



Chateau Musar

CHATEAU MUSAR RED 1990

Tasting Note

Citations

In 1990 the grapes narrowly missed being caught by the blockade which began on 28th September.

(Oz Clarke's Wine Guide 1994)

The 1990 nearly didn't happen. The two hour lorry journey was extended to seven hours northwards via Bcharre, where the Cedars of Lebanon grow.

(Wine Watch: Against the Odds. 1993)

In October 1990 a small unit of the rebel Christian-Lebanese General Aoun's army sent 60,000 shells down into Belhorizon in two days. It was senseless military vandalism

by a dozen soldiers, angry that their cause was doomed and keen to take it out on any target they could, even one within their own community. The development 'was destroyed to such an effect that we didn't think it could be rebuilt' The beautiful houses were shattered.

(Will to Survive - Andrew Jefford).

The longest detour was in 1990: a rambling dog-leg to the north through Bcharre, where Lebanon's 400 or so remaining antique cedars stand near some of the Middle East's best skiing.

(Power Serge - Andrew Jefford).

Was it not for a hunch that the political situation was turning sour again, the 1990 vintage might never have been made; a little earlier than he would have liked, but by the end of September the Syrians had shut all the roads from the vineyards as they closed in on General Aoun. As it was, the lorries had to make a huge dog-leg up through the Bcharre to avoid the fighting. Despite the journey, the wine is nervier, tighter, fresher than usual - 'more European than Lebanese' as Serge sees it.

(Will to Survive - Andrew Jefford)

In October 1990, Syrian troops clamped down on east Beirut, defeating forces loyal to Aoun. Subsequently the Lebanese army, with Syrian backing regained control over much of the country and ousted the PLO from strongholds in southern Lebanon.
(‘Lebanon’ Microsoft Encarta 1995)

Syrian imposed an uneasy peace in 1990 but 30,000 people had died along the way.
(Born again Beirut - Observer Oct. 1995)

In September 1990, he lost the harvest of one vineyard when the Syrians imposed a total blockade on Beirut. And then, picking up vital Italian equipment from Beirut airport, he was stopped by a hostile militia and had to plead for his life. “I was fortunate” he said.

Vintage Report

“ The mild Winter with very little rain and less than average snow fall on the mountains was followed unpredictably by one of the coolest summers on record. After an early flowering we expected an early harvest which in fact did not happen.

We started picking on 12th September and remarkably, the picking and transportation of grapes to the winery at Ghazir took place without incident, although the logistics this year were as difficult as ever. Finishing the harvest on 27th September was fortunate as on the 28th the blockade started and we were unable to move from the Winery.

Fermentation was easy this year with normal maceration time and good tannins, good vintage of fruit, good acidity but lower than average alcohol.

A very distinctive year with strong blackcurrant flavours coming through, excellent ageing potential.”

Serge HOCHAR. 1990

A vintage in which the harvest occurred early due to the war. Green pepper, mint and red cabbage on the nose. A lighter style and not as generous as the other wines from the 1990's. You can tell something's is different here but by no means is it flawed."

Michael Schachner - The Wine Enthusiast October 2000