



## CORTI BROTHERS

### G.D. VAJRA CLARÈ J.C. 2017

This new Nebbiolo wine from the estate of Barolo producer **G.D.Vajra** is wine made to recall nebbiolo wine made before the invention, rather, creation of Barolo. It is a wine made from nebbiolo that recalls the description of **nebbiolo (nebiule)** written by Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States, in 1787, when he was our minister plenipotentiary in France (1785-1789) and was making a trip though northern Italy.

His description of “nebiule” was: “There is a red wine of Nebiule made in this neighborhood which is very singular. It is about as sweet as the silky Madeira, as astringent on the palate as Bordeaux, and as brisk as Champagne. It is a pleasing wine.” **Memorandums taken on a journey from Paris into the South parts of France and Northern of Italy in the year 1787.** We know the exact date it was drunk—April 18<sup>th</sup>—and the place, the Hotel d’Angleterre in Torino. (If you want to see more about what Jefferson writes on wine, see my old friend John Hailman’s book, Thomas Jefferson on Wine, U of Mississippi Press, 2009)

The creation of Barolo, a major wine made from nebbiolo, did not happen until after the arrival of the French enologist, Louis Oudart, for the estate of the French born Marchesa Falletti di Barolo. Barolo as a “classical” wine is one of the youngest of these wine types since it was born in the mid nineteenth century. Classic French and German wines had already been famous for several hundred years before. Barolo and its brother, Barbaresco, are the two red wines of Italy that were born in the nineteenth century, just before the ravages of European vineyards by both powdery and downy mildew and then, Phylloxera.

What is interesting about nebbiolo as a grape variety is that it was known to be a lovely scented variety and not a massive one. Its color was also never intensely dark, since nebbiolo, like pinot noir, is deficient in color pigment. It was also a variety that made a slightly sweet red wine, since it could be fermented quickly and retained some residual sugar leaving it with a light, though scented, fruitiness, making an extremely pleasant red wine that drank very well (when well made!).

My recollection of this nebbiolo type was the last bottles of 1949 Nebbiolo Spumante made by the important firm of Gancia in Canelli, which we happily drank at a party in my parents’ home in 1960, the night I graduated from high school. As a counterpoint to this wine were some half bottles of Gancia Barolo 1947, also memorable, but as Barolo, not nebbiolo.

I spoke of this a few years ago with Aldo Vajra, whom I have known since he was twenty years old, and he thought that it might be possible to reproduce this wine. I had given him the references to Jefferson about nebbiolo, and then in 2014 he produced a small amount of what was to become **CLARÈ J.C.**

Originally, the wine was spelled CLARET, and then the Bordeaux association got perturbed since that was the name of their wine and insisted Aldo stop calling his wine that name. So the wine changed its spelling and the Claret became CLARÈ. The following letters J, refers to Jefferson and the C to Corti. The wine has been made in the vintages 2014, 2015, 2016 and now, 2017. There is not a lot produced. Technically, it is a Langhe Nebbiolo. But this Vajra version is really special.

Beginning with its lovely color, it is a luminescent red--actually red--not purple red or black red, extremely pretty to look at. Its scent is fragrant; red berry fruit-like, with perhaps a bit of rose, without any predominant character, typical as nebbiolo's varietal scent. The flavor follows through with the scent. It is fruity, not tannic or harsh, has nicely balanced acidity, with a slight amount of residual CO2. For pure pleasure, I find it unbeatable.

**CLARÈ J.C. 2018**, G.D. Vajra, 14.5% \$26.99 750 ml (#4450) \$291.00 cs/12 (#4450C)

### **Italian Candied Fruit, Syrups and Essential Oils for baking and drink making: PARIANI**

At the 2018 CIBUS in Parma, Italy, this year, I ran across an old friend, MATTIA PARIANI, whose products I had almost forgotten about. Some years ago, Corti Brothers sold his hazelnut oil, but now he has expanded his product line to take in candied fruits and fruit syrups and essential oils.

