

Chateau Musar Red 1961



Overview

Between 1959 and 1964 Serge was making wines without a clear objective; rather he was using what was available. As one of his early vintages after taking over from his father Gaston, the 1961 was heavily influenced by his experiences in Bordeaux and the wines of Saint-Julien and St-Estèphe.

I was still experimenting, still learning – Serge Hochar

Grape Varietals

Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault, Carignan

Winemaking

No sulphur. Natural yeast fermentation in concrete vats. Around 12 months ageing in Nevers oak barrels.

Tasting Notes

The 1961 was an incredibly powerful wine and certainly a vintage with more Cabernet Sauvignon to the blend. Now a lighter brick-red shade, time has stripped some of the colour and weight from it, but the concentration and complexity of evolved fruit and spice is very much present, even after five decades of bottle age. With hints of caramel and honey, the sweetness of ripe fruit is balanced by a touch of acidity that has preserved its maturity.

Massive – “the last in a run of really big wines, we are now looking for more finesse” – with a fabulous, chocolatey sweetness and a balance that belies the 15 degrees alcohol – Steven Spurrier, The Field, December 1984

A typical old Musar: fragrant as Zanzibar, soft as feathers, succulent and melting as caramel. The fragrance (bolstered by record levels of VA, just like Cheval Blanc '47) suggests, after 30 years in bottle, wild mushrooms and the forest floor; the flavour is sweet, spreading and singing, the red fruits of the first sip metamorphosing towards date and fig. A purr of tannins still mark the wine's borders – Andrew Jefford, April 1993

I noted a beautiful bottle at Hochar's London tasting in 1979: it had a glow reminiscent of warm tiles. Then at nearly 40 years of age, it was the oldest vintage in the pre-sale tasting: a palish rosehip colour; strange, raspberry-tinged bouquet; but better on the palate, still rich even though acidity catching up. Last noted at the pre-sale tasting of old vintages of Chateau Musar at Christie's, April 2000 – Michael Broadbent

Good ruby colour, with brick rim, lovely nose, not volatile - sweet. Good structure, spicy, long - a bit rustic, luscious and sweet finish. Very good – The Collector's Tasting, Paris, November 2000 - Decanter Magazine, February 2001 'The Power of One'

From an extraordinary vintage year, this remarkable wine simply refuses to die. As deep, rich, concentrated today as it was in its youth, and still showing tantalizing ripeness, this is a magnificent wine – Daniel Rogov, March 2001

Though faded at the edges still amazingly deep (garnet) in colour. We picked up a succession of flavours - root vegetables, at first, especially beets, sous bois (forest floor), shitake mushrooms, truffles, bacon, smoked Polish sausages, star anise, new leather (this came through after the wine had been exposed to air for a while) old Comté. A remarkable wine which helps to explain why Musar has developed its cult following – Fiona Beckett, November 2010

Served double blind, I was sure this was an older Bordeaux. Tea in colour, the stunning aromatics popped with smoke, tobacco, cigar box, earth, herbs, red berries and fennel. Soft, silky and amazingly fresh at more than 50 years of age. A treat and a thrill to taste – The Wine Cellar Insider, August 2013

Sweet, rich and thoroughly exotic. Old leather handbags? Ethereal and lifted. Beautiful sweetness as it hits the palate and then real freshness and super-clean, thoroughly mature aromas. Gloriously mature but not at all old. Does taste like a wine from a bygone age... Long and rich on the finish. Amazing to think that Cinsault can last this long. No variety imprints itself. Just a little chewiness on the end suggests a solid accompaniment would be wise – Jancis Robinson, March 2018

Alcohol

14% Alc./Vol.