

Château d'Yquem 2017

CSPC# 831393

375mlx3

14.2% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

75% *Sémillon*, 25% *Sauvignon Blanc*

Appellation

Sauternes

Classification

1er Cru Supérieur

Website

<http://yquem.fr/int-en/>

General Info

1er Cru Supérieur. Admired in the whole world since the 18th Century, Château d'Yquem remains the greatest of the great sweet Bordeaux wines. Centuries after centuries, the Château has always kept faithful to an ideal of perfection, even at the darkest hours of the 20th century when people came to a disaffection for this kind of wine. In 1999, people feared that this constant solidity would collapse due to divisions in the Lur Saluces' family and the sale of the Alexandre de Lur Saluces's shares to the luxury group LVMH, but it did not. Today, the tandem Alexandre de Lur Saluces - Bernard Arnault seems to work wonderfully and the working methods have not been called into question. Yquem remains the Bordeaux symbol of perfection and tradition. Exceptional fact in Bordeaux, the wine stays in general three years and a half in new wood barrels for maturing, before being proposed on the market. Its refinement, the exquisite perfection of its balance and its power do not have an equivalent. The great vintages (1937, 1950, 1995...) offer the plenitude whose any wine amateur dreams of.

The great sweet wines of Bordeaux, Sauternes, are among the most decadent, complex and simply enjoyable wines. Based on a blend of Semillon and Sauvignon Blanc that has been infected with the "noble rot", *Botrytis Cinerea*, Sauternes are rich, honied wines bursting with notes of vanilla, coconut, dried apricots and subtle spice tones. They are usually very sweet and rich with a soft quality to them that makes them appealing in their youth, yet they can age and improve for decades. The neighboring village of Barsac frequently makes wines comparable to those of Sauternes.

Winemaker

Alexandre de Lur Saluces and Bernard Arnault

Vintage

The early part of winter was cold and very dry. Warmer temperatures and rain returned in February and the weather in March led to a quick start to vegetative growth. The most significant event of spring 2017 occurred in late April when frost struck to a degree that had not been seen since 1991. Miraculously, temperatures did not go below the freezing point at Château d'Yquem, so the vines were spared an impact.

To add insult to injury, the summer of 2017 was the 4th hottest since 1897 which meant the growing season was a good month ahead of average, an advance that reached a peak on about the 20th of June. This meant records were broken again when picking began earlier than ever before, on the 16th of August, and both grape varieties managed to uniformly ripen in late August and in perfect condition.

In summary, 2017 was a brilliant year with total botrytis and tremendous concentration that called for very specific sorting techniques to stay within the parameters defined by Chateau Yquem.

Vineyards

This property is beautifully placed at hilltop in Sauternes commune, with its 103-ha big vineyard (clay and gravel on the surface and lime stones in the subsoil), planted with 80% Semillon and 20% Sauvignon Blanc. The average age of vines is 27 years and the yield does not exceed 10 hl/ha.

Harvest

The fruit was picked in two dry and warm windows between 26 September and 14 October.

Maturation

The wine matures for 3.5 years in new barrels. Neither chaptalization nor other techniques, which increase sugar content in grape must, are allowed. D'Yquem is one of the very few properties in the district, to use both semi-botrytized and fully botrytized grapes for the wine, in order to have enough acidity to balance sweetness.



