

Bodegas Roda, DOCa Rioja, haro



Ro-Da is the contraction of the surnames of the two owners, Mario Rottlant and Carmen Daurella. (Note that their wonderful extra virgin olive oil, Dauro, uses their surnames' starting letters in reverse.) Since 1987, they have sought to establish a unique expression of Rioja, based on 17 different vineyards of old vines in poor soils (a mixture of sandstone and clay/limestone) all with long histories in quality Rioja wine growing. Roda's main vineyards are in the Estacion district near Haro. For the first years, no wines meeting their intentions were achieved, but Roda has successfully released wines since 1992, starting with Roda 1 and Roda (aka Roda 2, 1992-2001), which have been produced each year since, save 1993 when only Roda 2 was produced. In 1998, these were joined by the deluxe 'Cirsion' and since 2008, a young vines wine, 'Sela'.

Roda wines are essentially 'vinos de viñas viejas' (old vines wines), from vineyards 2/3 owned, and all entirely managed by Roda. In Roda's case, old vines are determined as 35 years or more, though most are 50+. The greater depth of roots and the larger volume of soil encompassed by old vines reduces the influence of drought or excess rain, balances yield and stabilises character. Old vines set smaller, more concentrated berries with much lower juice-skin ratios and more faithfully reflect the mineral nuances of soil through mature natural tannins and acid. Of late, Roda have introduced a new wine, 'Sela', which is not an old vines release. When the Roda project was set up, extensive vineyard plantings were undertaken. For many years, this material planted by Roda was sold off on the bulk grape market. Nowadays, these 20yo+ plantings, while not old vines, are mature and characterful enough to warrant a release, 'Sela'.

All wines are from dry grown bush vines with three branches pruned 'en vaso'. The vase-pruning form ventilates the plant and gives an excellent balance of light and shade for the fruit. Most of Roda's plantings are Tempranillo, but depending on the year and the wine in question, some blending with Garnacha and or Graciano is undertaken. Mazuelo was used in earlier years.

Roda's viticulture is organic, with vineyard (design-and-management) plus biological controls taking care of pests. Yields average around 30 hl/ha. Each vineyard is hand-picked several times over by Roda's own picking team. To underscore their viticultural commitment, at 550m altitude near Cubillas they maintain the Enit research vineyard of some 582 distinct cultivars of Riojan vines! This vineyard-museum was planted in 2000 after 3 years' fulltime work by a team of viticultors identifying all possible distinct cultivars of Riojan wine grapes.



Roda are obsessed with the close study of ripening, particularly phenolic ripeness, and over time this has evolved a truly unique house feel for textural tannins – not to mention a singular wine, Cirsion, entirely devoted to silky tannin expression. Their concern is to make plush, violet-velvet wines with rich fruit and full, soft tannins pushing to the margins of the fruit, but always contained within. The wines of Roda are destined for the table, and explicitly stand against the stream of (for want of a better word) ‘Parkery’ fruit and artefact bombs. As GM of Roda, Agustin Santolaya remarks, such “wines are only good for making an impression at tastings ... their strength of flavour prevents enjoying more than one glass”. Agustin claims instead that Roda’s wines “find that magic balance between volume and airiness, voluptuousness and freshness; wines for enjoying from the moment they appear on the market but which live through many decades”.



For Bodegas Roda, everything is about the production and retention of grape quality: the approach to wine through viticulture is nowhere given more commitment, managed in the vineyard by Isidro Palacios and in the bodega by oenologist Carlos Diez. The winery is built into a mountain, and is a gravity-fed free run operation (you take a freight elevator to travel down through the hill from one stage of making to another). All fruit is hand de-stemmed and cooled before a spontaneous (indigenous yeast) fermentation is in Seguin Moreau foudre - 17 large clean vats, one per vineyard. Fermentation takes 7-8 days, then there is a short maceration. Natural cold settling takes place in vat after malolactic. Each parcel ages separately until tasting for red/black spectrum and division into Roda/Roda 1 barrels. After spring there is a single assemblage racking - the young wine is gravity decanted down one level to age in French barrels, with a minimum of oxidative handling. Over time, the period spent in oak (for Roda and Roda 1) has come down from 18-20 months in earlier years, to 14-15 nowadays, and barrels are 40% new and the balance 1yo. The barrel ageing hall is climate-controlled, with a north-facing glass wall which opens to allow cold winter air in after malolactic fermentation is complete, stabilising the wine naturally. Once mature in barrel, the wines are decanted by gravity to bottle unfiltered, fined by nature.

