



Château d'Yquem

The 2018 vintage

WEATHER CONDITIONS

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, signalling a return to fine and very dry conditions which lasted throughout September.

THE 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, *Botrytis cinerea* 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 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.

OVERVIEW

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.

Alcohol content: 13.50%Vol– Residual sugar: 145 g/L – Total acidity: 5.5 g/L H2T– pH: 3.95

Sémillon : 85% - Sauvignon Blanc : 15%



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SPECIALISTS ASSESSMENTS

Un bouquet exotique sans être exubérant, des notes d'épices, un peu safran. Noix de muscade et poivre blanc avec une légère aération. La bouche est fraîche, droite, moyennement dense sans être trop puissante et la liqueur reste élégante et précise. Un Yquem cristallin, frais, aérien et mentholé en finale. Pour une garde moyenne (10 à 15 ans).

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Yohan Castaing, Anthocyanes, le 23/09/2020

Yquem 2018 (85% Semillon; 15% Sauvignon Blanc; alcohol 13.5%; pH 3.95; residual sugar 145 g/L – almost identical to the 2015; largely picked between the 22 and 30 October – making this the latest harvest in the last quarter of a century; around 4,500 cases – the average is more like 7,500). Tasted with Sandrine Garbay at the chateau a week before bottling. Even if 2018 is unlikely to go down in the annals of vinous history as a 'great' Sauternes vintage, as is so often the case in vintages like this Yquem has produced an unquestionably great wine. For me, by quite some distance, the wine of the vintage.

Botrytis came very late, only really in mid-October after the catalyst of the long-awaited rainfall on the 5th and 13th. There is a good side to that, the botrytis formed on grapes that were already completely and fully ripe. But there is a downside too – in that levels of acidity had dropped in the grapes before they were picked (though the effect was mitigated in part by moderate September temperatures). At Yquem the upside trumps by some way the downside, not least as this is a wine that does not lack for balancing acidity.

Tutankhamen gold in the glass; viscous and enticing. Super fresh and lifted on the nose. A little like the 2017 (tasted alongside), the freshness here is delivered almost vertically. Almonds and exotic spices – mace, nutmeg, turmeric and even a hint of star anise. Toasted brioche and pain perdu. Shockingly soft – paradoxically so for a wine that is so rich and intense. On the palate this is almost chewy. Yet at the same time it has this incredible levity and brightness as it tempts and teases the sense and dances on the tongue. So subtle and refined and yet with considerable depth and underlying power. Structured like no other wine in the vintage. Very marked by its botrytis which weaves imperceptible sinews through the wine and holds and binds everything tightly together. This is seamless, supremely integrated and harmonious even at this very early stage – unlike the 2016 which, at the same stage, was much more of a cornucopia of senses and sensations. Apricots and mirabelles, saffron, mimosa and buttercups – shades of yellow and orange, reflecting the sunniness and warmth of the late summer. Extraordinarily textured and with a lovely spiciness. Rich, quite exquisite and very special.

Colin Hay, The Drink Business, 21/09/2020

Le nez est joliment racé, élégant, et offre une petite minéralité ainsi qu'un grain fin. On y retrouve des notes de kumquat frais, de petits agrumes mûrs et plus légèrement de poire williams fraîche associées à de fines touches de pomme croquant, de fleurs, à de très fines notes d'amande, de toasté ainsi qu'à une discrète pointe de vanille. La bouche est fruitée, fraîche, équilibrée et offre une jolie définition, de la précision, une jolie finesse du grain, de la complexité, de la sucrosité, un joli côté aérien, une jolie matière (tout en finesse comme des fils de soie), de la richesse (tout en finesse et maîtrise), une élégance ainsi qu'une jolie fraîcheur. En bouche ce vin exprime des notes de citron cristallisé, de mandarine cristallisée et plus légèrement de pêche de vigne charnue associés à des touches d'agrumes confits, d'ananas rôti/mûr ainsi qu'à de petites touches discrètes d'abricot/de fleurs d'abricot, de fleurs de citronnier, d'amande et à une discrète pointe de toasté. Bonne longueur. Présence de très fines pointes d'amande toastée/noisette rôtie sur la persistance.

19.25+ /20

Jonathan Choukroun Chicheportiche, Vert de Vin, le 15/09/2020



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Average temperatures 2.7°C over average, combined with 20% of the normal rainfall from mid August to the end of July made makes this a naturally rich, low-yielding vintage (40% less than average, not helped by a hail storm 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.

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Jane Anson, Decanter, le 27/08/2020