



Hacienda Monasterio, Ribera del Duero, Spain 2005 & 2007 Vintages

Hacienda Monasterio is a highly successful ambassador for the Ribera del Duero region, on Spain's northern plateau.

Ribera del Duero has had an extraordinarily protracted rise to global fame, from the mid 19th Century and the establishment of world famous Vega Sicilia through to its eventual DO (Denominacion de Origen) classification as recently as 1982. Even after the DO classification was awarded, the region failed to get the recognition it deserved until the late 1980s and 90s when saw considerable investment and the emergence of world class wines.

It seems crazy. The geology, similar to Priorat to the east and the schist slopes of the Douro to the west, offers benchmark conditions for quality wine production. Likewise the high altitude makes for hot sunny days but, most important, cool nights, allowing the grapes to stay longer on vines which have the chance to rest overnight. This adds to the complexity and intensity of the finished wines. The terrain is however tough, almost Alpine with, perhaps surprisingly, significant threats of frost at both the beginning and the end of the season. This possibly accounts for the initial reluctance to produce grapes but gradually there was a realization that in such challenges lies huge potential.

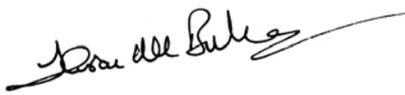
It was in this environment that Hacienda Monasterio was founded in 1991. This was a 113 hectare estate, 70 hectares of which were under vine, situated between the acknowledged flagships of the region, Pesquera and Vega Sicilia. Badly neglected, though brilliantly sited on a south-facing slope, the estate was in need not only of considerable investment but a real sense of vision and drive. The cavalry arrived in 1990, in the form of Danish-born, Bordeaux-trained winemaker Peter Sisseck. Peter had been dispatched by his uncle, Peter Vinding-Diers, a long-standing friend of Corney & Barrow, to cast an eye over the Monasterio project. Having outlined what he felt had to be done to restore the property and to produce top-notch wines, Peter found himself in the driving seat. Prodigiously talented as he is, this was still quite a challenge. Armed principally with experience of Bordeaux, Peter had to master radically different *terroir* and viticulture, as well as a new language.

Worldwide acclaim proves just how successful he has been to catch the attention of the wine critics, followed by his personal projects – Dominio de Pingus, Flor de Pingus and, most recently, PSI. Hacienda Monasterio is markedly different geologically from Peter's other projects – more Médoc-like, alluvial with deposits of clay. Like the Médoc, this is raised seabed with

crustacean fossils: very interesting *terroir* from a winemaking perspective, revealing just how complex and varied the ingredients of the region can be.

Peter is always respectful where *terroir* is concerned and does everything to sustain this natural complexity. Having endorsed sustainable agriculture for many years, Hacienda Monasterio has been officially certified as organic since 2007.

We are delighted to have been working with Peter from the launch of the first vintage of Hacienda Monasterio in 1993.



Alison Buchanan
Associate Director, Buying
December 2010

2007 Vintage Notes

The growing season began with both a wet winter and spring – useful in building up water reserves. Hacienda Monasterio was truly blessed during the summer as despite hailstorms in the region, the estate emerged unscathed. Conditions were such that they were able to delay harvest until the grapes had achieved full ripeness, not starting until the 15th October – very late. The 2007 blend is 80% Tinto del País (Tempranillo), 15% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Merlot, harvested parcel by parcel and vinified separately, according to variety and location. The 2007 vintage was aged in 40% new Alliers oak barrels for 15 months.

Due to severe pruning and strict sorting, production was 30 hectolitres per hectare, making for optimal quality and balance.

Hacienda Monasterio 2007, Ribera del Duero **Corney & Barrow Score 17 to 18**

This is a lustrous, intense plum-cherry in colour, almost opaque through to a bright, fine rim. The nose presents a beguiling combination of plum, prune and sweet, spiced cherries, punctuated by minerals and enriched by mocha cream. There is a wonderful fresh quality from the outset. The palate reflects similar aromatics and is plump, generous and richly textured with very, very fine, beautifully-integrated tannins, a lovely purity and refreshing acidity. This achieves an attractive balance between innate power and a high-toned vitality – which gives a certain elegance. Precise and focused, this has been beautifully handled, with a richness contributed by 40% new oak. It is drinking well now yet it will mature well in bottle. As ever, Peter has fashioned a wine which is true to place whilst being endowed with a certain classicism, reminiscent of Bordeaux.

Recommended Drinking from 2011 to 2020+
£290/case of 12, in bond UK

2005 Vintage Notes

2005 was a very dry year – a growing season which bore testimony to the strict regime of denying irrigation at Hacienda Monasterio. Rachel Donnelly, Adam Brett-Smith and I heard how, in the early days at Monasterio, Peter Sisseck's "no irrigation" policy had been received by onlookers, the estate's owners and the vines themselves. The former may have been rather bemused but the latter, somewhat peeved, responded by looking unhappy and bedraggled initially but underground stretched out their roots as deeply as possible to search for reserves. By 2005 the vines were well used to such treatment and maintained their balance during the growing season, producing small but intensely concentrated, ripe fruit - ideal ingredients. The blend is 80% Tinto del País (Tempranillo), 15% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Merlot and production, after selection; was a mere 20 hectolitres per hectare.

Hacienda Monasterio 2005 Reserva, Ribera del Duero

Corney & Barrow Score 17 to 17+

An inky plum velvet in appearance, this is immediately impressive. The nose then presents a complex combination of intense black cherries, ripe and spicy, coffeed notes, woodsmoke and crushed stone minerals. Generous and supple on attack, the palate is similarly aromatic, heady fruit layered with cream, with back notes of cedar, tobacco, dark chocolate and wild herbs. The fruit partially obscures a sturdy, firm backbone which will serve well in the mid term. This was aged in 60% new, 40% second use Alliers oak barrels for 18 months. Expressive and warming, this is a serious wine which is showing well now, with decanting, but has good ageing potential. A very good translation of the vintage.

Recommended Drinking from 2011 to 2025+

£395/case of 12, 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.

14-16 A very good to excellent wine.

16-18 An excellent to outstanding wine.

18-20 An outstanding to legendary wine.

- Wines are judged within their peer group.
- A definitive score of a young wine is almost always impossible. We usually offer a 'spread' (e.g. 14 - 16) which relates to the potential to achieve a higher mark. A + adds further to that potential.
- A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes

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