

Chateau Musar Red 1986



Overview

1986 had a similar weather pattern to 1985, however as a result of a mild winter with little rain and warm summer to follow, harvesting began slightly earlier than usual on 8th September.

On 15th September there was a fortnight-long heatwave, accelerating crop maturity, which combined with the lack of ground moisture, increased sugar levels whilst lowering overall acidity. The result was a smaller than average crop and delicate, silky wines.

Grape Varietals

Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault, Carignan

Winemaking

A traditional start to fermentation after grapes started arriving at the winery on the 8th September, suddenly developed into a much more challenging approach from the 15th, when fermentation control became more difficult – temperature variation was quicker and the fermentation stopped for no apparent reason, only to resume a couple of days later. What was obvious was the sudden concentration of colour, fruit flavour, body and power.

We were used to this evolution between the first and last week of the harvest; in previous years we had learned to cope with it, but in 1986 the change was so fast, making fermentation very complex to follow and finish.

By the end of October, some wines had sugar remaining. The hope was that fermentation would continue into 1987 – the resulting wines would become big, complex and powerful – built for the long term. Prior to bottling, 1% of the rustic *vin de presse* was blended in to enhance the character in this voluptuous vintage.

Tasting Notes

Initial thoughts placed it as a light wine for early drinking, but after the changes witnessed in the cellars, the wines took on a new life and filled-out. Dried fruit note of fig and dates with the characteristic sweet spice and hint of bitter chocolate delivered on the palate. Velvety in the mouth, round, full-bodied and long finish.

A truly great wine... overwhelming in its elegance, as well as in the strength of its attack – Auberon Waugh, The Spectator, 15th May 1993

It's warm, cedary, typically sweet with lingering chocolate and cherry, extraordinarily drinkable – Andrew Jefford, Wine Magazine

Orange-tinged; sweet, chocolatey nose that opened up richly; full, ripe, Pomerol style, with quite a bite – Michael Broadbent, April 2000

Mahogany red with fading tawny rim, plainly mature but still with an impression of youth for its age. Warm, very southern nose, like an old-fashioned Châteauneuf-du-Pape with a line of acidity that this would lack. Rich, satisfying and very Rhône-like on the palate, still with vigour and bitter chocolate. A lovely wine now at its peak and beginning to slowly fade – Steven Spurrier, October 2019

Alcohol

14% Alc./Vol.