From the Pariani line of **cubed candied fruit in syrup**, there are beautifully flavored and fragrant Sicilian lemon, orange, and Calabrian citron peel for baking use or adding to a dessert recipe. These are presented in syrup in glass jars to keep the fruit flavor intact. Pariani candied peel will change your mind about using candied peel in recipes. **All are \$13.99 the 260g jar**

**PARIANI CANDIED LEMON PEEL CUBES in syrup (Sicily) (#4451)**

**CANDIED ORANGE PEEL CUBES in syrup (Sicily) (#4452)**

**CANDIED CITRON PEEL CUBES in syrup (Calabria) (#4453)**

We have also selected two **unique fruit syrups**, made from pressing whole candied fruit. These sugar syrups can be used to flavor anything. The two selected are: **Green Walnut syrup** and **Chinotto syrup**. Green walnuts are candied, then pressed to produce a syrup to be used in place of nocino, the green walnut liqueur. Chinotti, a very special citrus (*Citrus myrtifolia*), are treated the same way. This very special flavor, tart, slightly bitter, and fragrant, forms the base of several Italian soft drinks called "chinotto." We also have the same fruit in its whole candied form, made by the last producer in Savona, its place of origin. These are from the **BESIO** company. Chinotti in Italy are a presidium of Slow Food. **The Pariani syrups are \$10.99 the bottle.**

**PARIANI GREEN WALNUT SYRUP 40ml bottle (#4454)**

**CHINOTTO SYRUP 40 ml bottle (#4455)**

**BESIO CHINOTTI DI SAVONA al Maraschino 380 g jar \$18.69 (#4456)**

In this same range of products, Pariani produces **semi-candied, whole Wild Strawberries** and **Elderberries** for dessert garnishing or adding to cocktails. These are made using a process whereby the candying leaves a fresh flavor and almost fresh fruit consistency. Another splendid cocktail ingredient are the **candied Cantiano cherries** called **Visciola di Cantiano**. These very special cherries are a wild cherry (*Prunus cerasus* var. *austera*), growing wild around the village of Cantiano in the Marche on Italy's Adriatic coast. The pitted cherries are simply cooked in sugar syrup, but have a very intense cherry flavor. If you are familiar with **Luxardo Maraschino Cherries**, the **Visciola di Cantiano** are even more flavorsome and intense. Try them in your next Manhattan cocktail. **All are \$14.99 the 260 g jar.**

**PARIANI semi-candied whole WILD STRAWBERRIES (#4457)**

**semi-candied whole ELDERBERRIES (#4458)**

**CANDIED VISCIOLO di CANTIANO (#4459)**

Another mixologist specialty from Pariani are the **Essential Oils** which they **cold press** from fruit and bottle in small bottles with a **dropper stopper** to be used in making cocktails or for flavoring anything, especially ice cream with the essential oil of these fruits. We have the essential oils of **Orange** (sweet orange), **Bitter Orange**, **Lemon**, **Bergamot**, **Mandarin**, **Grapefruit** and **Lemon grass**. These are just pure essential oils, without alcohol, for flavoring--especially when you cannot use fresh fruit.

**PARIANI ESSENTIAL CITRUS OILS: all in 15 ml bottles \$22.99 each**

**ORANGE (#4460) BITTER ORANGE (#4461) LEMON (#4462) BERGAMOT (#4463)**

**MANDARIN (#4464) GRAPEFRUIT (#4465)**

**PARIANI ESSENTIAL OIL: LEMON GRASS 15 ml bottle \$24.99 (#4466)**

### **BOOKS ON GREEK WINES FROM MADAME CAREX**

With the current high interest in Greek wines becoming even stronger, I have purchased some works on specific Greek wines and on the history of wine in Greece written by the Grande Dame of Greek Ecology, **Stavroula CAREX-Dragona**. I have known Madame Kouraou since 1993 when we presented wines together at a conference in San Gimignano in Tuscany on autochthonous white varieties. She presented on the major Greek white varietal and I on that from California, specifically, chenin blanc. Madame CAREX has written extensively on Greek viticulture and Ecology and was previously the head of the OIV in Paris. Madame is perfectly bilingual in Greek and French, not English. But her works have been translated very well into English and now, also finely printed.

The works here presented are those printed at the **FOINIKAS PRESS**. They are done on fine paper, with a lovely format, and are a pleasure to hold and read. Printing like wine is only a part of life, but when done properly, very pleasurable and rewarding. Both deal with different senses as art forms. There are, of course, different works on Greek wines in print. A lot are technical, comprehensive works dealing with all of Greece written by various authors of many stripes, from Masters of Wine, to sommeliers, to "wine writers."

