



Bin No:

1813

Wine: **Chateau Musar Red 2002 Vt**

Country: *Lebanon*

Region: *Bekka Valley*

Producer: *Chateau Musar*

Vintage: *2002*

Colour: *Red*

Grape Variety: *Cabernet Sauvignon - Carignan - Cinsault*

Status: *Still*

Allergens *Organic Certification - Vegetarian – Vegan*
contains sulphates

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

abv: 14% - *bottle size:* 75cl



Tasting Note

A deep crimson – even blood red colour with an intense and complex nose of spicy red fruits, cedar with deeper plum notes. Generous red and Black fruits follow through to the palate combined with Christmas cake spices, figs dates and stewed plums. Good acidity, silky tannins with a rich fruited palate and a long promising finish.

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:

After four successive years of drought, there was a long, rainy and cold winter which lasted until June. This was followed by a mild July and hot August. The vines took longer to reach maturity than average and the harvest started almost two weeks later than in previous years. The maturity level varied from vineyard to vineyard forcing the pickers to be selective in the harvesting – the grapes were picked by hand in the early mornings.

The grapes began arriving at the winery on 15th September, a lower fermentation temperature was needed so the yeast has the ability to complete transforming the sugar into alcohol.

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

The varietal components in Chateau Musar Red undergo lengthy fermentations in cement vats at temperatures below 31°C. and this was a very long fermentation and maceration were totally unexpected. The wines were racked six months after the harvest and then put into French nevers oak barrels for one year.

Blending

The varietal components were racked six months after the harvest and put into French nevers oak barrels for one year. The three varietals of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault and Carignan which up until then had been kept separately, were blended in the following summer of 2004 and bottled in July and August 2005.

The grapes of this year were characterised by high levels of sugar, acidity and tannins with the resulting wines being much bigger, riper and fuller than expected.

An exceptional year. As normally in Lebanon, high sugar content means less acidity, in 2002 everything was there.

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.

