

Château Guiraud 2003

CSPC# 758861

375mlx12

12.5% alc./vol.

CSPC# 758866

750mlx12

12.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

65% Semillon, 35% Sauvignon Blanc

Appellation

Sauternes

General Info

Paul César Rival acquired the property in 1932 and sold it in 1981 to a Canadian family named Narby. Having accrued great wealth in the transport industry, the Narby children were keen to take on new and perhaps more challenging tasks. For Hamilton Narby, Guiraud was that challenge. Under his direction (and subsequently that of his father, Frank Narby, who took control of Guiraud from his son in 1988) the estate has seen an unprecedented level of investment, refurbishment, repair and re-equipping. Under Xavier Planty, who was appointed manager by Frank Narby in 1988, the estate went from strength to strength.

The Narby-Planty era has seen Château Guiraud rise phoenix-like, with some fabulous vintages along the way. Much of the credit in this respect must be directed towards Planty, who has been exacting in his work in the vineyard, moving Guiraud increasingly towards sustainable, environmentally friendly and ultimately organic methods of viticulture. In more recent years the pace of change has picked up, both in terms of developments in the vineyards and cellars, and also in the quality of the wines. In part this is because, since taking part-ownership of Château Guiraud in 2006, Planty has increased freedom in deciding the direction in which he takes the estate.

Vineyards

Only Semillon (65%) and Sauvignon (35%) are planted at Guiraud with a pruning "à cots" or "in fan" for the Semillons and long branches for the Sauvignons.

The density of plantation is 6660 vine per ha (Root stock Riparia 33 09, 101 14, 161 49). The average age of the vines is 35-40 years. The average yield is 12hl/ha. The maximum yield allowed by the appellation is 25hl/ha.

Harvest

Eight days of harvest on an explosive botrytis. End of the harvest on the 23th of September, that means later than in 1990!

Vinification/

Maturation

The fermentation is made in 90% new oak barrels over a period of three weeks to two months. Different batches are fermented until they reach their own equilibrium which depends upon their selection. Chaptalisation, cryoextraction and any other techniques used to enrich the wine are absolutely prohibited. The aging in 60% new barrels for 18 months.

Tasting Notes

"This means a wine with intense aromas and smoothness, where elegance is the most important: a baroque wine. Silky, greedy, with very light sugar. Flavours of hot butter, vanilla cream with refined exotic scents. An astonishing length. A sumptuous wine." (Xavier Planty).

Production

8,000 cases made

Cellaring

Drink now - 2020

Scores/Awards

95 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2006

Top 100, Rank 14 - Wine Spectator's Top 100 Wines of 2006

95-100 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - June 30, 2004

94 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #164 - April 2006 (no notes given)

92-94 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #158 - April 2005

90-93 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #152 - April 2004

92-94 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - October 2005

92 points - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - Jul/Aug 2006

17 points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - October 2005

Highly Recommended - Decanter Magazine - June 1, 2004

17.5 -17.75 points - Jean-Marc Quarin - May 2004 (no review)

88-90 points - Wine International - June 2004



Reviews *"This is very sweet and rich on the nose, with toffee, honey and spices. Full-bodied, with thick honey, spice, dried apricot and syrup flavors. Lasts for minutes on the palate. Big botrytis bomb. Love it. Best after 2010. 8,000 cases made."*

- JS, Wine Spectator

"This shows loads of wonderful botrytis character, with apple tart and cloves, honey. Full-bodied, very sweet and concentrated. Super long and honeylike, with sweet mace and sweet tobacco on the palate. Pure bot baby. Score range: 95-100"

- JS, Wine Spectator

"Space limitations preclude including tasting notes. 2003 is a rich, sweet vintage of powerful, full-bodied wines that possess huge levels of glycerin, alcohol, and residual sugar."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"It is against my better judgment to taste the sweet wines of Barsac and Sauternes at such an early age, as I find they typically require at least 12 months to reveal the definition/delineation so essential in these creamy, creme brulee, and honeysuckle-flavored offerings. Nevertheless, because this vintage is so highly regarded, I tasted through most of the top estates. The 2003s appear to be somewhat in the style of the 1990s, with high levels of residual sugar (higher than 2001 for the most part) as well as botrytis, low acidity, and fat, full-bodied personalities. This region's harvest began extremely early (early September), and was completely finished within three weeks. It does not appear that the nobleness and racy richness of the 2001 vintage will be found in the 2003s, but readers who like the big, flamboyant, over the top style of the 1990s will enjoy the 2003s even more than I did.

Unlike most of my red wine tastings, this offering was only tasted once. Readers should keep in mind that this a very early, pre-bottling judgment from very unevolved wine that is not nearly as defined and easy to evaluate as the reds."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"Tasted after bottling at the UGC in Oct-05. Very little on the nose at first: chalk dust, almond and a touch of peach emerging after some time in glass. The palate is fresh with good weight and good level of botrytis. Notes of honey and quince with good fresh acidity. Floral, peachy finish. A very attractive Sauternes. Tasted October 2005."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Full yellow-gold. Musky aromas of exotic apricot liqueur, baking spices, toffee and smoke. Super sweet and unctuous, but with its glycerol texture cut by bright acids. The exotic apricot flavor is nicely complemented by coconut, vanilla and caramel. Finishes very long and juicy. Offers a very successful combination of thickness and firm acid edge."

- ST, International Wine Cellar

"A big nose of honey-coated fruit here, and a big, flavoursome palate to match. Full, firm character, with decent botrytis influence. Rich and opulent style, with a great sweetness. Should make good drinking. From a Sauternes 2003 tasting. 17/20 (October 2005)"

- CK, Wine Doctor

"Guiraud always has one of the richest offerings in Sauternes and this time it is slightly over the top. This example is broad, creamy, oaky and rich, and lacks a bit of elegance. The acidity is good, but the overall result is good, but not fine. 2008 - 2018."

- Wine International

"Nose: great concentration combined with elegance and breed. Taste: concentrated, luscious fruit flavours, caramelised oranges and length, very fine."

- Decanter Magazine