Visiting Bodegas Roda

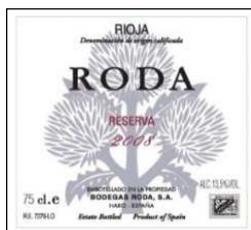
Roda is on the banks of the Rio Ebro on the outskirts of the Rioja wine capital, Haro, in the north-west corner of the appellation. There is a public visit program for tastings and tours of the fantastic bodega and grounds: go to www.roda.es and select ‘wine tourism’. While at Roda, there is a lovely art gallery “Maridajes” with a well-curated program of photographic exhibitions. There’s also a picnic area and wine bar at the base of the winery on a spectacular bend of the Ebro.

THE WINES OF BODEGAS RODA

Roda Reserva (formerly known as Roda 2)

Roda, compared to Roda 1, is based on a selection of Tempranillo which exhibits some red fruits and earth in the mix with the stricter, more structured blue-note Tempranillo which becomes Roda 1. Roda is a wine of great depth, tannin texture and class but in a relatively fruity and approachable register. This tendency towards open-hearted red fruit and earth is augmented with judicious blending, depending on the year, of some Garnacha and/or Graciano. Roda is grown from vines between 35-100 years' age, all dry grown 'en vaso'. Hand picked, hand everything, it is fermented in open foudre, gravity decanted to age 15 months in new+1yo French barrique, then gravity-decanted again for bottling (unfiltered, unfinned) and cellar ageing before release. The garnacha component of Roda's wines comes from separate vineyards in Rioja Baja, at Tuldellilla and Alcanadre.

RODA Reserva 2012



The aroma of RODA is a fine cocktail of berry, bramble, spice, earth and licorice. As always with Roda, beautiful fruit tannins are a big part of the picture, and the tannin perfume (and mineral smells) are as much a feature of the wine as fruit itself. The palate is full, lined with spice, leavened with pippy acid and tannins that are at once round and fresh. The wine is open and alive, with harmony a real feature: red fruits are floral with a touch of tea; not too fruity, and perfectly lined by delicately spiced tannin.

Roda 1 Reserva

100% Tempranillo. As Agustin says, "It is a wine with more structure, with deeper sensations of black fruits, greater wealth of minerals and more complexity. It is a wine for quietness and meditation with a style marked by black cherry." Roda 1 is handled identically to Roda, but the blue-note fruit has a heightened minerality with fine but determined structure resulting from great tannin maturity. The differences between Roda and Roda 1 are simply the product of fruit selection, not wine-making. It's a wine of power with enormous finesse.

RODA 1 Reserva 2010



A deep and mineral nose, this has dark, gamey-meaty fruit inset with vanilla, licorice, blue florals and soft dark spices. The palate is just sooooo long, with wonderfully harnessed power. There's great spice in fruit of restrained fleshiness, blackberry carrying licorice, leather and steely minerals into a finish of great finesse. Savoury and deeply textural thanks to lovely sweet seeds and very fine silty tannins. The back-palate floral perfume release is spectacular. This is by far the most fluid and open, delicate and flowing Roda 1 I have yet seen.

Roda 'Sela'



Sela is Roda's younger plantings, established in the late 80s at the inception of the Roda project. These three vineyards are north of Haro towards Villalba. Until now, this great young material was simply sold off on the bulk fruit market. Now, these vineyards are nicely mature and deserving release in their own right, but not yet qualifying as Roda or Roda 1 fruit, thanks to Roda's insistence that these are only to be old vine (35 years or more) wines. 'Sela' maintains Roda's hallmark of elegance and tannin fineness. 89% Tempranillo, 11% Graciano from sustainable vineyards, crianza of 12 months in used oak. The vines were 'tutored' on poles for their first 12 years, then released to be true bush-vines trained 'en vaso'. The name is not a Rioja reference: Sela is named for the Scandinavian village where owner Mario Rottlant goes for ski holidays.

