



Bin No:

1817

Wine: **Chateau Musar Red 2008 Vt**

Country: *Lebanon*

Region: *Bekka Valley*

Producer: *Chateau Musar*

Vintage: *2008*

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

Released 7 years later in the spring of 2015, the wine has a beautiful rich scarlet colour with an alluring nose of black and red fruits, cherries, coffee, leather and cloves. A good natural intensity with well integrated tannins and good acidity – this is a rich, warm, concentrated vintage of Chateau Musar showing an abundance of fruit, energy and considerable finesse. Mature and balanced with a long 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:

2008 was a year full of significant events, each in itself sufficient to change the outcome of the vintage. The weather was unremarkable during the first two months of the year with snow in January and rain until 23rd February.

But what happened next was extraordinary – no rain in the Bekaa Valley for the rest of the spring and the whole of the summer. March was fresh but not cold, April, May and June were mostly sunny, helping to achieve 90% flowering.

Humidity levels were at their lowest averages: 35 to 40%. Weeds, which are more apparent with organic viticulture, were few in number this year due to the lack of water.

In mid-August, a heatwave hit the Bekaa Valley for five days causing all the red grape varieties – Syrah, Carignan, Cinsault and Grenache to reach maturation at the same time.

The main concern was which order to bring the grapes in? Therefore harvesting became a day by day decision. When the first grapes arrived at the winery, we were delighted by the rich, balanced qualities of this early harvest. Fermentation began with the Syrah, followed by Carignan and Cinsault with Cabernet Sauvignon surprisingly the last.

The early stages of fermentation were straightforward but a week later sugar levels increased causing fermentation to take longer than usual due to the richness of the grapes. The Chateau Musar 'grand vin' of this vintage is the traditional blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault and Carignan – approximately one third of each. The blending took place 3 years later in 2011 and the wines spent a year in French Nevers oak barrels. The Cinsault of 2008 seemed to benefit most from the heat and exceptional weather and showed abundant red fruit aromas, Carignan displayed blackcurrant and black cherry notes and the Cabernet Sauvignon gave us structure with herbs, coffee and dark berry fruits. The grapes this year were intensely juicy.

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 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.

