



Chateau Musar

CHATEAU MUSAR RED 2003

The 2003 harvest was a unique experience and two words can aptly summarise it: *Alcohol & Acidity* – this vintage is rich in both.

After a rainy winter (records show that it was the rainiest year in 15 years), from mid April onwards not a drop of rain fell and it became hot and sunny. In May when flowering started, a 10 day heat wave reduced the harvest quantity by about 30%. This phenomenon was responsible for the concentration of sugar and acidity in the grapes. July and August were not as hot as they used to be in years gone by and certainly not as hot as it was in Europe in 2003.

The harvest started on the 4th September and the grapes were very healthy with good maturity and ripeness. The fermentation temperature was controlled between 27 and 30 degrees Celsius with 2 pump-overs per day to increase extraction, with a long maceration: about 3 weeks. Malo-lactic fermentation followed immediately and by the end of November, all the wines had finished their malo-lactic and had been racked. Even at the racking stage, we could tell that the wines were reflecting a great year, abundant in tannins, acidity and colour.

The wines spent 9 months in cement vats and then a year in French Nevers oak barriques. The three varietals - Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault and Carignan - which up until then had been kept separately, were very fragrant, displaying highly contrasting aromas. Reflecting the superb ripeness of the grapes, and the concentration of sugar and acidity that make this harvest unique, they were well-balanced and richly-textured, with soft tannins. The final blend rested for another 6 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.

Chateau Musar Red 2003, deep, intense ruby in colour, has a complex, intriguing array of aromas: toasted bread, cigar box, fresh tea, plums and Eastern spices. On the palate, there are mature fruits: plums, figs and cherries with hints of tea leaves and dark chocolate. The wine is intense and gregarious, the first taste releasing complex notes of currants, cherries and spice. The structure is light and airy, blending Musar's classic fruit flavours with a hint of game and finishing with a cleansing acidity. Our first indications were that the 2003 vintage would be full-bodied, powerful with great length and 7 years later upon release in 2010, we have been proven right: these will be the defining characteristics of 2003.