Roda 'Sela' 2013

Scrubby and springy with Rioja herb foremost, sweet caponata-fleshy vegetals, red-radishy fruits, strawberry florals. The palate is just mid-weight, with softly extracted fleshy tannins.

Roda 'Cirsion'



First released in 1998, Cirsion is Roda's in-vineyard tannin selection project. Cirsion (latin for the thistle, which is Roda's logo) is based on a theory of tannin development in perfect old vine Tempranillo. Under exceptional conditions (not mere hyper-ripening), Roda are able to identify very small parcels which naturally exhibit 'long-chain' (ie 'wine-like') tannins in berry, rather than the more usual model of softening shorter brittle tannins with barrel and bottle maturation.

This should not connote a soft-fruity-round wine, however. Cirsion is a very serious, concentrated, complex, powerful beast – but this power, extract and expression is amazingly harnessed by the full, unbelievably supple tannin structure. A 'grand cru' anywhere in the world. 100% Tempranillo.

RODA 'Cirsion' 2012

Black, charry, with tobacco, violet, meat, lilac, angelica. Tremendously meaty, beautifully cut. A swirling, textural dream of a wine.



RODA VINTAGE CHART

VINTAGE 2010

An excellent vintage. 440 mm rainfall during the growing season. The winter was wet, early spring was dry and there was plenty of rain during the flowering season which caused millerandage and in turn resulted in open and well-aired clusters. July and August were very dry. There was virtually no rain, no phytosanitary problems. Some light rains in September and October that allowed an excellent, although rather small harvest. Temperatures were well below those of 2009 and the whole cycle was slower, with a delay of about 10 days. It was a cooler vintage, which left its mark of freshness and elegance in the wines.

VINTAGE 2009

Rainy winter-spring, 419 mm rainfall Nov '08-Oct '09. The vintage started with good water reserves. A very hot and dry summer. Maximum temperatures between 35 and 37 °C. The balanced vineyards managed to endure the lack of rain. Some rainfall in mid-September which rounded ripening and put an end to water stress. Fantastic weather in lead-in to an excellent harvest.

VINTAGE 2008

An Atlantic vintage. A very dry winter, with only 73 mm rainfall from Nov '07 - Feb '08. Spring arrived with rain and in May it rained all month. Between March and June there was 443mm rainfall, which matches the total yearly rainfall in La Rioja many years, with 206 mm just in May. During the summer there was virtually no rain, only 44 mm were collected between July and September. Not a single raindrop in August. The peculiarity of the summer, in addition to drought was the cold weather, little sunshine and cool temperatures. Fortunately, autumn was spectacular, with sunny days and cool nights. A very late harvest, healthy grapes with excellent acidity, good ripeness, although containing less sugar. The wines are lighter than other vintages, yet full of life.

VINTAGE 2007

The year of mildew!?? Widespread outbreak in Spring reduced harvest, but dry and sunny weather in Summer and Autumn led to remarkable maturity in a late harvest of limited production and very high productivity. 627mm rainfall, but only 5mm from July.

VINTAGE 2006

A year with more rain than normal, but it came when it was most necessary: 587mm total, but 204 of this was immediately after the 2005 harvest. Good bud-burst, then the beginning of the summer was very stormy; August was very dry and fresh, September quite warm.

The grapes harvested that year were perfect and produced elegant Roda wines.

VINTAGE 2005

Outstanding vintage until October 12th when rains appeared. Rainfall from Nov '04 to Oct '05, 463 mm. Dry, warm summer. Perfect ripening in September with moderate temperatures, cold nights.

VINTAGE 2004

The miraculous vintage. Wet winter, rainfall Nov '03 to Oct '04, 445mm. Good budburst. Storms in August, some hail during August 2nd and 3rd. In September, storms and heat caused botrytis (September 1st – 10th). From September 11th to the end of the harvest time, dry and sunny weather with north winds drying the rot out. Warm days and cold nights.

VINTAGE 2003

Very rainy and snowy winter completed 2002. 529mm rainfall from November '02 to October '03. Excellent Spring with great bud-burst, then historically hot summer causing high water demand in the vines. 40 °C in the shade on August 13th. Old bush trained vines performed well. Rains during the first half of September gave relief, and the harvest went well.

