

Château d'Yquem 2018

CSPC# 831393

375mlx3

13.5% alc./vol.

CSPC# 845042

375mlx3

13.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

85% *Sémillon*, 15% *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

Sandrine Garbay

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

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. The yields are always tiny here, but in 2018 the property made 40% less than normal. The team sacrificed valuable quantity to preserve quality in the face of a more difficult vintage.



Harvest	Under sunny skies and with rainfall 80% below average from mid-August until late September, the grapes reached even, optimum ripeness, with up to 16% potential alcohol in the golden-ripe berries. In contrast, <i>Botrytis cinerea</i> remained very discreet and the pickers had to wait patiently for five long weeks. Finally, between the 5th and 13th of October, welcome rainfall led to the spread of noble rot. After such a long
Harvest	wait, picking resumed, grape by grape, from the 17th of October onwards. The fully botrytised grapes reached peak concentration between the 22nd and the 27th of October, constituting the lion's share of the 2018 vintage. The rain then returned from the 30th of October to the 4th of November, and the harvesting window suddenly closed. Thanks to the patience and availability of our faithful pickers over those 17 days, we managed to overcome the vagaries of this capricious vintage.
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	Yields at Ch. d'Yquem were down around 40% in 2018. The vintage was comparable to '16; hot and dry conditions produced intense aromas of tropical fruit, mango and passion fruit. The wine is rich and honeyed, with floral notes of honeysuckle on the nose. The palate, medium- to full-bodied, begins with lemon candy notes and later shows spice, apricot, and lemongrass. This is a very strong offering from the estate; it's nuanced, complex and fresh, with a depth of flavour that bodes well for longer-term ageing.
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.
Production	4,166 cases made.
Cellaring	Drink 2025-2045
Scores/Awards	<p>94 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2021</p> <p>98 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - October 2020</p> <p>97 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - September 2020</p> <p>17++ points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - September 2020</p> <p>97 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - September 2020</p> <p>97 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - September 2020</p> <p>97 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2021</p> <p>93 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - September 2020</p> <p>92 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - September 2020</p> <p>97 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - February 2021</p> <p>17 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - June 2019</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"A beauty from start to finish, with fresh, racy notes of honeysuckle, quinine and Mirabelle plum leading off, followed by richer quince, creamed pear and white nectarine flavors. Everything melds through the finish, picking up macadamia nut and brioche accents to complete the seduction. Best from 2025 through 2045."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The 2018 d'Yquem is all lime cordial, grapefruit oil and mandarin peel to begin. With a little coaxing, the fireworks really begin, letting off a whole array of honeysuckle, candied ginger, dried pineapple, lemon pastilles, chalk dust and sea spray scents, followed by a savory undercurrent of shaved almonds, allspice, and baking bread. The palate is an exercise in polish and poise, featuring the most gorgeously creamy texture and bright, sparkling freshness, framing all the densely laden tropical and citrus fruit layers, finishing with a powerful BANG of profound floral and spice perfume. It is wonderfully sweet, yes, but that—paradoxically for a "sweet wine"—is almost beside the point."</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"An extremely polished and refined d'Yquem with lightly cooked peaches and mangos and an overlay of vanilla and cream with some lemon meringue. Orange peel, too. What is striking is the texture, which is creamy and so fine. The tannins give the wine energy and beauty. The finish is extremely long and impressive. So clean and refined. Not heavy at all, but vivid and clean as crystal. Goes on for minutes. Elegance with stature is a good description. Drinkable now, but better in 2023 and onwards."</i></p> <p>- JS, JamesSuckling.com</p>

Reviews

"Blossom and barley sugar on the nose. By no means, the sweetest nor the heaviest but the texture is pure cream, and the flavour has overlays of green vegetation, cheddar cheese and smoke. This is Yquem! Complexity is all. But it still has a long way to go in terms of bottle development before the price is justified. For the moment it finishes a little short."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"As ever with Yquem, patience was the key, taking in the grapes slowly but surely over 17 days harvest that extended well into October. The results in the glass are intense and glossy, full of satin-textured apricot and white peach flavours. There are exotic fruits of pineapple and mango, but winemaker Sandrine Garbay has kept a focus on fresher flavours of lime zest and citrus that balance out the natural richness and concentration. Pretty closed right now, but there is power and balance here, an excellent Yquem."

- JA, Decanter.com

"Average temperatures 2.7°C, over average, combined with 20% of the normal rainfall from mid-August to the end of July made this a naturally rich, low yielding vintage (40% less than average, not helped by a hailstorm in July), with a gloriously gourmet 145g/ha residual sugar, and a pH level of 3.95. As ever with Yquem, patience was the key, taking in the grapes slowly but surely over 17 days harvest that extended well into October. The results in the glass are intense and glossy, full of satin-textured apricot and white peach flavours. There are exotic fruits of pineapple and mango, but winemaker Sandrine Garbay has kept a focus on fresher flavours of lime zest and citrus that balance out the natural richness and concentration. Pretty closed right now, but there is power and balance here, an excellent Yquem. Drinking Window 2022 - 2050."

- JA, Decanter.com

"Elegant, creamy, fresh, sweet charmer. While this lacks the density and verve found in the very best vintages, there is more than enough ripe and overripe pineapple, vanilla, roasted apricot, mango, candied orange rind and honey to keep any taster busy. Luscious textured, rich and opulent, this will be delicious in its youth, and it also has the ability to age for decades."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"The 2018 Château d'Yquem "unfolded under tropical conditions" according to the château's technical sheet, temperatures 2.7°C above average and this influences the style of the latest release. I tasted the wine from two ex-château bottles on the same day. Firstly, in the morning, poured straight from bottle at room temperature into a regular Bordeaux glass. Lucid straw in colour, it is paler than recent vintages. The bouquet requires coaxing, certainly less intense than with pretty scents of dried honey, saffron and orange pith, a discrete Germanic tinge just off stage. The palate is understated on the entry. Modest in terms of complexity and certainly far from the most luscious Yquem that I have tasted in recent vintages, it offers appealing lemon curd, apricot and a dab of spiciness, stem ginger and lemongrass."

The second bottle was served in the evening at a lower temperature after a two hour decant in a smaller Zalto Sauternes glass. Now, this showed differently. The aromatics here felt more focused and energetic for a start - more drive. The palate revealed greater complexity thanks to decanting and certainly more tension, crucial to counterbalance that residual sugar. Overall, I do not believe that the 2018 Yquem belongs in the pantheon of great vintages of Yquem since it lacks requisite nuance, depth and complexity. It is a pretty and charming Yquem, maybe a sensitive one that needs to be served correctly, lest its shortcomings deriving from the growing season, not any winemaking decision, show through. 2024 - 2050."

- NM, Vinous

"The just-released 2018 Château d'Yquem is a pretty, gracious wine. In 2018 d'Yquem is decidedly airy and ethereal in feel. Light apricot, passion fruit, spice, tangerine oil, orange peel, jasmine and pear accents are layered throughout. Residual sugar is 145 grams per liter, which is not especially evident. I tasted the 2018 over the course of several days and saw how well it responded to aeration. Yquem has a track record for aging brilliantly, but given its mid-weight structure, I would prefer to enjoy the 2018 young, while the flavors remain fresh. It's a fine effort in a difficult year. Aged 20-22 months in 100% new French oak. 2022 - 2042."
