



Chateau Musar

CHATEAU MUSAR WHITE 2003

Chateau Musar White is a truly unique white, made from ancient Lebanese varieties Obaideh and Merwah, dating back thousands of years. Reputedly the ancestors of Chardonnay and Semillon, they are among only 6 indigenous grapes still commercially cultivated in Lebanon. The vineyards were planted between 50-90 years ago, at around 1,300 metres above sea level in the foothills of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains on stony, chalky soils, and on the seaward side of Mount Lebanon on calcareous gravels. The vines are still on their own roots and few vineyards of this calibre remain in the world.

The style is reminiscent of a dry Sauternes, or a mature white Graves: rich and intensely zesty, with very complex, long-lasting flavours. As such, the wine benefits from decanting and is best served at around 15°C ('cellar cool' rather than chilled) with fine foods of similar richness: foie gras, rillettes, roast duck, spicy Asian dishes and goat cheeses.

The defining characteristics of the 2003 Chateau Musar white are deeper colour than usual, with greater intensity of aroma and flavour. After the rainiest winter in 15 years, no rain fell after April and it became very hot and sunny. In May, a 10-day heatwave affected flowering, reducing yields by around 30%, and concentrating sugar and acidity in the remaining grapes. July and August were cooler than usual. Harvesting began in October; picked by hand, the grapes arrived at the winery in excellent condition, with good maturity and ripeness.

After pressing, the resulting juice was fermented in French (Nevers) barriques, remaining in oak for up to 9 months. At the end of spring 2004, the separate Obaideh and Merwah wines were blended. The final wine was bottled in September 2004 and released in 2009.

Merwah was dominant in 2003, as if it were compensating for its absence due to a hail storm in 2002, when no Musar White was produced.

"Beautiful straw gold in appearance, this mature Musar white displays aromas of orange peel, sweet spice and stewed pears. The palate is rich and generous with almond and citrus fruit flavours."

- Simon Hoggart,
'The Spectator', April 2009.



Serve at cellar temperature 15°C