VINTAGE 2002

Unusual cycle. Very heterogeneous. Low yields caused by a small budburst. Rainfall from November '01 to October '02, 523mm. Drought in winter, very cold (as low as -15 °C). Frost in April, bad flowering. Rainy August. Rainy Harvesting time.

VINTAGE 2001

Outstanding vintage. Perfect ripeness. Rainfall from November '00 to October '01 was 473mm. Very rainy winter, dry and warm spring. Imperfect flowering, loose bunches as a consequence. Enough humidity in the summer time. Excellent autumn.

VINTAGE 2000

Very rainy winter, normal weather in the spring, severe drought in summer. 14 days over 30 °C. Rainfall from November '99 to October '00 was 482mm. Outstanding response from the vines with a deep root-system, especially the old ones with low yields.

VINTAGE 1999

The year of the short cycle. 36 days with temperatures below 0 °C during winter. Rainfall from November '98 to October '99 was 478mm. Severe frost on April 16th, reaching -4.5 °C devastated the region. Rains in September followed by a dry October. Very low yields. Exorbitant prices of the grapes. (The grapes from frozen vines had a better quality because their yield was lower)

VINTAGE 1998

Hot summer, drought year. September rainy, October dry. Rainfall from Nov '97 to Oct '98, 517mm

VINTAGE 1997

Irregular year which demanded a thorough selection. Very cold and rainy year. Plenty of vegetation. Rainfall from November '96 to October '97, 574mm. The '97 vintage in Rioja was bad as a whole, although very good until September. September was a month dominated by heavy rains and in those regions where the grapes had high maturity levels and sugar, botrytis developed. The fear of botrytis led to much early picking, obtaining wines with low alcohol content, body and extract. However, October was dry and sunny. Roda focused on obtaining grapes from old vines in southern Rioja and on delaying harvest. The wine from those old vineyards was of excellent quality, worthy of RODA I. On the other hand, wines made from the northern vineyards suffered excess vigour then rain during maturation, did not reach the desired quality level and were sold off (after 2 years' ageing.)

VINTAGE 1996

Irregular bud-burst. Very good conditions throughout. Plentiful but well distributed rainfall Nov '95 - Oct '96 was 537mm. Healthy grapes, after a good September and October. Badly Brett-affected.

VINTAGE 1995

Quality with high yields. Perfect distribution of rainfall. The rainfall from November '94 to October '95 was 465 mm. Outstanding harvesting time. Dry October (5mm of rain). Difficult fermentation due to the high temperatures outside.

VINTAGE 1994

Very dry year, healthy grapes. Light frost on April 13th. Rainfall from Nov '93 to Oct '94, 410mm. Severe Summer drought relieved by 36mm of rain on September 23rd. Grapes recovered hydration.

VINTAGE 1993

Only produced Roda II, there were no grapes for Roda I.

VINTAGE 1992

Atlantic vintage. Very rainy year and less sun. Rainfall from November '91 to October '92 was 731mm. In June 165mm and in October 150mm. Rainy harvest time.

HISTORICAL TASTING NOTES ARRANGED BY WINE

CIRSION

RODA 'Cirsion' 2010

Arrowroot succotash bark anise medicinal herbs, elsuperbalsmico! Red cherry, violet, great tannins, nutty, spicy-soft controlled richness. Yumme!

2009 Roda Cirsion

Black, charry, with tobacco, violet, meat, lilac, angelica. Tremendously meaty, beautifully cut. Swirling, textural dream of a wine.

2007 Roda Cirsion

Raw tobacco, game, bbq meat, adobe, anise, fresh blueberry pie and cloves mingle in an unbelievably complex nose. Dense at first, as you swirl and add air it rises up, lightens, pretty and enlivened. BIG?? Its feet never seem to hit the ground, a dancing, rising, rain-shower of Tempranillo in the mouth, shimmering satiny beet juice spiced with clove.

2006 Roda Cirsion

Power and complexity, surprising subtlety. Tarry, salty, kelpy, dieselly dark hung meat and blackberry fruit with black bean and pimiento, is powerful, sure, but has drive and torque with fantastic spice-oak-tannin integration.

