

CHATEAU MUSAR ROUGE 2002



Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault, and Carignan. Deep crimson, even blood red in color. Intense and complex aromas of spicy red fruits and cedar with deeper plum notes. Generous red and black fruit characters follow through to the palate, combining with notes of Christmas cake spices, figs, dates, and stewed plums. Richly fruited with good acidity and silky tannins. Toffee notes on the long, mineral finish. Pairs wonderfully with rich and intense dishes such as roasts, casseroles, grills, and mature cheeses. Organic.

After four successive years of drought, the region saw a long, rainy, and cold winter that lasted until June. This was followed by a mild July and a hot August. The grapes took longer to reach maturity than average and the harvest started almost two weeks later than in previous years. The grapes were all hand-picked in the early mornings. The grapes began arriving at the winery on September 15th. The average fermentation temperature was lowered to allow the yeast to finish transforming the sugar into alcohol. Fermentation in concrete vats went perfectly well but slowly with the temperature kept below 31°C. The wines were racked six months after the harvest and then put into French Nevers oak barrels for one year. The three varietals, which up until then had been kept separate, were blended in the following summer (2004) and bottled in July and August 2005. The grapes were characterized by high levels of sugar, acidity, and tannins. The resulting wines are much bigger, riper, and fuller than expected. An exceptional year; normally in Lebanon, high sugar content means less acidity, but in 2002 everything was there!

The wines of Chateau Musar are unique expressions from a country with an ancient winemaking culture as vines have been cultivated from Lebanon's high altitude Bekaa Valley for over 6,000 years. The vineyards of Chateau Musar are located in the Bekaa Valley and in Mount Barouk around Kefraya and Aana, which is about a two-hour drive from the winery in Ghazir, just north of Beirut. The Bekaa Valley receives an average of 300 days of sunshine annually and 39–78 inches of rain per year. The Bekaa has a Mediterranean climate and an altitude of more than 3,000 feet above sea level. The soil is predominately gravel with a limestone base.

Chateau Musar was founded in 1930 by Gaston Hochar. In 1959, after studying oenology at the University of Bordeaux, his son Serge became a winemaker. The civil war that tore Lebanon apart from 1975 to 1990 did not defeat Chateau Musar; Serge refused to abandon the wine and lost only the 1976 and 1984 vintages to the war. His inspiring determination and grand passion for his wines led to Serge receiving the inaugural "Man of the Year Award" from Decanter magazine in 1984. Recognition from Michael Broadbent at the 1979 Bristol Wine Fair threw Musar into the international spotlight and helped create a cult-like following. Chateau Musar is one of the most written about and discussed wines in the world today. Every wine of Chateau Musar is produced naturally with a 'non-interventionist' wine making philosophy. The winery was the first in Lebanon to implement organically certified viticulture.

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Tasting Note:

CHATEAU MUSAR ROUGE 2002

Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault & Carignan.
Complex aromas of spicy red fruits & cedar with deeper plum notes; flavors of red & black fruit, combining with notes of cake spices, figs, dates & stewed plums; richly fruited with good acidity & silky tannins. Toffee notes on the long, mineral finish. Organic.

Shelf Talker:



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