

Chateau Musar White 2004



Overview

Chateau Musar White is a truly unique white, made from ancient Lebanese varieties Obaideh and Merwah. Dating back thousands of years, they are among only 6 indigenous grapes still commercially cultivated in Lebanon. The vineyards were planted between 50-90 years ago, at around 1,300 metres above sea level in the foothills of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains near Ain Arab on stony, chalky soils, and on the seaward side of Mount Lebanon in Baqaâta, on calcareous gravels. The vines remain phylloxera-free and are still on their own roots. Few vineyards of this calibre remain in the world.

In 2004 there was snow in the Bekaa Valley until March; spring lasted until June, and was followed by a very mild, gentle summer. Fresh, cool breezes were present throughout the year and the grapes were slow to mature.

Grape Varietals

2/3rd Obaideh and 1/3rd Merwah

Vineyard Region

Mount Lebanon slopes

Winemaking

The grapes were brought to the winery on the 12th and 20th of October respectively; sugar content did not exceed 12%, acidity was high, pH low. Fermented with natural yeasts and aged partly in oak barrels for 9 months and partly in stainless steel vats, with temperatures ranging between 18°C and 22°C.

Tasting Notes

It was a year of fruits and freshness. Aromas of almonds, honey and mandarins follow through to the palate together with pears, figs, peaches and buttery notes on the long finish.

The style is reminiscent of a dry Sauternes, or a mature white Graves: rich and intensely zesty, with very complex, long-lasting flavours. As such, the wine benefits from decanting and is best served at around 15°C ('cellar cool' rather than chilled) with fine foods of similar richness: foie gras, rillettes, roast duck, spicy Asian dishes and goat cheeses as well as fruit and light desserts.

Characteristically waxy with an aroma of cooked apple (compote). Very spicy, high acidity – Fiona Beckett, November 2010

Lively gold colour, still vibrant looking. Honeyed nose with a hint of orange peel that reveals a controlled richness of fruit and dry spices. Attractively leaner on the finish than expected and while being very "Mediterranean" it shows the profile of a finely matured white Graves, the natural acidity allowing more complexity to develop over a few years – Steven Spurrier, September 2019

Alcohol

12% Alc./Vol.

