

DOMAINES BARONS DE ROTHSCHILD LAFITE

CHÂTEAU RIEUSSEC

R DE RIEUSSEC 2020

BACKGROUND

Classified as a First Growth in 1855, Rieussec is one of the biggest estates of Sauternes with 227 acres of vines, situated on the "communes" of Sauternes and Fargues, high above the Garonne River, in a small area where the cold Autumn dawns help form the famous mist. It is this mist which many believe plays a major role in the development of botrytis cinerea (noble rot). Château Rieussec is located in Fargues (adjacent to Château d'Yquem).

In the 18th century, the Rieussec estate belonged to the Carmes de Langon monks. Sold as a "national inheritance" after the French Revolution, Rieussec experienced several changes of owners before being acquired by Domaines Barons de Rothschild Lafite in 1984. Since then, meticulous plot selection and important innovative methods have been used in the cellars to enhance quality.

APPELLATION

Sauternes (Bordeaux), France

VARIETAL COMPOSITION

57% Sauvignon Blanc, 53% Sémillon

TERROIR & VINTAGE NOTES

Château Rieussec sits on the border of Fargues and Sauternes, bordered by Château d'Yquem to the West. Rieussec is one of the largest properties in Sauternes and Barsac; the vineyards are gravel sitting on sandy-clay soils.

The winter of 2019-2020 was one of the warmest for the last ten years in Bordeaux, resulting in an early bud break around March 20th. There was frequent rain from April to June, with a significant threat of downy mildew. The vines stayed ahead of their usual growth cycle, flowering around May 19th. There was then a fairly abrupt transition with 55 days without rain over the summer months. Véraison (color change) started around July 25th. Quite severe water stress was detected in some parts of the gravel terraces. The soil on the hillsides and at the base of the slopes, and the limestone marl fared much better in the hot, dry weather. As a result, the first Sauvignon Blanc grapes were harvested earlier in the year, with picking starting on August 18th. The harvests continued in fine weather, finishing just before the first days of September, which is quite remarkable: there have not been such early harvests at Rieussec for at least a decade.

WINEMAKING

Grapes are harvested by hand in small crates. They are refrigerated prior to being brought to the press, which helps prevent oxidation. The pressing is gentle in order to retain the aromatic freshness of the grapes. Once the must has settled, most of the semillon are placed in new oak barrels to undergo alcoholic fermentation, while the sauvignon is predominantly fermented in temperature controlled stainless steel tanks.

AGEING

Once fermentation is completed, the wine in barrel is kept on its lees for a period of six months with regular stirring, while the sauvignon are racked and left to age in the tanks to preserve their aromatic qualities.

TASTING NOTES

Very intense, complex nose. There are lovely aromas of citrus and passion fruit from the Bois plots, full of young Sauvignon Blanc vines growing on limestone marl. More mineral, smoky notes recall the scent of hot, moist gravel after a magnificent summer storm on the plateau.

The palate is very smooth, underscored by an acidity that contributes to the wine's length. There is excellent volume with a delicious touch of butter thanks to the ageing in barrels from Tonnellerie des Domaines Lafite cooperage. Notes of bergamot accompany the finish, which ends with a promising liveliness.



"The wines of Sauternes are so wonderful that we wanted to have our own, and Rieussec's vineyard is outstanding."

— Baron Eric de Rothschild



WINEMAKER

Olivier Tregcoat

TECHNICAL DATA

Total Acidity: 3.78 g/L

pH: 3.12

Alcohol:

13%



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