

# CHATEAU MUSAR ROUGE 1998

**94 points – Wine Advocate** *"This is a ripe, sexy Musar... It retains its elegant mid-palate as well as lovely fruit and fine balance."* Mark Squires

Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault and Carignan. Medium garnet color. This vintage had more than the usual amount of Cinsault in the blend, making a more fragrant and aromatic wine. Spicy aromas with leather, cigar box and berries. Full flavoured with rich ripe berries, stewed stone fruit and a subtle cedar and spice character. Medium bodied and dry with good acidity and smooth tannins. Fabulous long finish. As with all Musar reds, excellent with rich meat and game dishes. Organic.

Winter was a normal Lebanese winter; a mixture of cold rainy and snowy weather with weeks of sunshine. But it was again followed by a rainy and cold spring which was to last until June. Then July, August, September and October were normal but with absolutely no rain at all. Flowering happened later than usual but was good and this delayed the whole process with late maturity. We finally started harvesting on the 9th September. Some of the grapes were quite mature, while others could have waited two more weeks. There was no obvious reason for this diversity but this is "Les caprices de la nature". The crop was normal, both in quality and quantity; grapes were in good shape with no problems or disease and good to eat. Fermentation went smoothly but quicker than usual. Results were good, 1998 is a very aromatic and fragrant year.

The vineyards are situated toward the southern end of the Bekaa Valley, north of Lake Qaroun, in the villages of Aana and Kefraya. The Bekaa has a Mediterranean climate and an altitude of more than 3,000 feet above sea level. The soil is predominately gravelly with a limestone base. The vines were planted from the 1930s onwards (average age: 40 years). The grapes are hand-picked in the cool of the morning. Lengthy fermentations with natural yeasts in separate cement vats, racked at 6 months after the harvest. Then aged in French barrels (oak from the forest of Nevers) for one year. The resulting wines are blended to reflect the strengths and individual characteristics of the year and bottled without filtration at the end of the 3rd year following harvest. The final blend is aged for a further 3-4 years in bottle before being released in its 7th year.

In 1930, at just 20 years old, Gaston Hochar founded Chateau Musar, inspired by Lebanon's 6,000-year winemaking tradition and his travels in Bordeaux. In 1959, after studying oenology at the University of Bordeaux, Serge, Gaston's eldest son, with great passion became winemaker, his father having graciously given way. Serge then spent 18 years perfecting the formula for Chateau Musar's Red. The civil war that tore Lebanon apart from 1975-1990 did not defeat them; Serge refused to abandon the wine, and lost only the 1976 and 1984 vintages to the war. Owing to his inspiring determination and grand passion for his wines, Serge received 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. Today, Chateau Musar is one of the most written-about and discussed wines in the world. Every wine of Chateau Musar is produced naturally with a 'non-interventionist' wine making philosophy and the winery was the first in Lebanon to implement organically certified viticulture.



AN EASTERLY WINE SELECTION • BELFAST, ME

## Tasting Note:

### CHATEAU MUSAR ROUGE 1998

Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault & Carignan.  
Spicy aromas with leather, cigar box & berries. Full flavored with rich ripe berries, stewed stone fruit & a subtle cedar & spice character. Medium bodied & dry with good acidity & smooth tannins. Fabulous long finish. Organic.

## Shelf Talker:



### CHATEAU MUSAR ROUGE 1998

Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault & Carignan.  
Medium garnet color. This vintage had more than the usual amount of Cinsault in the blend, making a more fragrant & aromatic wine. Spicy aromas with leather, cigar box & berries. Full flavored with rich ripe berries, stewed stone fruit & a subtle cedar & spice character. Medium bodied & dry with good acidity & smooth tannins. Fabulous long finish. As with all Musar reds, excellent with rich meat & game dishes. Organic.

AN EASTERLY WINE SELECTION