Tasting Notes	The tannins and phenolic tension are very impressive to this. Dried-lemon undertones and burning botrytis. Full-to medium-bodied, linear and racy. Beautiful fruit and intensity.
Serve with	Foie gras, terrines, blue cheese, tarte tatin, crepes Suzette or duck with orange, but it will also be perfect for peach and apricot pies, cooked apples, creme brûlée with candied fruit, caramel cream and orange and pineapple parfait.
Serve with	
Production	4,166 cases made.”
Cellaring	Drink 2025-2045
Scores/Awards	<p>96 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2020</p> <p>97-99 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate #236 - April 2018</p> <p>99 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2020</p> <p>98-99 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2018</p> <p>18 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - September 2018</p> <p>18.5 points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2018</p> <p>96 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2018</p> <p>99 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2018</p> <p>97 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2020</p> <p>95-97 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - May 2018</p> <p>19+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2018</p>
Reviews	<p><i>“Very flattering and unctuous in feel, with coconut, creamed papaya, toasted hazelnut and warmed peach and tangerine cream flavors gliding along in unison, all framed by warm brioche and piecrust notes on the finish. Remarkably rich, yet poised and pure. Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc. Best from 2025 through 2045. 4,166 cases made.”</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>“There was no frost at d’Yquem in 2017, and botrytis was very regular and even this vintage. The nose opens with very pure notes of freshly sliced oranges, yuzu and lemon barley water with hints of white pepper, fresh ginger and lime cordial. The incredibly rich, unctuous sweetness (148 grams per liter of residual sugar) is beautifully marbled with bright, vivacious citrus fruit and spice flavors, while lifted by well-knit freshness, and it finishes with epic length and great depth.”</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>“This is a great Yquem, delivering thrilling purity and intensity. The nose offers intense aromas of fresh and dried apricot and peach pastry, as well as freshly baked creme brûlée, candied and fresh orange and kumquat. Some marmalade, too. Smooth, glossy texture with flavors of grilled orange, dried apricot and an exceptionally long finish with a powerful, driving push to the end. A flicker of toasty-oak influence arrives late, but this wine has completely consumed the oak. The 2017 Yquem is a very powerful wine from a very rich and exceptional vintage. The acidity has a big hand in balancing the richness. Pithy finish. The phenolics deliver some great depth. Rain at the beginning of September prompted an extensive infection of noble rot. The harvest lasted from September 26 to October 13. Great quality and one of the best since the legendary 2001. Drink or hold.”</i></p> <p>- JS, JamesSuckling.com</p> <p><i>“The tannins and phenolic tension are very impressive to this. Dried-lemon undertones and burning botrytis. Full-to medium-bodied, linear and racy. Beautiful fruit and intensity. Such clarity. Extreme but wonderful style.”</i></p> <p>- JS, JamesSuckling.com</p> <p><i>“75% Sémillon, 25% Sauvignon Blanc. The early part of winter was cold and very dry. Warmer temperatures and rain returned in February and the weather in March led to a quick start to vegetative growth. The most significant event of spring 2017 occurred in late April when frost struck to a degree that had not been seen since 1991. Miraculously, the temperature did not go below freezing at Château d’Yquem. Only a few vines on the fringes suffered, with little effect on the crop. In early May, a period of fine warm weather set in, with periodic showers. The summer of 2017 was the fourth hottest since 1897. The growing season was a good month ahead of average, an advance that reached a peak on about 20 June. Harvest 16 August to 13 October. Mid straw. Waxy nose with some savoury quality. Lovely combination of freshness and beeswax. Toasty edge. Racy energy. This is the sort of Yquem that could be drunk as an aperitif. Not too heavy, not too sweet, but definitely Yquem. Even slightly dry on the end! Good purity and lemon zest plus round sweetness. Very brisk.”</i></p> <p>- JR, JancisRobinson.com</p>

Reviews

“Only a few vines on the fringes were frosted. Rain in the first half of September promoted botrytis and stopped before it became a problem. Concentration was very fast thereafter and picking had to be fast too because of the rising sugar levels. The main picking was 26 September to 9 October. RS 148 g/l, TA 6 g/l, pH 3.8. Total production was up but strict selection was essential. 80,000 bottles produced. Rich, creamy-almond nose, almond paste, ripe pears, apricot more than bitter orange. The first impression showed less immediate botrytis than I expected, it smells so creamy. Fills the mouth with sweetness and a light peppery spice. As it opens up, there's pineapple and bitter orange flavours emerge. Viscous texture and such concentration that it fills your mouth even after spitting. Unctuous but balanced by the bitter-orange freshness on the long finish. 13.9% Drink 2027-2047”

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

“To overcome the gap between the dry white harvest (16-25 August, even earlier than in 2003) and the noble rot harvest (20 September to 14 October), the team began by picking their best plots on the cooler clay terroirs to ensure maximum freshness. They have expertly managed to retain a beautiful focus, showing pared back but fleshy white peach and pear notes, saffron, white pepper, subtle gun smoke and slate, followed by a fantastic kick of ginger through the mid palate and beyond. There was no frost impact here, but they were still very strict in the blending, using just 45% of their 17hl/ha crop. This wine has a fairly high 148g/l of residual sugar, with TA6 and 3.8pH (compared to 3.65pH in 2015). They expect to carry out long oak ageing to add structure and to balance the sugars. Expect 80,000 bottles of Yquem. (Drink between 2020-2042)”