The works of Mme CAREX now available from Corti Brothers, I believe are the only ones available in the United States. They are focused and specific to wine type and location. Her magnum opus **Vine and Wine in the Ancient Greek World** is just that: a magnum opus about the history of wine in antiquity and something that should be read by any really interested wine lover.

There is a lot of information on the pages of these finely wrought works, plus they are from the pen of the person who actually created many of the appellations for these wines and hence knows an enormous amount about them and their history. If you are looking for tasting notes or what to purchase, do not buy these books. If you are looking for history and the history of the creation of Greek wines in modern times, these works are a must for any wine lover's library. All book sales have 8.25% California sales tax added.

**VINE AND WINE IN THE ANCIENT GREEK WORLD**, large quarto, 279pp \$89.99 (#4467)

**NEMEA: AN HISTORICAL WINELAND**, quarto, 177pp. \$33.99 (#4468)

**SANTORINI: AN HISTORICAL WINELAND**, quarto, 189pp \$33.99 (#4469)

**XINÓMAVRO: THE WINE GRAPE VARIETY OF CENTRAL MACEDONIA** quarto 229 pp. \$33.99 (#4470)

**VINSANTO: THE TRADITIONAL SWEET WINE OF SANTORINI**, large octavo, 75pp \$13.99 (#4471)

**MALAGOUSIÁ: THE CINDERELLA OF GREEK WINEMAKING GRAPES**, octavo, 41pp \$16.99 (#4472)

**MOSCHOFILERO: THE GRAPE VARIETY OF MANTINIA**, 12mo, \$6.99 (#4473)

**Tom Pinney's book on Los Angeles wine: The City of Vines: A history of wine in Los Angeles.**

This work which came out in 2016 and has passed relatively unheralded, is the latest work from the prolific pen of Prof. Thomas Pinney, emeritus Professor of English at Pomona College and author of the magisterial two volume work on **Wine in America** from UC Press among other wine writings. The City of Vines tells the compelling story of how wine growing began in Southern California, where historically the wine business started when California was still Spanish, and the vicissitudes of growing grapes and selling wine years before the invention of Napa and Sonoma, and, at times, in competition with them. It documents the who, what, when, where, and how of the wine business in an area now inconceivable for wine growing. Yet it all started here.

What is amusing is to read about the places described as vineyards, now either houses, skyscrapers, or freeways. Vestiges of this history are still recognizable in certain parts of greater Los Angeles, such as the small parcels of vineyards remaining in Cucamonga. But to read about Pasadena/San Marino, let alone San Gabriel Valley being a large vineyard area is mind-boggling. The same with Disneyland in Orange County. Yet all the history is real. What is sometimes surreal is that we either don't want to know the history or don't want to believe it.

Tom Pinney, meticulously and somewhat laconically describes and gives the players and the reasons why it is now, just history. The fact that there is a vineyard in Bel-Air, vineyards in Malibu, should not seem strange to us, but merely a continuation of this history which began along the Los Angeles River, now a cement channel for rain run off that goes from Union Station in downtown Los Angeles to the Pacific Ocean. Compared to European wine history, this history is not very old. At less than 200 years old, it is history that happened just the other day. This is a work both enlightening and very enjoyable to read. And is a somewhat cautionary tale of "How do you make a small fortune in the wine business? Start with a large one!"

**THE CITY OF VINES: A history of wine in Los Angeles**, 2017, 334pp., Heyday, Berkeley, CA. \$24.99+ TX (#4474)

**A remarkable selection of mature Vintage Port to get you ready for fall**

I am setting out this collection of **vintage port** to give you ample time to decide what to buy for later enjoyment this winter. These wines need special care when serving and need to be carefully handled, therefore the warning. They have been stored perfectly. The bottle fills are almost pristine. But you need to make your choice early since there are less than a dozen bottles of some wine, more of others. This list is also has some **single quinta** wines, vintages usually declared when the wines are lovely, but the firm does not do a classic declaration. These are delicious wines that otherwise would not be seen.

If you like vintage port and have not laid down any, here is your chance to have a nice selection of ready to drink wines for this winter/holiday season and for the next five to ten years. The pleasure of drinking mature vintage port means you have to have laid some down when it came out upon declaration. It is only with collections like this that you can make up for your lack of astuteness in past years. But you should not buy vintage port and take it home and open it. It needs to be transported, then rested, then opened, decanted, and then enjoyed. Here is an opportunity which does not come along every day. All bottles are 750ml.

