



Bin No:

1811

Wine: **Chateau Musar Red 2000 Vt**

Country: *Lebanon*

Region: *Bekka Valley*

Producer: *Chateau Musar*

Vintage: *2000*

Colour: *Red*

Grape Variety: *Cabernet Sauvignon - Carignan - Cinsault*

Status: *Still*

Organic Certification - Vegetarian - Vegan

Body Value *E (A is light, E is full-bodied)*

abv: 14% - bottle size: 75cl



Tasting Note

When tasted in early November 1999, the wines were tannic, concentrated and powerful, but very well balanced. Now at 20 years after the vintage, the 2000 holds on to its primary fruit whilst really starting to reveal the classic Musar identity, balancing out the characteristic sweet spice and desiccated fruit notes with more evolved elements of leather, tar, tobacco and a hint of game. These complex aromas and flavours are lifted with a fresh lick of acidity that will ensure the wine will continue to age gracefully for years to come.

Winery information:

The Hochar family's philosophy of respect for the environment means that the 180 hectares of Musar vineyards are managed with minimal human interference and all the wines are made as naturally.

Chateau Musar was the first producer in Lebanon to achieve organic certification for its vineyards. Most are located in the Bekaa Valley, cradled between two mountain ranges running parallel to Lebanon's Mediterranean coastline. Vines have been cultivated here for at least 6,000 years: the Phoenicians (seafaring ancestors of the modern Lebanese) were instrumental in bringing vines and wines from Byblos across to all of the areas around the Mediterranean.

This wine is the 'Grands Vins', each with their unique signature and imprint in the world of wine. Since 1930, every aspect of production – grape sourcing, fermentation, oak-ageing and bottle maturation – has been trialed to achieve the ultimate expression of Musar's specific 'terroirs' (site-specific interactions of soil, vine, climate and time).

A guide to the style

In youth, Chateau Musar Reds are dense and richly-textured, with intense 'baked fruit' characters: plums, damsons, cranberries, cherries, figs and dates. Bordeaux grape Cabernet Sauvignon lends black fruit flavours; Rhône grapes Cinsault and Carignan contribute fragrance (violets; pepper) and supple spiciness. Either set of qualities might dominate a particular vintage, but the style is always emphatically Lebanese: enticingly aromatic, with persistent fruit flavours. Over decades the wines acquire tawny hues and mellow notes. We still offer wines from the 1950s: mesmerising artefacts of vintage.

Flanked by snow-covered mountains, and nestled at 1000m (3,000 feet) above sea level, the serenely beautiful Bekaa Valley is blessed with 300 days of sunshine a year, fresh mountain breezes and an average temperature of

25°C (encompassing snowy winters and hot summers). Remote and unspoilt, the Musar vineyards were 'organic' by default before the term was coined.

All the grapes are hand-harvested by local Bedouins between August and October. In the winery, ambient yeasts do the work of fermentation. The bare minimum of sulphur is used and the Chateau Musar wines are neither fined nor filtered.

Vinification:

Average rainfall in winter with some cold days, followed by pleasant weather which allowed flowering to develop well in the spring. However, things started to deviate from the norm with the arrival of summer; July was unusually hot with some very dry days when temperatures exceeded 35°C, followed by a hotter than average August. Harvest started on the 6th September, one week earlier than usual. The crop was healthy and quality good but yields were down by 15%. The grapes were sweet but tannic with good acidity.

Grapes and vines

Seven years in the making, Chateau Musar Red is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Carignan and Cinsault from vineyards near the Bekaa Valley villages of Aana and Kefraya on gravelly soils over limestone. Planted from the 1930s onwards, yields are low from these mature bushvines (average age: 40 years): 35hl per hectare.

Winemaking

Fermentation progressed well - slowly with very little heat as it was naturally under control. Interestingly, the level of alcohol was higher than usual - almost the same as 1999. All in all, it was an easy harvest and an easy fermentation with hardly any problems and malolactic fermentation followed its normal course.

Blending

Storage

To keep the wines showing at their best, bottles must be cellared in darkness, lying on their sides and not subjected to unnecessary movement or fluctuations in temperature.

Food Recommendation

Decanting and serving

Bottled unfined and unfiltered, Chateau Musar Reds are suitable for vegans (fining agents often contain animal proteins); they're also richly-textured and likely to 'throw a crust'. This is a common feature of most fine wines and is especially true of Musar Red vintages over a decade old. Ideally, bottles should be stood up the night before opening to settle any sediment. After careful decanting (and discarding of sediment, usually in the last centimetre of the bottle) the wine should be allowed to breathe for several hours and served at 18°C with roasts, grills (especially lamb), casseroles, game, and mature cheeses.

