



Bin No:

1818

Wine: **Chateau Musar Red 2009 Vt**

Country: *Lebanon*

Region: *Bekka Valley*

Producer: *Chateau Musar*

Vintage: *2009*

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

Released in the spring of 2016, this vintage has a deep scarlet colour and a nose of blackberries, Assam tea, dark chocolate and mulled berries.

On the palate there are rich black and red fruits, especially blackcurrants, cherries, damsons and figs with warm cinnamon spice and a hint of mint. This vintage is also characterised by a smoky, earthiness. The tannins are well integrated, there is good acidity and a long dry 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.

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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:

2009 was a truly memorable year in the Bekaa Valley and a vintage of two halves – before and after the rain! This vintage will go down in history as the year of the two day September deluge – unprecedented since records began in 1870. Conditions until mid-September had been exemplary – no rain or snow fell for the first three months of the year but surprisingly the rain and snow came back at the end of March and gave the blossoming vines a much needed moisture boost – the soils were also in much need of this moisture after a couple of months of dryness. Low humidity in May, June and July promoted excellent vine health and the weeds that also thrived in these conditions were manually removed – this was our only hard work during this time. Sultry conditions at the end of the summer brought the harvest on quickly and the red grapes began arriving on the 2nd September, Cabernet Sauvignon followed by Carignan with Cinsault last on the 7th and 8th. With low PH and high acidity and sugar, the grapes held exceptional promise. After the September rain fall, the remaining red grapes were harvested and were juicier than usual, showing a full bodied structure and a very fragrant nose.

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 Chateau Musar of 2009 is the traditional blend of approximately one third each of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault and Carignan. The blending took place 3 years later in 2012 and the wines spent a year in French Nevers oak barrels. The Cabernet Sauvignon in particular flourished this year, from flowering to dominating the final structure and taste of the wine.

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.