**GRAHAM 1975** \$158.99 (#4475) **GRAHAM 1970** \$201.99 (#4476) **WARRE 1958** \$200.00 (#4477)  
**FONSECA 1975** \$158.99 (#4478) **FONSECA Guimaraens 1974** \$94.99 (#4479) **1967** \$129.99 (#4480)  
**FONSECA Guimaraens 1968** \$106.00 (#4481) **COCKBURN 1967** \$179.99 (#4482) **1975** \$112.00 (#4483)  
**COCKBURN 1963** \$279.59 (#4484) **MESSIAS 1966** \$154.99 (#4485)  
**OFFLEY FORRESTER BOA VISTA 1972** \$98.99 (#4486) **SANDEMAN 1972** \$131.99 (#4487)  
**DOW 1975** \$158.99 (#4488) **DOW Late Bottled 1962** \$174.69 (#4489) **MARTINEZ 1975** \$112.99 (#4490)  
**REAL VINÍCOLA QUINTA DO SIBIO 1960** \$98.99 (#4491) **1963** \$119.99 (#4492) **1970** \$98.99 (#4493)

## **WALNUTS and WALNUT BUTTER: New products from California's Central Valley**

Since 2004, the Martella family has been shelling and processing their own walnuts and those of surrounding growers at Hughson, in California's Central Valley. They have now spread out forming a company called **The Nutty Gourmet** to process their shelled walnuts into **Walnut Butter** and also into **toasted and flavored walnut meats**. Corti Brothers has just found out about them and we have selected both nut butters and shelled **walnut meats** from the range of products The Nutty Gourmet produces.

Walnuts are a real "Superfood" with proven health advantages. The Nutty Gourmet uses only their California grown walnuts and the products are made without preservatives and other extraneous stuff. Basically, just walnuts.

The Walnut butters are: **ROASTED, SEA SALT**, and **MAPLE CINNAMON**. The Roasted walnut butter is made with walnuts and palm oil. Sea Salt is made with walnuts, palm oil and sea salt. Maple Cinnamon is made with walnuts, maple sugar, organic cane sugar, palm oil, cinnamon, sea salt. All you do is stir them to re-introduce the oil into the butter and use. They should be kept refrigerated after opening.

Interestingly, the Martellas are Ligurian Italians as are numerous of their neighbors in Hughson. You should try the roasted walnut butter to make the Ligurian pasta sauce "Tuccu de Nuxe" (sugo di noci) or walnut sauce for pasta. Instead of having to work walnuts into this paste like sauce, simply use the Roasted Walnut Butter.

The other product The Nutty Gourmet makes are 8 ounce bags of walnut meats with different flavors. Corti Brothers has the **SEA SALT**, toasted halves with olive oil and sea salt. **MAPLE CINNAMON**, toasted with maple and a bit of sugar and cinnamon. **HABANERO**, (no, it's not really hot) with a Habanero chile flavoring which enhances the walnut flavor, highlighting it. These are truly lovely products for putting out with drinks, especially for up coming holiday season entertaining. But eating three walnuts a day, or 6 halves is known to be very healthy for you. We just like to think they taste good.

**THE NUTTY GOURMET WALNUT BUTTER: 10 oz \$8.59 ea. ROASTED (#4494) SEA SALT (#4495) MAPLE CINNAMON (#4496) Mixed case-2 each \$46.00 case/6 (#4496M)**

**THE NUTTY GOURMET WALNUT MEATS: 8 oz \$6.99 ea. SEA SALT (#4497) HABANERO (#4498) MAPLE CINNAMON (#4499) . Mixed case-2 each \$37.00 cs/6 bags (#4499M)**

## **THE WINES OF KURTATSCH OR CORTACCIA: A remarkable producer in the Alto Adige**

I discovered these wines from the cooperative cellar of **Kurtatsch** or **Cortaccia** in the Alto Adige in May 2018. I had never been there before and was brought there by my friend Peter Dipoli, a wine merchant and producer himself in the Alto Adige. The seat of the cellar is in a remarkable building dating from 1521, nestled right up against the cliff of the southeast facing slope of the Dolomites facing the valley of the Adige River. Cooperative cellars function very well in the Alto Adige and make some lovely wines from the small parcels owned by the member growers. Founded in 1900, the Kurtatsch Kellerei has 190 members farming 190 hectares of vineyard. It shows that cooperativism works if everyone is on the same page. You can view the cellars on Corti TV on our website: [www.cortibrothers.com](http://www.cortibrothers.com)

