



# Chateau Musar Wine Tasting with a meeting of Lebanese and French Cuisine

Friday 23 April 2010 from 7pm

## Chateau Musar – 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Chateau Musar was founded in 1930 by youthful entrepreneur Gaston Hochar after a lengthy stay in Bordeaux. He was also influenced by Major Ronald Barton (of Château Langoa-Barton), who was stationed in Lebanon during WWII. Gaston's son Serge studied winemaking at the University of Bordeaux and was Decanter Magazine's first 'Man of the Year' in 1984 for producing superb quality wines throughout Lebanon's Civil War (1975-1990).

The Musar vineyards are located at around 3,000 feet (1000m) above sea level in the Bekaa Valley, cradled between two mountain ranges running parallel to the Mediterranean coast. Grapes have been cultivated for 6,000 years in this high-altitude environment, blessed with a mild climate and 300 days of sunshine a year. Musar wines are made as naturally as possible, without commercial yeasts, fining or filtration. Chateau Musar Red is one of the world's most patiently-crafted wines: each vintage spends 7 years in Musar's deep cellars north of Beirut before release.

*"Give my wines more time, and they will give you more joy." – Serge Hochar.*

## The Menu

### A selection of Lebanese Mezze

Wine: 2006 Chateau Musar Rose

Serge Hochar has long enjoyed the 'blended' rosés of Champagne; this is his still, gently-oaked tribute to the style. Mostly Obaideh and Merwah (ancient Lebanese varieties, reputedly the ancestors of Chardonnay and Semillon), plus Cinsault for colour, the wine is fermented and aged 9 months in Nevers oak. This subtle, fragrant vintage has flavours of almonds, herbs, pears and peaches and a citrusy finish.

### Pushed Foie Gras with Pear, Champagne Sauce

Wine: 2003 Chateau Musar White

Six years in the making, this unique white is a blend of ancient Lebanese varieties Obaideh and Merwah. Planted between 1920 and 1947 at around 1,400m above sea level, these ancient vines remain ungrafted. Fermented and aged in Nevers barrels for 9 months, then blended and bottled at the end of its first year, the style is rich yet zesty, like a 'dry Sauternes' or mature white Graves such as Haut-Brion.

### Pan Fried & Spiced Turbot with Asparagus Spears. Sea Urchin Froth

Wine: 2008 Musar Jeune Red

This new arrival is made from the fruit of organically-certified Bekaa vines at around 1,000m above sea level: a true 'wine with altitude', unoaked and intense. A blend of Cinsault, Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon, it has vivid blackcurrant, cherry and raspberry characters plus classic Musar spice and persistence.

### Guinea Fowl with Morels Sauce Poivrade, Jersey Royals

Wine: 2002 Chateau Musar Red

Chateau Musar's flagship red, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault and Carignan from 50 year old Bekaa Valley vines, takes seven years to produce. Having spent 12 months in Nevers oak barrels the wines are blended to reflect the strengths of the vintage, followed by lengthy bottle ageing. This rich, spicy, damsony style is best served at 18°C having benefited from several hours 'breathing time'. In 2002, after a cold winter lasting until June and a mild summer, the vintage began a week later than usual. Fermentation was slow, and the wines were riper and fuller than expected.

### Oranges, Myrrh, Lemon Curd, Liquorice

Wine: 1999 Chateau Musar Red

1999 was an exceptional Musar vintage: a dry winter led to a fresh spring and good flowering. Summer was mild; July and August were cloudy; September was hot and sunny, resulting in super-ripe grapes, and wines with high levels of alcohol, acidity and extract. The 1999 Chateau Musar Red is a wine of almost Port-like richness, with aromas of violets, game and incense. It was featured in the recently-published '1001 Wines You Must Taste Before You Die'.

Price per head for Meal £39.50 For the Wines £25.00 includes Vat @ 17.5%