

Chateau d'Yquem "Y" (Ygrec) Bordeaux Blanc 2021

CSPC# 803071

750mlx6

14.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

65% Sauvignon Blanc, 35% Sémillon

Appellation

Sauternes – Bordeaux Blanc

Website

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

Analysis

Residual sugars: 7.2 g/L Total acidity: 6.9 g/L H2T pH: 3.18

Sustainability

Respect for traditional, time-honoured practices has been the basis of Château d'Yquem's winemaking philosophy for over two centuries – and ample proof of its "sustainability"! Living in harmony with nature is a necessity since the grape harvest at Yquem relies entirely on what is paradoxically one of the most important vineyard pests, *Botrytis cinérea*.

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.

Winemaker

Sandrine Garbay. Pierre Lurton, Director of Chateau d'Yquem and Cheval Blanc

Vintage

In meteorological terms, 2021 was a turbulent year. The mercifully limited frosts of the 7th and 8th of April were followed by a very rainy spring, which fortunately did not affect the flowering of the vines. From mid-July through to late August, the weather was dry and relatively cool. With no extreme temperatures to contend with, the grapes were able to ripen in superb conditions, imbuing this vintage with an exceptional freshness which is perhaps its defining quality.

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

After four weeks without rain, the Sauvignon grapes attained optimal ripeness and harvesting of the Y 2021 began on the 29th of August. The first round of picking concentrated on the earliest ripening plots, and continued until the 1st of September. A second pass took place on the 5th and 6th of September, this time bringing in the beautifully balanced Semillon grapes and ending with the later-ripening Sauvignons.

Winemaking

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.

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.

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.



Winemaking	Only one third of these are new, and the lees are regularly stirred (bâtonnage) for ten months. The final blend is made after tasting. It usually consists predominantly of Sauvignon Blanc and a few lots of Sémillon.
Tasting Note	Y 2021 is sappy and vivacious, striking a pitch-perfect balance between the freshness of the Sauvignon Blanc and the complexity of the Semillon. The bouquet is dominated by pear, white peach, and fresh almond aromas. The complex finish is accented with zesty tangerine, offset with handsome, bitter notes that linger long on the palate.
Serve with	Chicken, seafood, fish.
Production	With an annual production of 10,000 bottles in a normal year, Y (pronounced "ee-grek" in French) is a rare wine. It is made from the same outstanding terroir and the same vines as Château d'Yquem. Although work in the vineyard is every bit as meticulous, the grapes are picked, and the wine made in a different way.
Cellaring	Drink 2023-2039
Scores/Awards	<p>94 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - October 2023</p> <p>95 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Independent - September 2023</p> <p>97 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2023</p> <p>98 points - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - September 2023</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"Suave, with alluring acacia, elderflower and lemon pith notes backed by a long finish revealing racy and creamy aspects. Offers nice chalk and orange blossom details in the background, too. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Drink now through 2028."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"A blend of 65% Sauvignon Blanc and 35% Semillon, with 7 grams per liter of residual sugar, the 2021 "Y" gives up delicate notes of honey-drizzled peaches, lemon tart, and lime leaves, leading to hints of coriander seed and green apples, with a waft of chalk dust. The medium-bodied palate has a wonderfully satiny texture, with crisp acidity cutting through the intense apple and citrus layers, finishing long and zesty."</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Independent</p> <p><i>"Lime and spicy pear with crushed stone. Kumquats. Smoke and iron. Kiwi. Full and rounded with bitter pear and steel. Dried limes. Unique minerality. Bright acidity. Touch of sweetness at the end that makes it fascinating. 65% sauvignon blanc and 35% semillon. September release. Drink or hold."</i></p> <p>- JS, JamesSuckling.com</p> <p><i>"A great example of this always-arresting dry white, with a ton of soft apple blossom aromatics, before drawing inwards to show scraping acidity, powerful white peach, quince, apricot and citrus flavours with a twist of lime juice, fennel and a salty tang of oyster shell and salted crackers. Has the richness, complexity and concentration that you find in Yquem, and although it won't have quite the same longevity, there is no issue with keeping this wine for 15 to 20 years. 7g/l of residual sugar, mainly from the Sémillon that is picked with the first bloom of botrytis, bringing an opulent, voluptuous feel that transmits the DNA of the property. Spends 12 months in 80% one year old barrels previously used for Château d'Yquem (of course fully washed and prepared, but still imparting a blush of rich flavour), together with 20% new oak. The 2021 vintage in Bordeaux was a better year for whites than reds, and this exceptional white wine is a great example. Last vintage with Sandrine Garbay as winemaker, leaving in 2022."</i></p> <p>- JA, janeanson.com</p>
