PRIVATE CELLAR

Chateau Musar

Although the Lebanon is widely appreciated as a wine producing country it remains nonetheless a bit of an enigma for most wine drinkers. With a historical French influence, Lebanese winemaking traditions are strongly European and the grape varieties used, particularly for reds, are very familiar: Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault, Carignan, Syrah and Grenache – the Rhône meets Bordeaux, although some producers are beginning to promote indigenous varieties with some success.

Chateau Musar is one of the best known Lebanese wine producers, established by the Hochar family in the 1930s. Their vineyards are in the Bekaa Valley, squeezed between two mountain ranges, where the vines grow at around 1,000m above sea level, an altitude that allows them to avoid the intense summer heat and ensures that the vines are well rested over the winter – often coated in snow. Their wines have a delicious blend of Old World classicism, New World fruit and an enticing touch of the exotic which reminds you that these wines come from the Middle East, not Europe.

The wines from Chateau Musar are capable of extremely long ageing and their policy of releasing them only when they are ready to drink presents a wonderful opportunity to buy wines with some good bottle age, at very sensible prices.

Nicola Arcedeckne-Butler MW
September 2013

	£ per case In Bond London	£ per case inc UK Duty & VAT	Equivalent Inc VAT per bottle
 Musar Jeune 2011	£71.00	£114.00	£9.50

50% Cinsault, 35% Syrah, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon. Organic.
Made in the tradition of the Joven wines from Spain - fresh, fruity, unoaked and immediately gratifying, this is vibrant red in colour with a delicious, sweet nose of black fruit, tar and spice leading to a juicy, fresh palate of peppery ripe fruit with supple tannins behind and lovely definition. Perfect, uncomplicated deliciousness.

 Hochar Père et Fils 2008	£106.00	£156.00	£13.00

50% Cinsault, 30% Grenache, 10% Carignan, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon
A single vineyard wine on gravel and limestone soils, this is paler red to a light tawny touch on the rim with a nose of tarry, red berry fruit, perfumed with a floral, exotic note leading to a softly fruited palate of fresh red fruits, again this musky floral note, with ripe tannins and a lovely spiced finish.

 Chateau Musar 2005	£155.50	£215.40	£17.95

34% Cabernet Sauvignon, 33% Cinsault, 33% Carignan
Chateau Musar itself is fermented and aged in cement tanks for nine months prior to a year of further ageing in French oak barrels. Deep red to the rim with a hint of brick just beginning. Sweet, tarry, evolved black fruits on the nose, more in the secondary aromas of cigar box than primary fruitiness, very attractive. Sweet, tarry black fruits on the palate, musky and herby yet fresh with fine acidity to balance going to a rich, long finish.

 Chateau Musar 2000	£196.00	£264.00	£22.00

34% Cabernet Sauvignon, 33% Cinsault, 33% Carignan
Paler again in colour with a definite brick note, with a sweet, jammy nose contrasting with evolving dry grass aromas. Fresh and supple on the palate, sweet and ripe with notes of underbrush, the ripe tannins are there but not obtrusive, mature, evolving and eminently drinkable although it will also keep for a few years yet. Perhaps the most Bordelais of the wines offered here.

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