SELA

Roda 'Sela' 2012

Field herbs, soft, round tannins are nicely rustic, with a nice squareness which sits the wine up in the mouth, pert and relaxed, it then folds out slowly to a gentle finish.

RODA 'Sela' 2011

Dark, but not heavy - in fact incredibly limber – this typical 2011 is aromatically direct but also very deft. A quite electric nose has the hessian tannin smell of Rioja, choc-carob, anise rings, glace fruits of forest and squeaky plums. It has the wonderful long-tube-effect typical of '11s: long and fine and open, elegant and uncluttered, with both lovely tannin maturity and great freshness. The best 2011s combines the open developed nature of a 2009 and the zip and reach of a 2010 and surpass both of those wonderful vintages.

RODA 'Sela' 2010

Berry-bright, fresh and foresty with raspberry and blackberry, herbs, foresty undergrowth and creamy oak, it's a mid-weight charmer. A bit of fruit volume to get things going on entry, with really good snap and crunch to finish. In between, wild berries, neat oak, plenty of spice; fresh and tasty.

RODA 'Sela' 2009

Aromatically, the second release of 'Sela' is highly expressive with well-defined fruit character and fresh red berry-cherry, rosehip, chocolate, tobacco and five-spice complexities. Very fresh, lively and flavoursome, with fine silky tannin. It sits between Roda and Roda 1 in style and flavour set, with the elegant line of Roda 1 and the fresh berry ease of Roda.

2008 Roda 'Sela'

Aromatically 'Sela' is highly expressive with well-defined fruit character and fresh red berry-cherry, rosehip, chocolate, tobacco and fivespice complexities. A mouthful of lovely fresh fruit with a cool, mineral finish and fine tannin giving silkiness. Well integrated oak gives subtle richness against a background of spicy florals. Tempranillo, 4% Graciano

RODA/RODA 2

RODA Reserva 2010

Cruisy, essential, long and effortless in the way of 2010s, this is a wine of perfectly natural, integral structure, carrying red-black lozenge fruits that are succulent and springy-soft with a nice crunch at the rim. All is gathered from the get-go: juice, steeliness, leafy relief and springy tannin look as if somehow they were made tight and then just loosened off a half-turn so all is both directional yet tranquil. There's a lovely lingering trace of fennel and a touch of pepper in the softly-spiced finish.

RODA Reserva 2009

(Note on release in Spain.) Liqueurous, fleshy red berries with lots of minerality, earth and meat complexors. The plush and pippy, red-meets-blue purple-perfumed round fruit rolls out on a solid line of fat round tannins, nutty and balsamic. A palate of wonderful balance and harmony. Stunning combination of generosity and restraint.

Roda Reserva 2009

(Note on arrival in Australia.) Lovely fresh soil aromas, and touches of bitter chocolate lead on the nose of this Reserva which is barely handled. with deep gentle red fruit studded with carob, wood-spice, betel. Richer and rounder, presenting further up in the mouth, but utterly savoury too - there's no sense in which this is a "New World Fruit Bomb", ultra-ripe-pick or new-sweet-oak-driven type of thing. The front palate plushness is totally savoury for starters, and glides out on a silken

tannin raft which gets nuttier down the line of the back palate and totally controls the oak which is built in and gently grips towards the end under the effortless drive of the fruit tannin. Gently it releases into a little tannin-spiced-acid natural perfume cloud at aftertaste, giving a delightful linger.

RODA Reserva 2008

Fresh, clean and pure red berry fruit is dancy but embedded in a buzz of mineral, cola, tobacco and anise, gloved by husky-nutty spice, walnut outers mingling with cardamom, and a subtle but unmistakable sense of the grapeskins which Roda value even above the juice. Laded with raspberry, strawberry, loganberry, a touch of blackberry and cranberry tannins, but by no means simply a fruit wine, with plenty of earth and game. Wood and winemaking are imperceptible. Reflecting both the vintage and this wine's fundamental character, Roda 08 has an easy red berry juice expression and is very lively and fresh, despite the great depth and textural complexity which are typically present. A wine of outstanding harmony, already expressive and complex, with a great future ahead. 2008 Roda is 13.5% a/v, 90% Tempranillo, 6% Graciano, 4% Garnacha.

