

Chateau Musar Red 1999



Overview

1999 was an exceptional year. A mild winter with very little rainfall was followed by usual spring weather. The summer was also mild, with a cloudy July and August preceding a hot and sunny September. The resultant grapes reached maximum maturity with great all-round concentration, displaying good acidity and a high sugar level. The Musar reds are made from three grape varieties, Cinsault, Cabernet Sauvignon and Carignan, all of which are grown around three wine villages, Ammiq, Aana and Kefraya, made even more complicated by the diversity of soils from rich to rocky, which with vintage variations, necessitate the sort of juggling act at which Serge Hochar is a supreme performer.

Grape Varietals

Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault, Carignan

Winemaking

Fermentation took place in cement vats with maceration periods of up to four weeks, and then the wine was aged for one year in French Nevers oak. It was blended at the end of its second year (August 2001) and bottled in the summer of 2002.

Tasting Notes

The colour is a brilliant, deep red with a nose full of red and black fruits - cherries and cassis, with nuances of vanilla and chocolate. This follows through to the palate, which is rich, well balanced and powerful. Mellow spices are evident in the beginning, mature red fruits surround very smooth tannins and a hint of orange is apparent on the very long finish.

A Cabernet vintage. One of the greatest years of the century. Masculine - Serge Hochar

This is the basic palette from which Serge Hochar, no dry academician, creates his blends: first, a Cinsault from a single, soil-rich vineyard in Aana: deep core, young Provençal scent; delicious flavour, wonderful richness and flesh. Soft tannins. Next, a Cinsault from Ammiq's very gravelly soil: fragrant, lighter style, more charm. Then Carignan from a lighter soil in the Aana district: deep, velvety; spicy garrigue scent (I was reminded of Corbières in the Languedoc), flavour more aromatic. Lastly, Cabernet Sauvignon from Kefraya's rocky soil: very deep purple; sweet, lovely crisp flavour, excellent tannins and acidity. End taste of violets and blackcurrants - Michael Broadbent, 1999

If the 1997 was Bordeaux-style, this gives more of a nod to the Rhône. An enticing, dangerous scent of violets, game and incense, with a concentrated, full-throttle flavour of dense, sweet fruits - Andrew Jefford, Decanter Magazine The Magic of Musar, January 2004

Fans will know what to expect - others will be delighted to discover a rich, dark, velvety wine with cedar, smoke, even chocolate and liquorice, topped off with a wonderfully fragrant perfume - Simon Hoggart, The Spectator, 28th January 2006

An unusually elegant Musar that is vibrant, fresh and lively with Pinot Noir-like aromatics. This medium bodied red combines elegance with depth; its floral, red berry-filled nose leads to a layered palate with complex flavours and silky tannins. The finish is long and lovely. A wine that is drinking well now but should keep for another decade easily - Jeannie Cho Lee, October 2016

Warm autumnal red colour; mature yet clean and fresh, warm spices on the nose. Seems more 'southern' than the 2000, yet retains the classic Musar acidity, all of a piece, totally open now but will keep evolving to 2026 - Steven Spurrier, October 2019

Alcohol

14% Alc./Vol.