



2005 SAUTERNE

It wasn't just the clarets which shone en primeur. Many believe 2005 is one of Bordeaux's greatest ever sweet wine vintages. DAVID PEPPERCORN MW rates the star performers

AS WITH THE rest of Bordeaux, the 2005 vintage was the outstanding feature of the 2005 season in Sauternes. Last year was actually the second best year since 1977, just after 1988 and just ahead of 1989 – both rather mediocre vintages.

The period from June to October was also the 20th hottest in 120 years, after 1933, 1948, 1953 and 1988, but ahead of 1988 and 1987 – all of these great years for Sauternes. But to make Sauternes you need a hot, dry, sunny autumn. The weather of May, July or August. This was followed by perfect micro-climatic conditions, with steady morning fog and afternoon sunsets through all October.

Everyone was quick to recognise the quality of the 2005 Sauternes and the resulting prices. 'We can't remember having such a good first sale,' says William Lurton at Château d'Yquem. 'This vintage provides an educational

experience for our visitors – everything is new! After three vintages of Château d'Yquem, this is an extraordinary vintage. It is a very good vintage, but not as good as the vintage of 2001. This time all the producers had excellent, first great harvest and completely outstanding 2005 could take the place of 2001 and 2002 as the vintage of what Sauternes can produce. All the stars are extremely drinkable young, but the best will improve for up to 20 years.

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FIVE STARS ★★★★★

CHATEAU D'YQUEM 1985 (17.5) This is a first vintage from the longest highlights the great concentration and sheer beauty and purity of the fruit. The wine has tremendous length and elegance with exceptional sweetness. Typical,

especially pronounced fruit notes and richness will also be enhanced with a touch

GREAT VALUE TIPS

After the Union des Grands Crus tasting I discovered two unclassified wines of four-star quality. Both are from Barsac and likely to represent exceptional value.

CHATEAU LA CLOTTE-CAZALIS 1985 comes from Barsac, Bordeaux, in the great region of the quality. The grapes, rich and well-hanging in a Sauternes. The second is

CHATEAU LA CLOTTE-CAZALIS (17.5)

has belonged to the Lacoste family since 1779 and, after 40 years of being leased out, the vineyards have been reclaimed. The first vintage was 2001. There are only 5ha, with 95% Sémillon. The wine has great purity of fruit and concentration – quite superb. Both are well-worth seeking out. **D**

David Peppercorn MW is a leading expert on Bordeaux. His latest book is *Wines of Bordeaux* (£9.99, Mitchell Beazley)

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS POINCELT