

## Château d'Yquem 2020

CSPC# 831393

375mlx3

14.0% alc./vol.

CSPC# 845042

750mlx3

14.0% alc./vol.

### Grape Variety

75% *Sémillon*, 25% *Sauvignon Blanc*

### Appellation

Sauternes

### Classification

1er Cru Supérieur

### Website

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

### Analysis

pH: 3.79 Residual sugar: 135 g/L

### 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

The 2020 vintage in Sauternes was first marked by a dry winter whose mildness favored an early budding of the vine. The flowering took place under mixed conditions, followed by a summer marked by heat and drought. A few rains in August helped to boost the ripening of the grapes, and the grapes were perfectly ripe at the beginning of September. But the dry weather delayed the installation of the noble rot brought by the *Botrytis Cinerea* fungus. At Château d'Yquem, the conditions did not allow to wait long enough to have a good concentration of botrytis, the teams had to be very reactive and very precise, and the result is only delicate.

### 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

That Yquem's final yield of around 10 hl/ha is almost a third lower than the preceding vintage and just a little below the appellation average for 2020 is, then, rather more a consequence of the selectivity of the picking of both passerillé and fully botrytized grapes than it is a consequence of losses due to mildew. But it is also a reflection of the tiny window of opportunity (just five days) for the harvest of botrytized grapes before the return of the rain in mid-October. There was, as Lorenzo Pasquini again explained to me, simply no time to wait for the optimal concentration of the grapes following the late onset of the botrytis. The result (unlike, say, in the 2022 vintage) is a wine of delicacy rather than of sheer power born of great concentration.

### Maturation

By reducing the ageing time (from around 36 months to 22 months for the 2020 vintage) and racking less. In the last 15 years, spontaneous yeasts mean a longer, slower fermentation with no racking, cooling or adding sulphur.' The intensity of the aromatics can withstand the wood. Even in a vintage like 2020, it's important to stick to this ancestral approach of ageing wines in new barrels. There's no risk of the wood overwhelming the



<b>Maturation</b>	wine, it helps add another dimension to the Botrytis, giving a gourmand element that preserves the fruit but enhances the expression', he said
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	The 2020 Yquem is supremely elegant, a taut, refined, effortless wine of length and poise. Initially this is quite an extrovert showing plenty of exotic fruits such as pineapple, mandarin, and orange peel. It's airy and graceful, yet there's wonderful intensity and vitality on the palate. Although focused and direct, we were impressed by the breadth to the flavours: hints of spice, brioche, marmalade, apricot, and lemon zest. This wonderfully crystalline Yquem is already expressive and a joy to taste, however, we have no doubt this is a wine of real finesse and botrytis character, which will evolve and develop gracefully over many decades.
<b>Serve with</b>	<p>Château d'Yquem 2020 will go wonderfully with starters such as foie gras or scallops fried in vanilla and lemon butter, as well as dishes such as tuna tartar or cod fillet. It can also accompany meats such as Wagyu beef, roast chicken, or duck breast, because let's not forget that Yquem is a world of complexity.</p> <p>Enjoy it with blue-veined cheeses such as Roquefort, Bleu d'Auvergne, Caesar Regalis or Fourme d'Ambert. For dessert, finish it off with a citrus salad with cinnamon, saffron rice pudding or a pear-caramel bavaois. In Sauternes, the typical pairing is with roast chicken. Also great with Duck Breast and tuna tartare with wasabi and crab risotto.</p> <p>However, it will lend itself very well to tasting if properly prepared. To do so, open the bottle 2 to 3 hours in advance and keep it refrigerated. Take it out a few minutes before tasting so that it can be served between 10 and 12°C.</p>
<b>Production</b>	The 2020 is the smallest production since 2000 with an equivalent of 35,000 bottles made.
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2028-2040. Château d'Yquem 2020 is a great Sauternes that has exceptional ageing potential and deserves to wait in the cellar for several years in order to refine and show itself to be grandiose. It will be ideal to drink between 2040 and 2045 but can be kept longer.
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>95 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2023</p> <p><b>97+ points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - March 2023</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - March 2023</p> <p><b>98 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2023</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Colin Hay, thedrinksbusiness.com - March 2023</p>
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>"This has a broad and unctuous feel, with nectarine, apricot and mango notes leading the way and creating an opulent feel, though there are also racy bitter almond, orange blossom and elderberry accents for contrast and range. The lush finish is carried by mango and pie crust. Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc. Best from 2028 through 2040."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The 2020 Château d'Yquem a blend of 75% Sémillon and 25% Sauvignon Blanc. It has 135 grams per liter of residual sugar and a pH of 3.79. Pale lemon-gold colored, citrus and baking spice notes emerge slowly from the glass, rising to offer well-defined scents of candied ginger, orange blossoms, allspice, and almond tart, leading to a flamboyant core of peach cobbler, ripe, juicy pineapple, jasmine tea, and apple butter with a waft of saffron. The palate is full-bodied and characteristically rich, yet possesses impressive tension and therefore stunning harmony. Layers of exotic spices and fragrant white flower accents fill the palate, leading to a long finish with lingering chalk and mineral nuances. It's a showy Yquem that is gregarious in youth but is reserving that extra something for those with the patience to wait twenty years or more."</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Independent</p> <p><i>"The 2020 Château d'Yquem is a blend of 75% Sémillon and 25% Sauvignon Blanc. This is a wine that majestically turns in the glass, like a prima ballerina, and lands on the palate softly, in perfect attitude or arabesque. Then it glides to an effortless finish balancing fruit ripeness, noble sweetness, and electric acid-freshness."</i></p> <p>- JC, Decanter.com</p> <p><i>"A masterclass in purity and delicacy for this 2020 vintage which manages to convey the beauty and allure of Yquem in a toned down, subtle, and beguiling way. Aromas of white blossom and honeysuckle, gently caramelised Mirabelle plums and fresh apricots with flecks of clementine and grapefruit pith abound on the nose - richly scented in their individual aspects but delivered quietly, almost sultry, and shy. Immediately mouth filling and unctuous, streamlined, and fresh with a sugary hit hitting first before mouthwatering acidity follows giving sumptuous succulence and vibrancy. Apricot, peach, fleshy mango, and sharp pineapple give the exotic fruit zing balanced by a salty, flintiness that adds faint angles to the expression. Juicy, bright, clean, and complete with hints of cinnamon spice and just-toasted bread providing the frame and structure reminding you that this is built to last. It's not as opulent as some vintages, much more understated and relaxed - and coincidentally one of the lowest in residual sugar at 135g/l - but this is a wonderful expression with control and confidence on show. It</i></p>