- JA, Decanter.com

“Crisp notes of vanilla, marzipan, pineapple, mango, orange rind, flowers, and candied apricot are right there, as soon as wine the moves from the bottle to your glass. On the palate, the wine is full-bodied, fresh, sweet, ripe and zippy. There is length, purity and precision. The lingering pineapple, apricot and sweet, lemon curd on your palate gets life from the jolt of racy acidity that runs down the middle. This is a top vintage for Chateau d'Yquem that is defined by its vibrant, freshness. What made 2017 so good, is the speed in which the sugar levels reached maximum potential. The harvest took place September 26 - October 13. The wine was made from blending 75% Semillon and 25% Sauvignon Blanc, reaching 13.6% with sugars hitting 48 G/L. The Grand Vin was made from 40% of the harvest. Read more”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“The 2017 Yquem was tasted instead of the 2018 since owners LVMH no longer show the wine en primeur. This vintage has just been released onto the market and so I have included it in this report. The estate suffered no frost damage in 2017 and a warm period between May and July, 3° Celsius above average meant the vines' growth cycle was a month in advance. Then, 65mm of rain between 1 and 16 September was the catalyst for botrytis formation. The fruit was picked in two dry and warm windows between 26 September and 14 October, during which concentration came easily so that the bunches achieved even levels of ripeness. The vineyard team selected the best parcels to pick at 21 degrees potential alcohol and in a draconian measure, the rest was sold, some 50% of the crop. Winemaker Sandrine Garbay described it as "A vintage of puissance and richness." It has a charming and very pure bouquet with dried honey, acacia, apricot blossom and touches of crushed stone that gradually unfurls in the glass. The palate is viscous on the entry, beautifully balanced with impressive weight and substance, though sans the multi-dimensional complexity of the very greatest vintages. Honey, hints of lemongrass, marmalade and quince combine on the extremely harmonious finish that lingers. This is a seriously good Yquem.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2017 Yquem, which was not affected by frost, was picked in two tries from 26 to 29 September and 5 to 10 October. There is 148gm/L residual sugar and a 3.8 pH, alcohol coming in at 13.9°. The early September rain prompted homogenous pourriture noble (noble rot) and this was followed by a warm period that meant that concentration came rapidly. They focused on the best parts of the property, discarding 30% of the parcels. It has a very harmonious bouquet with white peaches, orange sorbet, white flowers and a touch of crushed stone. It has an “airy” nose that gathers pace with aeration. The palate is very fresh in the mouth with slightly less weight and concentration than the 2015 tasted alongside. There are subtle spicy veins interwoven through the final

Reviews *third with hints of freshly shaved ginger that add another dimension towards the finish. This might not be up there with the top tier of Yquem's over the last century, however, it is clearly a very well-crafted and complex Sauternes that will last many years."*

- NM, Vinous

"Only 3ha of the total of 105ha were frosted, and this was a dry wine part of the vineyard, so d'Yquem got off very lightly indeed. It was warm in general here and the vines grew intensively in July and August. In September it rained for two weeks which was perfect for instigating the onset of botrytis. Then a window appeared with warmer, windy weather from the 26th September until 14th October. In the end there were only 2 tries (picks) in the vineyard and the botrytis kept rising quickly throughout this period. They started with the best terroirs to be sure to have the balance of acidity and sugar. With grapes with 28-30 degrees alcohol potential out in the vineyard it was a super ripe vintage. Having said this, these grapes were not used for the Grand Vin.

It is odd to have such a big delay between the ripeness of the grapes and the onset of botrytis. They have done some graphs and analysis of 2017 and it apparently resembles 1947! There is less Sauvignon used this year because the grapes appeared tired in the gap between aromatic ripeness and botrytis coming in. In common with other wines the nose is very exotic and creamy. The palate is extremely buoyant with huge sweetness and generosity and the acidity is fighting the fruit from the outset. The freshness comes from the bitterness and zestiness in the flavour as opposed to the acidity which brings balance. Very luxurious, juicy and opulent, only 45% of the total crop (80000 bottles) made the Grand Vin. The fruit and the length are so exuberant and intense, and the finish is insanely long. I rather like this wine!"

- MJ, matthewjukes.com
