

Chateau Musar Red 1998

Overview

The winter preceding the 1998 harvest was a normal Lebanese winter – a mixture of cold, rainy and snowy weather with several weeks of sunshine. This was followed by a cold, wet spring which lasted until June. Summer followed its normal pattern, although from June until October there was no rain at all.

The harvest started on the 9th September with mixed maturity levels: some grapes were already quite mature, whilst we delayed harvesting others for up to two more weeks. There was no obvious reason for this diversity, but this is “les caprices de la nature”. The crop was good in terms of both quality and quantity – the grapes were healthy and very good to eat.

Grape Varietals

Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault, Carignan

Winemaking

Fermentation progressed smoothly, although slightly quicker than usual, maceration was up to four weeks. The wines were racked into French Nevers oak casks in August 1999 and aged for twelve months, then blended in September 2000 and bottled in August 2001.

Tarek said: 'Let's bottle at the end of the second year. Let's try!' We did 20,000 bottles like this, then the rest a year later, as usual. We tasted the wines four years later. Something was missing in the earlier-bottled wines. They had an obvious Chateau Musar character but were not necessarily better. Identity is permanently important. We went back to the original formula - Serge Hochar

Tasting Notes

The cooler 1998 has an elegant Cinsault dominance; the colour is lighter and more delicately perfumed than a typical vintage. Despite this initial impression, the wine is deceptively powerful with a vibrant acidity and fresh, soft red fruit flavours and a very long, spicy finish. The ideal partner to mushroom and game dishes.

A relatively pale, light vintage but this has relatively mature, classic, sweetly cedary aromas already, with smooth, graceful flavours of wheat and raisin - Andrew Jefford, Decanter Magazine, December 2003

Noticeably sweet and soft, harmonious with evident acidity and good length - Michael Broadbent, Musar Masterclass, Christies, November 2004

This is a beautifully mature wine that is delicious to enjoy now. The wine has elegance, persistence and ethereal flavours of dried autumn leaves, black truffles and pu'er tea. Lovely, silky texture, supple palate and a long finish. An impressive wine that rivals the best of Bordeaux - Jeannie Cho Lee, October 2016

Pale, jewel-bright garnet. Light, spicy, particularly well-integrated nose, already well developed. A sweet start on the palate; the opposite of heavy; a really lovely wine: fresh, sweet, with some very slight mintiness and a dry finish. Very long, and nicely mature: seems just right now. It will go beautifully with food. One of my favourite wines in this collection. Is it the Cinsault I like so much? - Jancis Robinson, March 2018

Alcohol

13.5% Alc./Vol.

