R DE RIEUSSEC 2020

VINEYARD ATTRIBUTES

Appellation : AOC Bordeaux, France
The Sauternes appellation stretches on the left bank of the Garonne, about 50km South of Bordeaux. The natural humidity arising from the Ciron river provides the ideal conditions for the development of Bortrytis Cinerea, also known as noble rot.

Terroir : 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, covering 85 hectares of gravel sitting on sandy-clay soils.

VINTAGE SUMMARY

The autumn winter of 2019-2020 was one of the warmest for the last ten years in Bordeaux, resulting in an early bud break around 20 March. There was frequent rain from April to June, and we had to fight against a significant threat of downy mildew. The vines stayed ahead of their usual growth cycle, flowering around 19 May. There was then a fairly abrupt transition with 55 days without rain over the summer months. Véraison (colour change) started around 25 July. We detected quite severe water stress in some parts of our beautiful 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 early this year, with picking starting on 18 August. The harvests continued in fine weather, finishing just before the first days of September, which is quite remarkable: we have not had such early harvests at Rieussec for at least a decade.

WINE MAKING SCHEME

Grapes are harvested by hand in small crates. They are refrigerated prior to being brought to the press, which helps prevent oxydation. 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, whilst the sauvignon is predominantly fermented in temperature controlled stainless steel tanks. Once fermentation is completed, the wine in barrel is kept on its lees for a period of six months with regular stirring, whilst 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 our 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 our cooper, Tonnellerie des Domaines (Lafite). Notes of bergamot accompany the finish, which ends with a promising liveliness.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Varietals : Sauvignon blanc 57%, Sémillon 43%
Alcohol content : 13 % vol.
pH : 3.12
Total acidity : 3.78 g/l