



# Cuvée Madame de Château Coutet

## 1997

### HISTORY

The origin of Cuvée Madame goes back to Madame Rolland-Guy, owner of Château COUTET between 1922 and 1977. The vineyard workers were in the habit of working without pay for one day while picking the remaining grapes from one of the property's two oldest parcels, whose berries were super-concentrated. A sweet wine of incomparable richness and flavor was thus obtained.

This very small and exceptional cuvée was dedicated to Madame, the proprietor's wife. The Baly family carries on this tradition for their finest harvests. The superb Cuvée Madame was made in 1981, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1995, 1997, 2001, 2003 following the memorable 1943, 1947, 1959, 1971 and 1975 vintages)

### VITICULTURE

The Cuvée Madame originates from the property's two oldest parcels of Sémillon. The average age of the vines on these plots is 55 years.

### WINEMAKING

The selection process is painstaking as each grape is picked one-by-one by hand. Further sorting takes place at the wine press and damaged grapes are eliminated immediately. The unfermented grape juice is quite rich, with 22 to 26 degrees of potential alcohol. A single, light pressing (at less than 180 kg/cm<sup>2</sup>) produces a clear, limpid juice. Alcohol fermentation takes place in new French oak barrels. The large amount of natural sugar forces the yeast to work slowly and develop secondary aromas that will contribute to the wine's complexity. Once this hard work is done, the wine is aged in barrels for three years before bottling.

### WEATHER CONDITIONS

A dry and warm climate in the first months of the year caused the vegetation cycle to start three weeks earlier than usual. Frost in April, combined with a cool May, slowed the cycle and caused the flowering to take place in the second fortnight of May. A dry July, hot and wet August and dry September provided favorable conditions for the development of the Botrytis cinerea. The crop had to be cleaned twice after the August rain that caused an attack of 'grey rot'.

HARVEST DATE	October 14 <sup>th</sup> , 1997
BLEND	100% Sémillon
FERMENTATION	100% barrel fermented, 100% new oak
ELEVAGE	100% new French oak for three years
ESTATE BOTTLED	June 2000

### TASTING NOTES

The '97 Cuvée Madame has a very opulent, botrytis-rich bouquet with yellow plum, honey and orange peel that wafts like a harlot from the glass. It is instantly seductive and tangibly different from the regular Coutet. The palate is beautifully balanced with vibrant acidity the slices through the mellifluous, honeyed fruit mingling with fresh apricot, clementine and a touch of passion fruit. There is a candied quality to this Cuvée Madame, an almost constrained decadence that brims over towards a powerful, alcoholic, lascivious finish. Wonderful. Drink now-2030+. Neal Martin, ERobertparker.com April 2010, 96/100.