

## Château Rieussec

Presented by Tanneguy d'Harcourt, Brand Ambassador  
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*With a synopsis of noble rot on the last page*

It was wonderful to have this outstanding property featured in TGWS this year. This Premier Grand Cru of Sauternes was acquired by Domaines Barons de Rothschild (Lafite) in 1984 and is the perfect partner for Lafite itself.

Far too little attention is paid to Sauternes, which belongs to the pantheon of the greatest vinous achievements. True, these wines are sweet to varying degrees and today's tastes lean dry. However, for much of history wines touched by noble rot were placed at the top of the pyramid, above dry whites and reds. It's worth remembering that Château d'Yquem was ranked as the one and only Premier Cru Supérieur in 1855, effectively placing it above all other Bordeaux wines.

Another salient point is that the sweetness is typically offset by beautiful acidity, which means that the finest examples are superbly calibrated rather than heavy and cloying. Among the wines presented here, there are some which are comparatively delicate and would match a diversity of food preparations, not simply desserts. Personally, I find the precise and refined examples particularly compelling.

The mix of grapes at Rieussec revolves around 90% to 95% Semillon with the balance split between Sauvignon Blanc and Muscadelle. The production is variable but averages only 6,000 (9-liter) cases annually.

### **Carmes de Rieussec 2020**

*Light yellow gold. An inflected youthful perfume of candied pineapple, starfruit, and white grapefruit pith. Apparent sweetness yet subtle and fine. Tender, pure, and already long with a fine acid spine. Beautiful right now in its youth.*

### **Carmes de Rieussec 2019**

*Light gold. The nose delivers lemon candy, ginger, and peach. On the palate, the sweetness is disguised. The impression is caressing, understated. Embedded acidity provides a fine counterpoint. Notable for its finesse.*

### **Ch Rieussec 2019**

*Yellow gold. Ample aroma, very rich. Honeyed and lemony. Simply sensational in its multi-faceted taste profile! Very young, still reserved and promising much more to come. Hidden acidity provides support and equilibrium.*

### **Ch Rieussec 2014**

*Pronounced yellow gold. At first intense, concentrated, and faintly volatile to the nose. Candied yellow fruits and acacia honey command attention. The palate, contrarily, is remarkably elusive, nuanced, and composed. Spot-on equilibrium. A beautiful Sauternes which should have a long life.*

### **Ch Rieussec 2011**

*Golden yellow, more density than the 2014. The developing bouquet boasts classic “roasted” noble rot with baked peach, butter pastry, and an enhancing volatile lift. This stunning 2011 is luscious and very sweet, filling the mouth with its opulence, all while remaining well balanced. Arresting finale, exceptionally long.*

### **Ch Rieussec 2010**

*Pronounced yellow gold. The complex nose exhibits an intriguing combination of floweriness and a slight mushroom or earthy note together with an intense apricot and roasted quality. The 2010’s taste is sublime: toffee and honey with a silky feel. A masked, delicate acidity provides a refined send-off.*

### **Ch Rieussec 2009**

*Very deep golden yellow. Incredibly luxuriant and inviting nose of marked volume and noble roast. Explosive and voluminous on the palate as well as mouth-coating and intensely sweet. A powerful, opulent vintage best suited to equally rich and sugary desserts such as flan, caramel custard, or bread pudding.*

### **Ch Rieussec 2005**

*Dense yellow gold. Prominent botrytis and imposing richness in its toffee-rich bouquet. Simply fabulous in the mouth! Viscous and amazingly long in taste. A magnificent Sauternes which has arrived at an exquisite stage of life.*

### **Ch Rieussec 2003**

*Deeply colored: yellow, gold, amber. The nose is multidimensional, featuring classic roasted notes, mango, and apricot. On the palate, voluptuous, unctuous, and mouth-coating. Very generous, nearly overpowering.*

### **Ch Rieussec 2001**

*Gold, yellow, and amber to the eye. More evolved aromatically with a whiff of mushroom. Very beautiful and less assertive at this stage. Elegant and balanced. Precise defining acid frame gives lift. Particularly long aftertaste. At an ideal point of life. The perfect model of this high-caliber vintage. Nearly all Semillon and no Muscadelle in the blend this year.*

### **Ch Rieussec 2000**

*Dark amber yellow. Refined and restrained nose, particularly subtle in expression with a background of apricot and vanilla. Dances across the palate with a light, lilting feel. Ends with a note of caramel. Immensely pleasurable. Uncommon blend this year with much less Semillon, more Sauvignon and Muscadelle.*

### **Ch Rieussec 1998**

*Golden amber. A very beautiful perfume of toffee and roasted highlights, exceptionally pure. Striking and elegant with a very long line across palate. A saline finale hinting at salted caramel.*

### **Ch Rieussec 1997**

*Golden amber. The bouquet marries an evolving roasted overtone with ripe yellow peach. In the mouth, the 1997 is resolved and understated. Lovely and subtle. Very fine.*

### **Ch Rieussec 1988**

*Yellow amber. Intricate and focused aroma, exciting and inflected. Exceptionally precise mouthfeel, beautifully calibrated. A paragon of elegance and refinement. As with the 1997, proves how Sauternes often becomes graceful and polished and less obviously sweet with bottle age.*

### **Ch Rieussec 1983**

*Dark yellow amber. Extraordinary bouquet of toffee, caramel, and buckwheat honey. There is a huge volume of flavor for a wine of this age (nearly 40 years from vintage). Unctuous. Amazing length. Seems to last forever. A splendid example of this excellent vintage for Sauternes.*

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### **NOBLE ROT (*Botrytis cinerea*) in brief**

**Noble rot is responsible for some of the most extraordinary sweet wines in the world. This benign fungus requires just the right combination of humid nights and sunny, dry days.**

**The grapes become dehydrated and shrivel, concentrating the sugars.**

**There is a gain in glycerol, adding texture.**

**Acetic and gluconic acids increase, providing a volatile accent and enhancing complexity.**

**Enzymes are produced, specifically laccases, which account for honey, caramel, and apricot flavors.**

**The vine produces botryticine, its own antibiotic.**

**The combined effect of these and other changes on the aroma and flavor is sometimes referred to as a “roasted” quality or *goût de rôti* in French.**

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