



# 2007 & 2008 Benjamin Romeo Release

## 2007 Vintage Notes

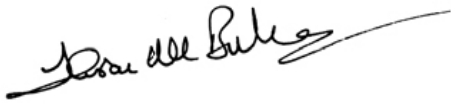
Overall 2007 was slightly drier than average. During the winter rainfall had been light, and temperatures slightly warmer than usual. In April, at the start of the growing season, it became wet and this continued into May. This served to restore much needed water reserves, avoiding hydric stress for the vines but the wet weather continued through to flowering which resulted in both failed and uneven fruit setting, *coulure* and *millerandage*, reducing potential yield. Wetter than average, spring reversed the trend set by the dry winter but it continued to be warm. July then was drier than usual just as August was slightly wetter. The uneven nature of flowering, allied to the roller coaster climate necessitated extreme care in the vineyard to keep attendant problems of mildew and oidium at bay. Even so, minor attacks further reduced yields.

Whilst technically poor fruit set is a problem, it is actually often a blessing in disguise – nature carrying out its own green harvest. This was certainly the case with the 2007 vintage. The smaller yield was better placed to take advantage of a boost in the amount of sunshine – 85% of the days at Sonsierra were totally free of cloud - optimising conditions for photosynthesis.

By the end of August all seemed set for a very good, if small, vintage but very fine weather in September, with cool nights, really enhanced the balance of the crop, which was brought in under beautiful conditions. The harvest was healthy and very ripe, large numbers of bunches with very small, spaced out grapes, well-aerated. The long ripening period, allied to a significant difference in night and daytime temperatures in September, made for a perfectly pitched balance of ripe fruit and fresh acidity.

Climatic conditions certainly did not guarantee a good result but, equally certainly, they absolutely demanded rigorous vineyard discipline, which is taken as read in every vintage at this estate. These are lovely wines which benefit greatly from Benjamin's assiduous attention to detail.

Given the short history of Benjamin's wines, their potential drinking dates are difficult to assess. Our estimates are guided by their intensity, power and structure. Our experience thus far is that they are incredibly approachable from the outset but warrant further ageing to gain in complexity. They seem to evolve very gradually and, thus far, they do not seem to close down at any stage, as so many wines do. Having now had a few vintages under our belt, we can conclude that we were somewhat conservative with our drinking dates and have extended them with this release.



**Alison Buchanan**

**Associate Director, Buying**

**June 2009**

#### **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 plus (+) adds further to that potential.
- A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes.



***Benjamin Romeo vineyards***

## **2007 Tasting Notes**

### **Predicador**

**Corney & Barrow Score 17 to 18**

**84% Tempranillo, 11% Garnacha and 3% Viura, 2% Graciano from 45 yr old vines**

Now in its third vintage, Predicador is an established favourite within the Corney & Barrow team, from its iconic label through to its distinctive style. Benjamin was unable to produce any kind of meaningful volumes until he had built his wonderful new winery. As ever his standards are extraordinarily high but with moderately higher production, lighter bottles and the re-use of the first wines' French oak barrels, he is able to lower the price. The 2007 vintage is deep jet-plum in colour, with a firm, dark cherry rim. The aromatics are warm and inviting, herb-scented black cherries to the fore. There are layers of both red and black fruit, richly textured and rather decadent, sweet and ripe yet with a lovely fresh focus throughout. This is a luscious translation of the region and vintage, supported by well-integrated, supple tannins. Enriched by 16 months in one year old oak, it offers a prolonged, elegant finish. The name, Predicador (meaning preacher) and the label are inspired by Clint Eastwood's Pale Rider – of which Benjamin is something of a fan.

**Recommended drinking from 2009 to 2017 plus**

**£180/case of 12, in bond UK**

### **La Cueva del Contador**

**Corney & Barrow Score 18**

**100% Tempranillo**

This is the second wine of Contador, a very fine wine in its own right. Almost opaque, inky-plum in colour, it is dark and brooding on the nose, presenting earthy dark fruit, wild herbs and crushed stone minerals with hints of bitter chocolate, laced by oak. The palate echoes the aromatics of the nose, spiced and opulent, powerful yet never losing a heightened freshness and a mineral layer which contribute poise and balance. This is a very lovely Cueva, wonderfully refined with opulent fruit, complemented by understated oak.

It can be enjoyed from the outset but will benefit from cellaring.

**Recommended drinking from 2013 to 2020 plus**

**£260/case of 6, in bond UK**

## **La Viña de Andres**

**Corney & Barrow Score 17 plus to 18 plus**

**100% Tempranillo**

This vineyard, planted by Benjamin's father (after whom it is named) is one single plot, planted on alluvial, chalky soil. Left to its own devices such *terroir* tends to be over productive. Benjamin rigorously persuades it otherwise – important in any vintage - but all the more so in a year like 2007. This is a jet-plum ruby in colour with a firm, bright rim. The nose is intriguing, earthy and sultry with dried black fruit on the nose and palate but there is so much more to this tightly-knit, powerful wine. There are savoury elements, a pronounced smoky character and pencil lead minerality - all of which are complemented by silken tannins. Coiled and tense, this bristles with stifled complexity, hints of which are revealed almost whimsically to entice the taster - an incredible wine which is tempting to drink in its embryonic state but warrants some time in bottle and it will age well.

**Recommended drinking from 2015 to 2025 plus**

**£415/case of 6, in bond UK**

## **Contador**

**Corney & Barrow Score 19 to 19 plus**

**94% Tempranillo, 6% Garnacha Tinta**

Lustrous jet-shot plum in colour, this is intense and fathomless. There is obvious complexity here from the outset and a restrained, innate power. The nose is rather sedate and contemplative, spicy with dark fruit complemented by wild herbs, with a heady dash of pepper. Truffles and an earthy minerality underpin the palate which is immediately seductive, dark supple cherry to the fore, with subtle tobacco and dark chocolate notes as a backdrop. As ever with Benjamin's wines, this has inordinate power yet it dances on the palate, fresh and breezy, with a lovely fresh focus.

**Recommended drinking from 2017 to 2030 plus**

**£985/case of 6, in bond UK**

## **2008 Vintage Notes**

The main challenge with the 2008 vintage in Rioja was irregular maturity, overcome by Benjamin Romeo making several staged passages through the vineyard, picking over twelve days, from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> October. Thereafter, severe selection secured a healthy crop which was cold-macerated for 40 hours before being transferred to new French oak barrels for the alcoholic fermentation.

## **2008 Tasting Notes**

### **Que Bonita Cacareaba, Rioja Blanco**

**Corney & Barrow Score 18 plus**

**36%Viura, 34%Garnacha Blanca, 30% Malvasía Riojana**

Shimmering green gold in colour, this makes a welcome sight after a year's absence. There was no 2007 produced as it did not meet Benjamin's demanding standards. The nose presents a lively combination of fresh citrus and exotic stone fruit, warm brioche and vanilla cream. The palate, echoing these aromatics, is richly textured yet poised and elegant with well-balanced acidity.

**Recommended drinking from 2009 to 2015 plus**  
**£195/case of 6, in bond UK**