2008 Roda Reserva

Very complex florals, violet, lavender, honey and rose, red cherry lipstick, loganberry; the palate leads with some glyceric richness and finishes with glorious fresh acidity, and in between sappy cherry runs with meat, tobacco, balsalm.

2007 Roda Reserva

Typical forest fruits and forest mulch, tobacco, husky-spicy mixed in a creamy-nutty-spicy palate.

2006 Roda Reserva

Typical Roda descriptors on the nose: red bean paste, forest mulch, tobacco, violets, nut husk ... the red+black fruits palate continues with amazing freshness and balance. It's less creamy on palate than say the very good 05s we've just worked with, a nice sense of crispness works into the back stretch where fine oak, natural acid, a long mineral flourish, Roda's trademark amazing velvet fruit tannins and a boof of purple florals all feature in a quiet riot. Composed, sensual and taut, packed with complex flavour and textures, it's a supremely delicate and deft wine. This year, Roda is 97% Tempranillo and a little Graciano.

Roda Reserva 2006

Typical Roda descriptors on the nose: red bean paste, forest mulch, tobacco, violets, nut husk ... the red+black fruits palate continues with amazing freshness and balance. It's less creamy on palate than say the very good 05s we've just worked with, a nice sense of crispness works into the back stretch where fine oak, natural acid, a long mineral flourish, Roda's trademark amazing velvet fruit tannins and a boof of purple florals all feature in a quiet riot. Composed, sensual and taut, packed with complex flavour and textures, it's a supremely delicate and deft wine. This year, Roda is 97% Tempranillo and a little Graciano.

RODA Reserva 2005

Deeply foresty, with fores fruits, both briary and bright, and an underlying carnal beastliness. Its lush, soft earthy berry fruits gain savouriness down the palate, the sweet, ripe pipiness melds with fine rounded tannins and bright, natural acid energy at back.

Roda Reserva 2005

Leads with dark-nutty aromatics which unfold to smokey-sweet cherry with the usual Roda complexors: betel/cacao/blue florals, black bean, cola, animal skin, and a lash of minerals over pencil case oak. Dense, black overall, but fresh and lissome with terrific juice/savoury structure interplay. A serious wine with a lot of subtle razzle-dazzle and life. Mineral-acid nerve leavens all, and this will be a wonderful wine for a long time. Manages both heaps of individuality and overall harmony within a savoury structure. 9% Graciano, 6% Garnacha.

RODA 2004

Slinky, darker and nuttier than some Rodas, sweet smoky cherry, loganberry a touch of betel, cacao, game. In the mouth, a lower profile, less glyceric Roda than most, with long fine tannin through very nice bright red-purple fruit, cherry front, floral at back.

RODA 2003

Balanced, very even palate with a great spice profile – easily the spiciest Roda (aka Roda 2) yet. A remarkably fine, almost pretty wine from the hot, dry 2003 vintage. Leads with cherry pie, earth and dried flowers, cacao, betel nut, cedar. Long palate, great concentration, with nice mature balsamic note moderating creamy juicy fruit. Opens nicely in the mouth, red-meets-purple fruit - generous, harmonious, seamless.

RODA 2002

Formerly called Roda 2, now just Roda, this is tempranillo with a little garnacha, graciano and mazuelo; this blend is intended to produce a somewhat more forward wine, ideal for current restaurant consumption, with cellar potential of 5-10 years. 2002 is a 'maritime' vintage, but entirely free of any green, thin, unripe character due to the cold wet vintage – thanks to altitude and high care viticulture. This Roda is mid-weight, with slinky fruit and fruit tannins, elegant with a neat, nutty, creamed chocolate and spice finish. There's plenty of trademark licorice in an even-tempered long palate, as usual featuring great fruit tannins.

RODA 2 2001

Aromas of cola, some briar and marzipan - deeply earthy with typically plush 'feel' to aromatics. Palate is elegant, extremely long and very well integrated, with wonderful quiet concentration. Extraordinarily velvety, due to Roda's trademark plush fruit tannins. Ripe fleshy berries gain a host of complexing flavours: cacao, coffee, forest, spice, raw pepper, mahogany. Texturally, it has a lovely open weave, and a waft of earth perfume to end.

