



Bin No:
1815

Wine: **Chateau Musar Red 2004 Vt**

Country: *Lebanon*

Region: *Bekka Valley*

Producer: *Chateau Musar*

Vintage: *2004*

Colour: *Red*

Grape Variety: *Cabernet Sauvignon - Carignan - Cinsault*

Status: *Still*

*Organic Certification - Vegetarian – Vegan
contains sulphates*

Allergens

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

abv: 14% - bottle size: 75cl



Tasting Note

A deep burgundy colour with a nose of mature fruits, plums, cherries, figs, cinnamon and cloves. The aromas follow through to a palate full of rich black and red fruits – plums and damsons dominate with pomegranate, baked cherries and Christmas spices.

An intensely concentrated powerful vintage with fine smooth tannins and a spicy, warming 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:

The vintage we experienced in 2004 only happens on average once in every decade.

The winter in Lebanon was fairly consistent with previous years with snow until March, spring until June followed by a very mild and gentle summer. Fresh, cool air dominated the summer months which allowed the grapes to mature slowly and steadily.

At the very beginning of the 2004 harvest and for two weeks, the grapes had low sugar content with medium acidity. Then suddenly a one week heat-wave changed everything – high sugar content grapes, but again with medium acidity, began to arrive at the winery.

This interesting and important experience was like a case study, almost as if there were two different harvests in the same year.

The wines from the first two weeks of the harvest were fruity and mellow with floral aromas from the Cinsault and Carignan. The Cabernet Sauvignon was more powerful, intense and concentrated with mature black and red fruits, leather and spices.

Two weeks later the Cinsault and Carignan developed more of a red fruit character, the overall palate became more velvety with smooth integrated tannins.

The wines spent 9 months in cement vats and then a year in French nevers oak barrels and the final blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault and Carignan rested for another 9 months in vats before being bottled and transferred to the Chateau Musar cellars high in the mountains at Ghazir to begin its journey of maturation and development

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 30°C. 6 months after the harvest they are transferred into French barrels (oak from the forest of Nevers) for one year.

Blending

The varietal components are brought together two years after the harvest; the resulting blend is then placed back in cement tanks before being bottled 12 months later. Each wine is blended to reflect the character of the vintage. After 4 years' bottle maturation in the deep stone cellars of Chateau Musar, the finished wines are released a full seven years after the harvest.

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 unfinned 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.

