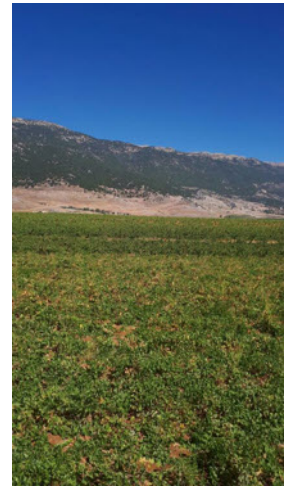




Harvest Report 2017

We began the year with high hopes and positive forecasts. In January, we experienced above average rain and snowfall which led to expectations that the water table would be replenished. More rain and snow followed in February and in March, the rain continued non-stop but into a mild spring with temperatures rising in April, though not excessively. In fact, opening of buds on the vines was 10 days later than usual, due to low air temperatures and comparatively cold soils. In late April, a one-day frost hit the Bekaa valley but at the time, was not seen as particularly harmful. We were only to learn of the effects of that day at harvest time when it transpired that the vines pruned in early winter had indeed suffered. June witnessed a lowering of our expectations as after three weeks of normal temperatures, we saw an increase to 37 degrees on the 24th. This was to continue till mid-August, and, unusually in our Lebanese climate, affecting the vines and grapes, with yields dropping 30%.



First day of harvest was the 3rd of August for the Chardonnay, ripe and yellowed by the sun. Viognier picking started on the 7th, with a lower sugar content and the white grape harvest for the Musar Jeune trio ended with Vermentino on the 23rd August.



The continuous high temperatures from June to August had led to a reduction in quantities.

On the reds, the harvest started with the Cabernet-Sauvignon on the 22nd August. It was followed by the Syrah on the 24th and Cinsault on the 4th September, Carignan on the 7th with Grenache last on the 13th September.

Fermentation of the whites was slow and smooth, temperatures ranging between 18 to 21 degrees. Viognier was the star, with its floral aromas spreading throughout the fermentation area. With the reds, fermentation temperatures ranged between 27 to 30 degrees. All wines proved very aromatic and in particular, the last Cabinet Sauvignon picked, which was impressive.

Of our local grape varieties, Obaideh and Merwah, Obaideh was the first to be picked on 19th September, earlier than usual directly due to this year's weather conditions. The grapes were fermented in new oak barrels as were the Merwah which was picked on 27th September. Powerful aromas pervaded the winery during pressing. Tasting reveals an elegant Obaideh and a 'wild' Merwah, perhaps a perfect combination of styles and genuine reflection of the terroir and the ease with which they have adapted to Lebanese conditions over centuries.

All the wines finished their malolactic fermentation by 1st November and preliminary tastings are showing that 2017 is a different year with more structure and a powerful taste. 2017 looks promising, the wines are unique and yet retaining the Chateau Musar style. Three factors came to our minds during the whole process: the similarity in style of the different decades; 2007, 1997, 1987, the taste of the Cabernet-Sauvignon and the quality of the Obaideh and Merwah which exceeded our expectations. As always, its passion combined with natural wine-making philosophy, leading the way.