RODA 1

RODA 1 Reserva 2011

Very 'present' in the way of good 2011s. Blueberry skinsy fruit has cola, dark dark blue flowers, cold rocks and a sense of huskiness from tannin smells. The vibrant energy and directness on nose follows in the mouth, which is open but not broad and expresses with a refined animality.

RODA 1 Reserva 2009

Rounded and mature tannins, the hallmark of 2009, drive the show here. Blueberry, leather, cola, graphite, kelp, soy, angelica, mace - literally lashings of blue fruit+mineral perfume. Fruit sweetness is tempered by florals and spice. Nice mineral studding stops the wine being overly smooth and rounded. Licorice runs through jubey fruit along with a big slab of ferrous minerality. Swishy and very fine, with extra-good oak integration. This is a generous, stylish, very delicious Roda 1, and utterly composed - juice, spice, earth, oak, acid all run together.

Roda 1 Reserva 2008

Almost classical Bordeaux pencil case, it carries a jumble of currant and licorice then morphs and releases into a soft blend of meat glaze, wood spice and balsam and the tells of Roda 1: tobacco and road metal mineral blue notes. Always longer and more reserved ("tighter" never seems exactly right though) than Roda, the 2008 Roda 1 is slinky, long gentle and fine but with a lovely grit-and-twist in the back half where acidity, subtle volatility wood and more combine in complex harmony. Perhaps not showing the early profundity of many vintages, certainly gloriously accessible now and I would tip it to grow and age surprisingly well.

RODA 1 Reserva 2007

Typical deep, dark, earthy register of Roda 1, with a nice fresh lift. Dark blackberry and glaze fruits of the forest with briar are woven through with anise ring, carob, tobacco and walnut husk into an

aromatic whole which is subtle and harmonious. In the mouth, there's a strong entry line of cold dark mineral rockiness accompanying the terrific juiciness, and these slide down into leathery tannins and a slow release to freshening acidity and blossoming perfumes at finish. This wine always reserves a little mystery while young, and yet presents with composure – there's no sense of “the oak will harmonise with time” and other mythologies of clunkier wines. Subtle smells of the Riojan countryside herb set rise up out of the gamey-hide aromas ensuring an exact sense of place. The best Ribera and Toro wines may share Roda 1's violets, but they do not smell of lavender and dried sage as great Rioja does. There's nothing about this wine that seems 'made', it's a priori all the way baby; pure, effortless and grand in the least showy of ways. Juice, oak, tannin and acid are all interleaved, at one ... there's an imbued minerality as the true core within - the Om of Rioja, and the power suffuses into heathery lightness.

2007 Roda 1 Reserva

Forestly, herbal and licoricey, meaty, dark lozenge fruit. Firm palate allows a surprisingly easy passage, lots of tobacco, nutmeg and extremely mineral. Well built with very good balance.

2006 Roda 1 Reserva

All blue-black and sooo beautiful to smell: animale meat'n'blood, plus road metal minerals gain pretty violets and a lash of mineral. The palate features astonishing tannin maturity, great spiciness with fine spicy oak tucked way in at the back, while the fruit runs in the plum and cola range, with black pepper and nutmeg. It's power with enormous finesse. Great mouth perfume is driven by wonderfully mature tannin.

Roda 1 Reserva 2006

All blue-black and sooo beautiful to smell: black animale meat'n'blood, plus road metal minerals gain pretty violet/neroli florals and a lash of mineral. The palate features astonishing tannin maturity, great spiciness with fine fine oak tucked way in at the back, while the fruit runs in the plum and cola range. It's power with enormous finesse and unfolds like a perfectly told story. Really wonderful wine, 100% Tempranillo.

Roda 1 Reserva 2005

The Tempranillo for Roda 1 is all about action in the blue note spectrum, expect licorice, violet, dark cherry, tobacco, gun-metal and the like. Subtle, extremely fine nose of plumskin-blueberry, black bean and liqueur dark cherry with tobacco, licorice, bitumen and lilac floral. Above all the perfume of fruit tannin itself! Great balance, a wine more about harmony than size: creamy fruit leads to nice spice, foresty mulberry and blueberry turns to firm minerals and a final release of bluenote perfume in the mouth. Exceptional Integration and length.