**Reviews** *also has supreme drinkability even now with tension, clarity and energy so don't be afraid to open and enjoy this in its joyful youth. The 2020 is the smallest production since 2000 with an equivalent of 35,000 bottles made. All stock will be released for sale on 23rd March with only a small number of bottles kept back for the estate's library collection. 3.79pH. The vintage was challenging in terms of viticulture with tropical spring-like weather delivering early budburst and high mildew pressure, especially given it was the estate's first year of official organic conversion. June was wet and cool followed by a hot, dry summer. Botrytis arrived in mid-October but there was only a small window of five days and two separate passes to harvest grapes with perfect noble rot."*  
- GH, Decanter.com

*"On the fresh, bright vibrant, racy side of the style range with a focus on its complex core of honeysuckle, dried oranges, apricots, lemon curd, saffron, marzipan, pineapple, vanilla, and just the right drizzle of honey to top everything off. It is cut, and defined, with length, purity, lift, and ample acidities giving lift, length, and vibrancy, as well as richness, balance, and complexity. I love this style of d'Yquem because it works as a sweet wine that can be enjoyed either on its own or with a myriad of savory courses. So, if you cannot keep your hands off it, enjoy it on the young side for all its luscious, sweet, ripe, overripe, racy fruits, or age it for decades as it gains secondary nuances. Drink from 2025-2065."*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*"Yquem 2020 (Sauternes; 75% Semillon; 25% Sauvignon Blanc; a final yield of around 10 hl/h and hence 44k bottles in comparison to 60k for the 2019; 135 g/l of residual sugar; picked, essentially, in two tries (a tri is a 'sweep' through the vineyard picking grapes), the first of passerillé (the grapes that have been left to dry on the vine) and the second of botrytized grapes; 14% alcohol). The return to quite a traditional blend for Yquem. Golden highlights and, in the sunshine, a splash of buttercup. Joyous, very open and immediately expressive aromatically, this feels fully-formed and, from the very first encounter, complete, harmonious, and supremely integrated (an impression only reinforced as the wine opens in the glass). The nose is rich, sweet, and enticing, with a sparkling, lifted, bright, crisp fresh feel to it – the very pure and precise fruit very much the star of the show. The botrytis notes are present, but a little restrained (much more so than in the 2019, for instance) and the complexity is constructed differently than in a richer and more concentrated vintage with multiple tries of botrytized grapes. This is a wine of purity and precision, the botrytis element bringing a subtle additional complexity without ever dethroning or detracting from the apricot, white pear, apple skin, peach skin, candied apple, and tropical fruit. There's a tiny hint of wild strawberry and just a trace of orange blossom and elderflower – but this is much less floral aromatically than the 2019. There's buttered brioche, saffron, buttercup, heather honey, candy floss and toffee apple, marzipan and frangipane and a panoply of subtle citrus notes – fresh, confit and pressé – bringing tension and accentuating the detail and definition. There's also a delicate hint of roasted langoustine shell. This is super-soft and diaphanous on the entry, cooling in the mouth from the delicacy, purity, and precision of the fruit. It is rich and yet fluid and dynamic and there's a lovely evolution over the palate. The acidity acts like the tannins in a chiseled red wine, engaging slowly but with purpose to shape and structure the flow of the wine over the palate, drawing the core back to a well-defined central spine and, in the process, revealing more and more of the ever more perfectly detailed apricot fruit (like an image moving into focus). It's a little like the building and then breaking of an Atlantic roller, with a profoundly apricot-scented plume of spray released as the acidity (and, indeed, salinity) grips the wine. In form and personality this has much more in common with the very best red wines of the vintage than the whites, with lovely clarity, tension, and poise. Sumptuous, joyous, silkily textured, and energetic, but above all luminous and crystalline with great precision and purity. The touch of fleur de sel elongates the juicy, sapid finish leaving just the pure fruit as a wondrous memory in the empty glass."*  
- CH, thedrinksbusiness.com

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