

Château Guiraud launches flagship dry white wine



TOP 5 WINES

VINTAGE	WINE NAME	SCORE
2020	Château Guiraud Bordeaux Blanc Château Guiraud Blanc Sec 2020	94

JANE ANSON, MARCH 2022

G de Guiraud has long been one of the true bargains on the wine world – a sappy, exuberant dry white that you can find for around €14 on the French market. But this is an 1855 classified estate, that was not only one of the first classified properties to become certified organic back in 2010 (it was a two-horse race at the time with **Pontet Canet**), but has been at the forefront of a push to preserve the genetic diversity of Bordeaux white grapes. All of which means it's not surprising that the estate clearly wants to launch a dry white that rivals the great dry whites of the Médoc 1855 properties.

Cue the Guiraud Blanc Sec that has just released its inaugural 2020 vintage. This was an extremely dry year that favoured exotic fruit flavours in contrast to the bright intensity of 2019. It was a particularly early harvest – Guiraud began picking the grapes for this wine on August 20, just after the first wave of picking for the sparkling Crémant de Bordeaux on August 15, and a few days earlier than Château Climens' dry white Asphodèle on August 24.

Overall this early harvest meant the whites avoided the searing heat of September so not only are the yields good on average, but the flavours are juicy and balanced – Guiraud Blanc finished harvesting the grapes for its dry whites by September 7, with a healthy 40hl/h yield.

This stands in contrast to the average yield of the sweet Sauternes wines in 2019, which stood at 12hl/h, giving a good idea as to why more and more Sauternes and Barsac estates are releasing dry whites – and becoming more ambitious in how they are positioning them in terms of image and price. In the same week that Guiraud announced its new wine, the neighbouring Château Suduiraut also announced an expanded range of dry whites with the 2020 Château Suduiraut Vieilles Vignes Grand Vin Blanc Sec, the 2020 Château Suduiraut Pur Sémillon Grand Vin Blanc Sec and Lions de Suduiraut Bordeaux Blanc Sec (bringing their output to a total of four dry whites since S de Suduiraut first launched in 2004).

The discussion over whether to create a specific Sauternes Sec dry white appellation has still not been resolved, but the wines themselves, led by names such as Asphodèle, Opalie de Coutet and of course Y d'Yquem (the original, first produced in 1959), are standout, easily rivalling the Cru Classés whites of Pessac-Léognan. Château Guiraud Blanc Sec is clearly going for a richer, more textured style than G de Guiraud, setting it up as a gourmet white to be drunk with food. It's fermented in barrels that were previously used for Château Guiraud's Premier Grand Cru Classé Sauternes, adding extra depth, but still with a high percentage of Sauvignon Blanc, as is signature for this estate.

TASTED BY JANE ANSON - 23 MARCH 2022

Château Guiraud Bordeaux Blanc Château Guiraud Blanc Sec 2020

G de Guiraud, the long-time dry white of Château Guiraud, has for years been one of great bargains of the wine world. It still is, but you can understand why, as an 1855 classified estate in Sauternes, Guiraud would want it to be joined by a more serious, structured white that can rival the great whites of the classified Médoc estates.

This is its inaugural vintage (and also the 10th anniversary since organic certification at Guiraud), and it's a confident start, with creamy citrus, apricot and white pear, clearly differentiating from the more zippy charms of G de Guiraud. Although this is 0g/l residual sugar, so bone dry, the wine is fermented for three weeks in barrels that were previously used for Guiraud's flagship Sauternes, and that combined with the heat of the 2020 summer combine to give this gourmet, rich and succulent character.

Put this together with an edge of bitter almond and oyster shell salinity and you have a white wine with presence. I look forward to seeing how this character is expressed in a vintage with more contrasting acidity. Harvest from August 20 to September 7, 40hl/h yield.

SCORE 94

VINTAGE 2020 PRODUCER CHÂTEAU GUIRAUD

APPELLATION BORDEAUX BLANC