, 13, 20 October. Cabernet Sauvignon picked 21 October and 1 November. Petit Verdot picked 27 October. Magnum.*

Bright, dark crimson. Not that expressive on the nose. Intensely sweet and ripe. A bit of a bruiser. Needs food! Pretty hot and a bit 'thick'. Gritty. Just a bit too much. Fades a bit on the end.15.5% Drink 2018-2030

16.5

- *Trinoro 2015 IGT Toscana 50% Cabernet Franc, 36% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Petit Verdot. Merlot harvested 21 September, Cabernet Franc harvested 12 October, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot harvested 22 October. Magnum.*

Dark crimson. Minty and intense nose. Svelte and racy. Very sophisticated, salty and fresh. Great ingredients. Jewellery. Glamorous and dramatic.14.5% Drink 2023-2040

18