I was particularly taken by several white wines and one typical red which is a red wine varietal we do not grow in California: **Grauvernatsch** or **Schiava grigia**. It was tried, but in the 1890s. I was particularly taken by the **SONNTALER**, (Sun Valley in German), from a vineyard site at about 450 meters high. This variety produces a pale colored red, with great fragrancancy and flavor and light tannin, but is always an inviting red wine to drink even when you don't think you want a red wine. It's particularly good with Chinese cuisine, especially dim sum. **SCHIAVA GRIGIA** is a member of a heterogeneous group of Schiava varietals. The others are Schiava

gentile, Schiava grossa and Schiava Lombarda. They are all distinct varieties. Schiava grossa is also called Trollinger in Germany, and is one parent to a lot of other varieties. Its name most likely comes from “Tirolinger” the original name of the Alto Adige, Süd-Tirol. The famous hot house vine still growing since the mid eighteenth century at Hampton Court in England is Schiava grossa, known as Black Hamburg. So, perhaps there are some vines of this variety growing in California since we are known to have Black Hamburg in old, mixed plantings.

However, the **SONNTALER** is particularly lovely. At one time in the late 1980s, early 90s, growers were invited to pull up their old, good producing plantings of Schiava and replant to Cabernet and the like. This has caused a dearth of Schiava in the Alto Adige, a variety which produces well and makes a light bodied red, currently sought after. Just how much Cabernet or Merlot can one drink?

The other wines selected from the Kurtatsch cellar are whites: Müller Thurgau, Pinot Grigio, and Pinot Bianco.

**MÜLLER THURGAU** is a cross between riesling and Madeleine Royale, a variety now not grown but an offspring of Schiava grossa. At one time it was the major variety planted in New Zealand. The **GRAUN** vineyard Müller Thurgau is a remarkable example of the variety with a pale color, delicate fragranciness and an intense flavor with riesling-like persistence, grown at the limit of viticulture at almost 900 meters. We have a few bottles of the **2013 Cellar Reserve Graun** to show what age does to this variety.

The **PENÓNER PINOT GRIGIO** comes from a vineyard high up in the village of Penon. Here the altitude (650mt) produces a delicacy in the variety rarely seen in this flavorsome varietal. Again, it is one of the flagship wines of the cellar and will keep extremely well if you can keep your hands off of it. **HOFSTATT PINOT BIANCO** is a delicious version of this white form of Pinot noir showing fullness and flavor. This style of Pinot Bianco is perfect for those times where one wants a full bodied white, but not a tiring one. Zippy acidity and body are its hallmarks due to soil condition and vineyard altitude.

All in all, the wines from **Kurtatsch** are those of a producer that leave a very fine mark in this lovely area of fine wines. They merit your attention.

**KURTATSCH SONNTALER Schiava grigia 2017** 12.5 % \$19.99 750ml (#4500) \$107.00 cs/6 (#4500C)

**GRAUN MÜLLER THURGAU 2016** 13% \$23.99 750ml (#4501) \$129.00 cs/6 (#4501C)

**PENÓNER PINOT GRIGIO 2016** 14% \$28.99 750ml (#4502) \$156.00 cs/6 (#4502C)

**HOFSTATT PINOT BIANCO 2016** 13.5% \$25.99 750ml (#4503) \$140.00 cs/6 (#4503C)

**GRAUN MÜLLER THURGAU 2013** 13% \$35.99 750ml (#4504) one bottle per order, please

**TERMS OF SALE: This list supersedes all others. All taxable items, such as wine, beer, or spirits will be taxed at the rate of 8.25%. This is for all sales since we sell in California. Foodstuffs are not taxable. Shipping will be charged at prevailing rates. PLEASE NOTE: In extreme weather, either hot or cold, please give us a shipping address where your order may be properly received and stored. Corti Brothers cannot be responsible for items left without protection**





STAVROULA KOURAKOU DRAGONA  
**VINE AND WINE  
IN THE ANCIENT GREEK WORLD**

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