



VINTAGE 2004

SUMMARY

With six waves of picking spread over seven weeks and twenty-five working days, the 2004 vintage was complex, but well-rounded. It reflects the full gamut of Yquem's terroirs. Careful picking in the vineyard was followed by strict selection in the cellar after numerous blind tastings. The end result is that only the cream of the crop was deemed up to Yquem's draconian quality criteria in 2004.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

After a cold start to the year, bud break was late (the beginning of April). However, June was hot and dry, bringing about perfect flowering and every indication of a large potential crop. While the hailstorm in mid-July only affected us slightly, tropical weather in early August (it rained two days out of three!) caused worrying pockets of "early rot" to appear.

HARVEST

However, the altogether desirable "noble rot" set in on 10th September thanks to warm rainy weather. The first wave of picking took place from 20th-23rd, bringing in excellent fruit with high sugar levels. This also entailed the ruthless elimination of grapes affected by Botrytis at the wrong time (in August).

The second and third waves of picking took place during a warm, dry period lasting from 27th September-7th October, during which time we harvested perfect Semillon grapes with 20° potential alcohol.

From 8th October, rain at the tail end of a depression interrupted the vintage, but also gave rise to a burst of Botrytis. The third stage of the harvest started on the 18th thanks to superb weather which quickly concentrated grapes for the fourth and fifth waves of picking. These gave the 2004 vintage the body and richness essential for great Sauternes. The harvest drew to a close on 2nd-4th November in a final wave of picking.

The vintage was rather spread out, which made for a good balance between sugar and acidity with attractive, perfectly-focused ripe fruit flavours. Alcoholic fermentation took place under the ideal conditions, using only natural yeast.

2004 Yquem has been excellent from the very beginning: expressive and silky on the palate with plenty of volume. This vintage also has a fine balance of 13.5% alcohol volume for 129 g/l of residual sugar and a marked acidity of 4.8 g/l of H₂SO₄, guaranteeing great ageing potential.