

Château Rieussec 2018

CSPC# 844662

750mlx6

14.4% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

75% *Sémillon*, 25% *Sauvignon Blanc*

Appellation

Sauternes

Classification

Premier Grand Cru Classé

Website

<http://www.lafite.com/en/the-chateaus/chateau-rieussec/>

General Info

Following the 1855 Classification, Rieussec passed through numerous owners including the Gasqueton family. The Gasqueton family also owned Chateau Calon Segur in St. Estèphe. This was followed by numerous changes in ownership until it was purchased by Alain Vuillier.

In 1984, Alain Vuillier was running out of money and he sold Chateau Rieussec to the owners of Chateau Lafite Rothschild, Domaines Barons de Rothschild. They bought the property in a partnership with Albert Frere.

Albert Frere was quite familiar with Bordeaux as he already owned a portion of Chateau Cheval Blanc in St. Emilion. The following year, in 1985, Charles Chevallier was placed in charge of managing Chateau Rieussec.

Aside from a modernization of the estate since Lafite Rothschild took over, the estate has almost doubled in size. At the time of the purchase, at most, 40 hectares were under vine. 30 years later, Rieussec had almost 90 hectares under vine.

Vintage

Despite the unpredictable weather, the vintage was a tremendous success! In 2018, winegrowers played an essential role, meticulously caring for the vines right until the harvest, before noble rot waved its magic wand in late October, rewarding all their efforts.

The 2018 growing season unfolded under near-tropical conditions with much higher rainfall than usual and temperatures 2.7°C above average! This resulted in vigorous vine growth and the intense threat of diseases. Above all, 2018 was "a year of the winegrowers", whose hard work and home-grown expertise maintained the vines in impeccable condition. On the 15th of July, a violent hailstorm struck the south-facing plateau stretching in front of the château, causing localised yet considerable damage to the grapes. It took until the 15th of August for the weather to radically change, signaling a return to fine and very dry conditions which lasted throughout September.

Vineyards

The large, 85-hectare Chateau Rieussec vineyard is planted to 85% Semillon 13% Sauvignon Blanc and 2% Muscadelle. The vineyard has a terroir of gravel, sand, clay and limestone soil. The slopes place Rieussec at one of the highest elevation in the appellation, reaching 78 meters at its peak.

Harvest

Like all the top Bordeaux wine producers in Sauternes, the harvests are done in passes. This length of the harvest and number of passes is determined by the ripeness of the fruit and more importantly, the level of botrytis found on the grapes. The 2018 Rieussec was picked from 10 to 31 October in two or three tries through the vineyard

Maturation

To produce the wine of Chateau Rieussec, sorting takes place in the vineyard during the harvest, not at the winery. Vinification takes place in a combination of new, French oak barrels and used barrels. Prior to 1996, the wine was vinified partially in tank, but that is no longer the case.

Starting with the 1997 vintage, the entire vinification process is conducted in French oak barrels. The used barrels come from Chateau Lafite Rothschild. The wine of Chateau Rieussec is aged in an average of 50% new, French oak barrels for 18 to 24 months, depending on the character of the vintage.

Chateau Rieussec has clearly benefited from being owned by the Rothschild's. Numerous technical improvements in the vineyards and the winemaking facilities have helped vastly improve the wines of Chateau Rieussec. The wines are vinified in



