



VINTAGE 1995

SUMMARY

Anticipating quick, intense concentration, grapes with lower than average potential alcohol were picked on purpose to balance must expected to reach over 30°.

The blend of these two lots produced a rich, powerful wine with excellent ageing potential.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Wet, very mild winter (February temperatures were + 3° C above average). Spring was hot and dry (less than half the usual rainfall).

A hot (2 to 3 ° C above average) and very dry (6 mm of rain in June instead of the usual 60 mm) summer was interrupted by the "storm of the century" on August 11th, during which 115 mm of rain fell in just two hours!

HARVEST

It was clear early on that this would be an early-maturing and powerful vintage. Tests revealed 16.5° potential alcohol in the golden Sauvignon Blanc grapes on September 7th.

A period of almost continuous rain followed until September 18th with 140 mm of precipitation, or twice the usual amount. Fortunately, the grapes were uniformly ripe and healthy at this stage, which tended to even out the onset of botrytis.

From the 20th onward, this high humidity caused an explosion of noble rot. We went out in the vineyards to pick during several hours of dry weather on September 26th, as 80% of the crop was fully botrytised with 18° potential alcohol.

Since the weather forecast spoke of a lasting anticyclone, we decided not to wait any longer and began picking in a big way, even though sugar levels were slightly under Yquem's average. Seeing as botrytis had well and truly attacked the whole vineyard, our main worry at this stage was to compensate for excessive sugar levels likely to develop at a later date.

This apprehension turned out to be perfectly justified because the potential alcohol later increased by nearly a full degree per day, and the harvest ended with extremely concentrated juice (28 to 30° potential alcohol on the three last days). It was difficult to differentiate separate waves during these 14 consecutive days of picking but, on average, each plot was gone over three times.

Tastings from the end of fermentation and throughout the three and a half years of barrel ageing confirmed the 1995 vintage's exceptional power.

The aftertaste can vie with the very greatest and rarest vintages of Yquem. Lab analyses also show that this vintage is unique, and suggest good to very good ageing potential. This year that will surely go down in the annals of Château d'Yquem.

TASTING NOTES

The 1995 vintage as seen by the Château d'Yquem winemaking team
Brilliant golden colour.

Subtle nose with hints of fruit tart the opens onto honey, dried apricot, and almond overtones. Very intense and powerful on the palate with loads of volume.

Marmalade and gingerbread flavours evolving into other subtle impressions. A real festival of pleasures! This wine needs time to reveal its full potential. Best enjoyed on its own at the end of the meal.

(tasted on April 28th 2003)