

Chateau Musar Red 1967



Overview

This wine stands as a marker in history, as it was the vintage that brought Chateau Musar and Lebanese wine to the attention of the wider public at the 1979 Bristol Wine Fair. Both journalist Roger Voss and head of Christie's Wine Department Michael Broadbent were delighted by Serge's wines, with Broadbent famously citing the 1967 as his "find of the fair".

As we spoke, I realised that I was in conversation with a very serious winemaker. Two things stood out for me, firstly, the sheer quality of the fruit that had been used, and secondly, the way the wine had aged so superbly – Roger Voss on meeting Serge in 1979

Grape Varietals

Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault, Carignan

Winemaking

Serge Hochar had just returned from his classical training in Bordeaux and was experimenting with a lighter style of Musar.

What did I do, and why did I do it? I was still under the influence of Bordeaux and started blending wine almost as soon as it was in the barrels. I think I realised then that although the Bordelais make their assemblage in the December after that autumn's vintage, that my wines would need time to develop, time to express themselves – Serge Hochar

Tasting Notes

The 1975, 1969 and 1967 styles are similar and appear to be more Cinsault dominated. They are more tawny orange in colour, more forward than the 1970 and 1966 vintages with an extraordinary bouquet and taste.

In full maturity, the wine is holding on to its pale brick-red/tawny hue. The delicate aromas have many layers with an initial soft fruit element that leads into spice then more tertiary, developed notes. With time, this opens up to a caramelised sugar/toffee note. Certainly more delicate than other more-structured Cabernet Sauvignon dominant vintages, but the flavours are persistent and the overall impression is lifted with a vibrant acidity that defies its age.

After the 1970, the 1967 appeared light, yet had been the best of them all, according to M. Hochar, in the late 1970s – Steven Spurrier, The Field, December 1984

The enterprising Serge Hochar presented his wines for the first time in England at the Bristol Wine Fair in July 1979 which is where I first met him (Christie's were also exhibiting) and tasted his wines: three very dry white and three red. Of the latter, the 1967 was outstanding and in the January 1980 issue of Decanter magazine I wrote that it was one of the two top wines of the entire Fair. Dry but rich and fruity later that year and early 1980. A glowing note: luminous, fragrant in 1988, and equally delicious 12 years later: roship maturity, still Some tannin. Last tasted pre-sale at Christie's, April 2000 – Michael Broadbent

Still a great wine. Orange brick colour dominates as I swirl the glass. Aromas of fig with dried dates start to emanate from my wine glass. Rich glycerol richness with continuing flavours of scented tobacco, saddle leather and dried flowers invade the palate giving this wine a silkiness that remained for a good minute – William Bincoletto, Purple Feet Magazine, Aug./Sept. 2001

Light coloured. Perfumed nose with a spicy, savoury, herby character. Dry, savoury palate with spicy character. Appealing: quite a light style. Very good+ – Jamie Goode, Musarathon, Summer 2005

Pale brick colour - it looks for all the world like a wine well past its prime, but that is just the perception of the eye. On the nose, the aromas are at first faint, but very persistent, even insistent with hints of forest floor, subtle barnyard and a waft of orange peel. This smells as if it were compiled by a perfumer. The palate is tight and nervous and the flavours emphasize citrus. The wine vibrates on the palate with exceptional length – this is an astonishingly persistent wine. As it unfolds on the palate, like some sort of vinous slinky descending a stairway, it continues to unveil its minerality. What is this experience? It is part Bordeaux and part Burgundy, magical in its subtlety – Lyn Farmer, Tasting with Serge Hochar, 2012

Massively impressive – Richard Ballantyne MW, May 2019

Alcohol

14% Alc./Vol.