



2003

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Following a particularly mild winter, bud break began on March 24th, on the same date as the previous two years. Mid-flowering was observed on May 30th and mid-véraison on August 5th.

The summer heat wave, combined with the season's exceptional levels of sunshine, violent thunderstorms on June 24th and July 15th, and some rainfall in September, encouraged the Botrytis cinerea to spread rapidly (70% of the vineyard was affected by mid-September).

HARVEST

Excellent weather during the 19 days of harvesting enabled the 70 pickers to make four passes through the vineyard, gathering a crop that gave richly aromatic musts.

HARVEST DATES	September 16 th to October 6 th , 2003
PASSES	4 manuel successive passes
NUMBER OF DAYS OF HARVEST	19
GRAPE VARIETIES	Sémillon 80%, Sauvignon Blanc 18%, Muscadelle 2%
FERMENTATION	in barrel (100% new)
AGEING	18 months in French oak barrels 100% French oak
ESTATE BOTTLED	May 2005

TASTING NOTES

The wine is of a beautiful aged gold color. Its very expressive nose reveals a large array of aromatic notes, lemon zests, preserved pineapple, crystallized quince, vanilla and honey, yet keeps a very distinct minerality.

The first impression on the palate is one of concentration. It is the sign of a beautiful botrytisation and typical of this hot and structured vintage.

The wine is at the same time classy, powerful, and fleshy -- even voluptuous in the middle -- but is not dominated absolutely by a sensation of alcohol. The retro-olfaction gives out a wide range of aromas such as honey, vanilla, gingerbread and small dried fruits with a few tangy notes of citrus fruits, candied pineapple which brings a light touch of freshness. The savory finish is well balanced, a great quality for this rich and massive vintage.

July 30, 2014:

Beautiful color. Dried fruits, such as apricots on the nose. Rich, powerful and concentrated mouth feel, round and balanced wine. Aromas of dried fruit, orange peel and candied orange.

It is against my better judgment to taste the sweet wines of Barsac and Sauternes at such an early age, as I find they typically require at least 12 months to reveal the definition/delineation so essential in these creamy, crème brûlée, and honeysuckle-flavored offerings. Nevertheless, because this vintage is so highly regarded, I tasted through most of the top estates. The 2003s appear to be somewhat in the style of the 1990s, with high levels of residual sugar (higher than 2001 for the most part) as well as botrytis, low acidity, and fat, full-bodied personalities.

This region's harvest began extremely early (early September), and was completely finished within three weeks. It does not appear that the nobleness and racy richness of the 2001 vintage will be found in the 2003s, but readers who like the big, flamboyant, over the top style of the 1990s will enjoy the 2003s even more than I did. Robert Parker, The Wine Advocate, April 2004, 93-96 /100