

Comic hopes to unseat Chávez

The Venezuelan opposition's dreary struggle to unseat President Hugo Chávez has been galvanized by Benjamín Rausseo, alias the Count of Guácharo. Best known for his raunchy sense of humour, the Count has announced his candidacy in December's presidential election

■ **Jan 26, 1961:**
Benjamín Rausseo
born into poor family
in Musipán,
Monagas State

■ **1972:** Leaves
school, works as
shoeshine boy to
support his five
younger brothers

■ **1975-80:**
Orphaned at age 14,
Rausseo moves with
his brothers to
Caracas and finishes his schooling.
Working as a taxi driver and waiter, he
begins taking acting classes at night

■ **1981:** Presents as his graduation
thesis a comic monologue **el Conde
del Guácharo. The Count** becomes
a TV personality and instantly makes
Rausseo one of Venezuela's most
successful stand-up comedians

■ **1980s-90s:** Builds
business empire –
**Guacharo's
Enterprises** –
which includes
theme parks, hotels, restaurants and
recording studios. Rausseo becomes
self-made millionaire



■ **1998:**
Votes for
outsider
Chávez
(inset) in
presidential
election

■ **2005:** Rausseo
studies law at
Universidad Santa
María de Caracas.
He jokes that the
reason he wants to
become a lawyer is

**“to know how it feels to be such a
cold-hearted bastard”**

■ **Jul 2006:** Rausseo announces on
TV that he is running for president
under his newly-formed **Piedra Party**



His Spanish campaign slogan, **Vota
Piedra**, is a play on words with the
double meaning **vote for the party**
and **get angry** – apparently at Chavez
and the situation in the country

■ **Policies:** Combat crime, create jobs,
win trust of foreign investors, redirect
Venezuela's \$83 billion oil revenues
from military to domestic spending

