

Château Y d'Yquem Bordeaux Blanc 2016

CSPC# 803701

750mlx6

14.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

75% *Sémillon*, 25% *Sauvignon Blanc*

Appellation

Sauternes

Website

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

General Info

Chateau d'Yquem also produces a dry, white Bordeaux wine called "Y," which is pronounced (Ygrec). The wine is only made in select vintages. The first vintage for the production of dry, white wine at Chateau d'Yquem took place in 1959. Close to 80% of the parcels used to produce their dry white wine can change from vintage to vintage. Y was formerly made at the end of the harvest, with the last bunches left on the vines. These grapes, affected to varying degrees by *Botrytis cinerea*, but never with more than 15% potential alcohol, resulted in a very unusual wine. This explains why it has always been produced in small quantities and on an irregular basis since 1959. Y changed starting in 1996, but without compromising its unique character, to be more in tune with the times by displaying the qualities of freshness and crispness – essential for a modern great white wine. It was decided in 2004 to make Y every year. It is thus by deliberate choice that we now harvest certain plots of Sauvignon Blanc at the beginning of the vintage, making sure to pick perfectly ripe bunches. These are completed by *Sémillon* grapes picked just at that fleeting stage when the grapes have reached maximum ripeness, *botrytis* has just appeared, and the skins have turned a pinkish colour. This is the precise moment when this grape variety's tannins are soft enough for the aromatic potential of the best plots of clay soil to come through.

Vintage

The 2016 growing season did not get off to an auspicious start. Rain during the first three months of the year was three times the historical average. Warmer than normal temperatures led to an early budbreak, which is always a concern, as it exposes the vines to severe damage in the event of frost. Temperatures dropped into the spring and vegetative growth slowed.

Temperatures soared above historical averages during the summer months, especially during July and August, both of which saw the vines receive more sunlight than either of the two preceding vintages. Rain, such a constant during the early part of the season, was essentially non-existent in July and August. Curiously, while daytime temperatures were above historical averages, nighttime temperatures were cooler than average, which is an unusual combination. Heat and lack of rain took the vineyards into hydric stress and caused sugar accumulation to stop.

Rains in mid-September could not have been more opportune. Parched vines responded positively, and ripening resumed. By this time, daytime highs began to moderate while the nights remained cool. Average temperatures had moved to below historical averages. One of the key elements of 2016 is that the final phase of ripening took place in September and October, a time of year when the days are shorter, and the nights are longer than they are in July and August. In 2016, this phenomenon was accentuated by wide diurnal shifts between daytime highs and nighttime lows. Strong diurnal shifts are essential for the development of color and aromatics.

In most years, rain and disease pressure start to become an issue in the fall, but in 2016, conditions remained stable throughout the end of the season, which gave winemakers and vineyard managers the luxury of harvesting at their choosing. The late harvest allowed for the full maturation of tannins, one of the many hallmarks of the 2016 vintage.

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	<p>picked between 5 September and 13 September. To make the dry white Bordeaux wine of d'Yquem, the fruit the estate uses does not only come from declassified grapes. Most of the berries are picked before the harvesting of the grapes for the production of Chateau d'Yquem has started.</p> <p>When harvesting for Ygrec, the vines and grapes are chosen prior to harvest. However, while one bunch of Sauvignon Blanc on the vine is designated for Ygrec, the remaining bunch can be used for d'Yquem, if the necessary amount of noble rot develops. For the Semillon used in Ygrec, the grapes are harvested just prior to the full development of noble rot.</p>
Vinification/ Maturation	<p>To produce the dry white Bordeaux wine from d'Yquem, the wine is vinified in stainless steel vats. In fact, in 2012, the estate added several new, gleaming, stainless steels for the vinification. There is no malolactic fermentation. The wine is aged in 50% new, French oak barrels for an average of 10 months.</p> <p>The wine receives close attention all during fermentation: light, precise pressing as well as temperature-controlled must racking and alcoholic fermentation in a new aesthetically pleasing, state-of-the-art vat room set aside just for this wine. The end of fermentation and ageing on the lees take place in barrels. Only one third of these are new, and the lees are regularly stirred (bâtonnage) for ten months.</p> <p>During its aging time, the wine is aged on its lees. This marks a major change in the wine, as previously, the wine was aged for up to 18 months in barrel before bottling</p>
Tasting Notes	<p>Composed of 75% Sauvignon and 25% Semillon, Y 2016 is a tight wine of great length. Very seductive thanks to its aromas of lemon, grapefruit and white peach.</p>
Production	833 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2019-2036
Scores/Awards	<p>96 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2018</p> <p>91 points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate Interim - September 2017</p> <p>17+ points - Richard Hemming, JancisRobinson.com - October 2017</p> <p>16 points - Farr Vintner - September 2017</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"Rather rich, with coconut, green fig, creamed pear, yellow apple and jasmine notes all melded together, picking up light acacia and elderflower accents on the finish. Very, very showy, with the underlying cut to pull it off. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Best from 2019 through 2026. 833 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JS, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The 2016 Ygrec (or "Y" as it is shown on the label and referred to) is, of course, the dry white from Yquem, and this latest release is a blend of 75% Sauvignon Blanc and 25% Sémillon picked between 5 September and 13 September. It has a fresh, attractive bouquet with citrus peel, Nashi pear, grass clippings and gooseberry, the Sauvignon firmly in the driving seat. The palate is where the Sémillon says hold on a moment, it's not all Sauvignon. The texture is waxy, and there are lovely peachy, watermelon notes that dovetail into a saline finish that leaves you wanting more. True, it is not cheap, and you could argue there is a plethora of cheaper alternatives. But they are not Yquem. Tasted September 2017."</i></p> <p>- NM, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"75% Sauvignon Blanc, 25% Sémillon. Impressive oak sweetness on the nose, likewise on the palate, but the palate seems quite light in body. The fruit actually comes through more on the finish. In fact, perhaps that is coming as the wine warms up (it was served ice cold). There's a touch of honey giving complexity. (RH) "</i></p> <p>- RH, JancisRobinson.com</p> <p><i>"The dry white wine from Chateau d'Yquem. Only 10,000 bottles were produced in 2016... The wines were aged 80% in second year Yquem barrels and 20% in new oak. It has 7 grams per litre of residual sugar. The wine was bottled in July 2017 and released in September for delivery in November. This has the richness of the 2015 vintage but the acidity of 2014. Finely balanced, with a vibrant, lifted and floral nose reinforced with juicy peach and passionfruit. Notes of honeysuckle and a lightly waxy texture are cleansed by refreshing acidity which brings higher toned lemon blossom and grapefruit through. Lightly spicy and smoky, the oak is subtle, integrated and supportive rather than dominant, with a light touch that adds complexity of sweet vanilla and savoury nutmeg. The finish is long, fine and precise."</i></p> <p>- Farr Vintners</p>
