

Chateau Musar Red 1997



Overview

A fairly normal winter followed by a fresh spring with no hail or frost. Summer was mild with a very cloudy and fresh August and sunny September.

These perfect conditions allowed the grapes to mature slowly at a pace rarely achieved. The harvest started on 15th September and ended on 11th October for the reds, stopping for four days from the 30th September due to rain. When picking resumed on 3rd October, it was almost like harvesting in a different vintage.

Grape Varietals

Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault, Carignan

Winemaking

It was the slowest and best fermentation we have ever had at Chateau Musar, especially between the 15th and 30th September with 80% of the harvest in the cellar. I tasted the wines on the 18th November. Almost all malolactics were finished and wines looked ready for drinking. Very, very beautiful wines and the white wines are just as beautiful as the reds. All wines are big and perfectly balanced whatever the cepage – Cabernet Sauvignon, Carignan, Cinsault, Merwah and Obaideh. Definitely a vintage to follow very closely – Serge Hochar, November 1997

Tasting Notes

A rich, warm colour, now paling towards the rim, with a smoky nose full of spices and fruits. On the palate there are mixed berry fruits – cherries, redcurrants, pomegranates and Christmas spices of cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves. Good acidity with good tannin levels results in a wine of classic structure with long ageing potential.

First tasted with Serge Hochar in the Chateau Musar cellars, December 1999. The wine was still in individual vats: Cinsault from the garrigues of Kefraya in the Bekaa Valley: crisp, fragrant; attractive, some elegance. Carignan from Aana, a little further north: more flesh, nice fruit, very tannic. Cabernet Sauvignon was an incredibly deep colour: green, stalky nose; austere, astringent. It would be another year before blending. Most recently, seemed fully developed, good flavour, lovely aftertaste. Last tasted May 2002 – Michael Broadbent, Vintage Wine

Redcurrant scents, and a clean, fresh, intense flavour, more drily curranty than is usual for Musar – Andrew Jefford, Decanter Magazine, January 2004

The Chateau Musar 1997 will be familiar to all devotees of that deep, dark, rich, fleshy, fruity and – aptly – cedary wine and it's scrumptious – Simon Hoggart, The Spectator, 28th February 2004

Very light in colour with maturity on the rim: salmon ruby. Surprisingly intense and concentrated nose with strong ash and autumnal smells; great acidity, damp leaves and old bonfires. On the palate, very sweet fruit and a long finish which goes through several evolutions (one of which develops old pomegranate flavours) in the longest aftertastes of any Musar. Full mouthfeel defies the lightness of the wine. Almost chewy in texture. Intense volatile acidity – Bartholomew Broadbent, October 2019

Alcohol

14% Alc./Vol.