Maturation	small lots which allow for vinification on a level that is even more precise than a parcel-by-parcel basis. The wines are aged in 50% new, French oak barrels for 30 months.
Tasting Notes	The robe can vary over the entire range of colors from pale gold to coppery gold through straw yellow. In the main aromatic field of soft and sweet Bordeaux we find the flower, the fresh fruits, the exotic fruits but also spicy notes and empyreumatique's (wood, cinnamon, vanilla ...). The sweet white young are delicious, they are slightly jammy but still retain acidity. With age they evolve on more concentrated aromas, such as the bitter orange confit and small notes of salted butter caramel.
Serve with	Chateau Rieussec can be served with seafood dishes, especially shellfish, lobster, crab, and oysters on the half shell. Foie gras is a perfect pairing with its natural sweet, salty, and savory characteristics. Chateau Rieussec can also be paired with roasted chicken, veal and pork dishes that are either spicy, or prepared with a touch of sweetness. Spicy Asian cuisine, raw fish, like sushi or sashimi, and cheese, both hard and soft also make great pairings with Chateau Rieussec. Chateau Rieussec is best served at 14 degrees Celsius, 57 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. The wine will naturally warm in the glass, while it develops more aromatic complexities and fleshes out.
Cellaring	Drink 2022-2040
Scores/Awards	<p>91 points - Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2021</p> <p>93-95 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate #242 - April 2019</p> <p>93-94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2019</p> <p>94-96 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 2019</p> <p>17.5 points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2019</p> <p>94 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2019</p> <p>92 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2019</p> <p>90-92 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - November 2019</p> <p>17.5 points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2019</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"Rich and forward, but has cut and definition, with a range of white peach, quince, toasted almond and honeysuckle notes working together, followed by a broad, marzipan-coated finish. Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc. Drink now through 2030."</i> - JS, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Rieussec was hit by hail on the 15th of July," says Eric Kohler. "For Sauternes, the botrytis began very late. It was very difficult for the botrytis to begin. There was not so much sugar this year and not so much botrytis. This is not as great a year as 2015 or 2017." Harvest at Rieussec began on October 10 and ended on October 31. Blended of 75% Sémillon and 25% Sauvignon Blanc, the pale lemon-gold colored 2018 Rieussec reveals delicate scents of lemon drops, pear tart, marzipan, and crushed stones over a core of orange blossoms, white peaches and lime leaves. The palate has a quiet intensity of an array of citrus and savory layers with amazing freshness, finishing with great length and depth."</i> - LPB, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Very clean and fresh with banana, pineapple and papaya character and hints of honey. Medium-to full-bodied, sweet, and crisp. Lively finish. Jasmine and acacia with hints of spice. Slightly crisper style. More sauvignon than normal."</i> - JS, JamesSuckling.com</p> <p><i>"Plenty of ripe botrytis with a dry core is surrounded by flavors of sweet honey, ripe apricot and a touch of orange marmalade. The acidity keeps it fresh and vibrant."</i> - RV, Wine Enthusiast</p> <p><i>"Gorgeous ripe aroma of pineapple and ripe lemon, and apricot. Sweet, luscious and full of that lovely almond bitterness of botrytised wines. Full in the mouth, generous, long and fresh with a fine almond-paste bitterness at the end. Long. 14.4%. Drink 2025-2040"</i> - JH, JancisRobinson.com</p>

Reviews *“This takes a minute to lift out of the glass, with a focus on texture more than aromatics, but it’s highly attractive with a luscious, gorgeous texture and flavours that are concentrated but elegant and fine, showing touches of mandarin, saffron and spice alongside a creamy citrus mid-palate. The harvest took place between 10 and 31 October, later than last year - the day they finished in 2017 was the day they started in 2018. A yield of 17hl/ha. Drinking Window 2022 – 2042”*
- JA, Decanter.com

“Pineapples, vanilla, honeysuckle and apricots fill the nose. The wine is sweet, almost unctuous, with an orange and sugary tropical laced finish. The wine was made from blending 58% Semillon and 42% Sauvignon Blanc.”
- JL, Decanter.com

“The 2018 Rieussec was picked from 10 to 31 October in two or three tries through the vineyard. This contains one of the highest percentages of Sauvignon Blanc (25%). It does not possess the same intensity as the previous vintage, a little compact and perhaps more floral in style, yellow flowers mixed with acacia honey and saffron. The palate is medium bodied with notes of apricot, quince, and light spicy aromas with good acidity. It is well balanced and fresh, although it does not have the weight and complexity of the 2017, ergo I suspect this will be earlier drinking. 2022 – 2040”
- NM, Vinous

“(75 Semillon, 25 Sauvignon Blanc) This is a robust, mouth-coating Rieussec and it hasn’t got the orange peel notes which one normally feels on this wine. Instead, the notes are more along the citrus spectrum but there is weight and gravitas here and I have no doubt it will age well, but it will not be a heavyweight.”
- MJ, matthewjukes.com