RODA 1 2004

Pure blue note: licorice, black bean, blueberry, plumskin, lilac, warm bitumen with thistly-dried vegetal herbs and so on. Creaminess thoroughly cut with firm minerals and a bluenote perfume. Long, fine, mid-weight.

RODA 1 2003

Blue florals lead, then comes the mineral-steel (gun barrel) aromatics, black bean and black jellybean and some tobacco, blackberry, black cherry, sars. Well-defined with a particularly good finish, featuring soft, sweet, very dark spices. Lush, floral and well structured – typical Roda 1. Seamless, warmer and rounder than usual with nice dab of slate tidying the end.

Roda 1 Reserva 2003

Beefstock, briar and licorice, developed leather-and-earth aromas repeat perfectly on the palate, which is sweet-and-sour tannin-acid wrapped around soft cherry-choc fruit and lovely tobacco and herb flush at end.

RODA 1 2002

Very juicy, with a palate of mixed red-blue-black fruits. Silky with great definition – clean, ripe natural fruit tannin and acid in perfect harmony with clean oak. Smells a riot of standout tempranillo action: peony/violet, cold tea, cola, plumskin, and gamey hide. Less glyceric than recent vintages, as one would expect, but very good balance, with a slug of white pepper, mineral and anise in a long, spicy finish. The wine shows lovely balance, albeit most likely an early drinker. Roda's trademark tannins are supple with fruit tannin playing as large a part in the wine as the refined wood. Quite simply a ripper drink that delivers now what many would hope for in a well-aged very expensive Burgundy - stunning.

Roda 1 Reserva 2001

Fine meat and sandalwood, floral, anise-spiced, absolutely perfect and resolved.

RODA 1 2001

Smells of licorice, ripe earthiness, moccha. Absolutely bursting with plush, luxuriant dark fruit, edged with dried native pepper pods, beefy and minerally, with subtle violets. With breathing, these typical, but extraordinary Tempranillo aromatics flourish to anise jube, blueberry'n'blood and decadent florals ... sorta purple and black smelling at the same time. Rich and dry, the palate has immediate cherry, dark chocolate, coffee and well integrated oak on a terroir slat - highly minerally ... earth, stone, anise and kelp. The full front palate rips with fruit exuberance and then pulls back and down with a blast of warm dry spice to flourish complexity over its oak/acid spine. Aftertaste is gravelly, with mineral-inflected dark fruit, dried spice, ripe acidity and leathery tannin memory. Extremely long and of great balance, complex mouthfeel and perfume.

1999 RODA 1 RESERVA

A beautiful expression of a cool, relatively light vintage. Earth, succulence, spice.

1997 RODA 1 RESERVA

Fabulous wine from a diabolical vintage. Rain, lack of summer heat ...). This, however, is the result of very rigorously nurtured and selected fruit handled perfectly. The dry, beautifully drained soils on which Roda's old vine farming takes place certainly helped too. Radical fruit selection, utter dedication in the field ... and a successful, pretty wine. Dig the varietal core of cola/berry run through with licorice, minerals, bramble, dark truffle, mahogany, florals, sweet dark earth ... & trademark Roda fruit tannins. Long, expressive, fresh finish.

Roda 1 Reserva 1997

Crunchy-claret-red, very fine and focused, old wood and red florals; a bit fuller, softer and rounder, nicely metal-mineral, with sweet-sour textural interest. Not as long or great as 95 and 01, but really delicious and successful.

1996 RODA 1 RESERVA

Baked adobe, spice-vegetal-berry mix, subtle with some background game, heather, violet, cherry-chocolate. Hints of alcohol, volatility and rusticity harmonise. Long fine and very well balanced, very even, tannins perfectly built throughout on a wine which doesn't really start or finish, dancy, ethereal and 'there'. Elegant, persistent, stylish, balanced

Roda 1 Reserva 1995

Shrooms, marzipan, nicely spiced leather, cabinet polish and wonderful old flowers; great metal-minerals flow through elegant fruit and tannins/oak are perfectly resolved within. Delicious, mature, will hold for plenty yet. After a while these just become deep, sweet, fennel-earth-herb mature wines of earth-memory perfumes ... Light in body, deeply perfumed, utterly earthy in a delicate, lingering with just a touch of brick and dust, terracotta memories.

