



Whoop, whoop, it's another *Spectator* scoop! Mighty Ch. Musar of Lebanon has just released its latest – 2017 – vintage, and wily Johnny Wheeler has ensured that readers are the first in the UK to get their hands on it. This wine is not available anywhere else until Easter and, with Musar repositioning the brand (aka putting the price up a fiver a bottle), you won't find it cheaper. If Musar's your thing – and it's certainly mine – do get stuck in.

Yes, the 2017 Ch. Musar White (1) is an acquired taste but it's one that I have most definitely acquired and trust you have/will too. It's hard to know with what to compare it, weaving as it does between dry white Bordeaux, white Rioja, white Rhône and even Manzanilla sherry in style. If you enjoy such wines and are bored with Chardonnay, say, or single varietal Sauvignon Blanc, then this oak-fermented blend of two indigenous varieties – Obaideh and Merwah – will be right up your alley. It's full and rich but dry, slightly oxidative and touched with honey, nuts, succulent citrus and something enticingly savoury on the finish. It's distinctive and delicious. £33.95 down from £37.95.

The 2020 Musar Jeune Red (2), with its oscilopsia-inducing, Timothy Leary-designed label (only joshing, dunno who came up with it but poor Mrs Ray said it made her eyes hurt), is Musar's entry-level red, designed to be knocked back with abandon. An unoaked blend of Cinsault, Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon, it's fresh, fruity and easy-going and full of juicy, spicy bramble fruit. It's a sort of hybrid Côtes du Rhône Villages/Bordeaux Supérieur and really jolly good. £14.95 down from £16.95.

The 2019 Hochar Père et Fils Red (3) is the stepping stone between the above and the grand vin, a Cru Bourgeois in quality, let's say. A blend of old vine, low-yielding Cinsault, Grenache and Cabernet Sauvignon from high in the Bekaa Valley, it's aged in French oak for six months and is serious fare. There are complex cherries, blackcurrants, pepper, spice and heady herbs and there are tannins too, but so gentle and subtle that they add to – rather than take away from – the enjoyment. £21.95 down from £24.95.

And so to the brand new 2017 Ch. Musar (4) itself. As you know, Musar only ever

releases its grand vin once it's deemed ready to drink, and this is bang on song. A balance of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault and Carignan, fermented in concrete tanks and aged in oak for a year before blending, it's full of fresh and dried autumnal red/dark fruit, herbs, spice, coffee, leather and tobacco.

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The tannins are silky soft and there's that typical touch of Musar sweetness before it finishes perfectly dry. I can't imagine anyone not begging for more. £35.95 down from £39.95.

Oh, and if you want to compare and contrast this latest incarnation with previous years, JW has snaffled us 30 wooden boxes containing two bottles each of the excellent

2012, 2015 and 2016 vintages. At just £315 a box, this is well worth grabbing, especially given the imminent price increase.

The Musar Experience Case has three bottles each of wines 1-4 and the Musar Museum Collection has two each of the 2012, 2015 and 2016 vintage. Delivery, from the week of 27 March, is as ever free.

And finally, for lovers of Musar keen to enjoy this new vintage in congenial company, we've a very special Spectator Wine-makers' Lunch at 116 Pall Mall, London SW1, on Wednesday 17 May, to be held in the presence of H.E. the ambassador of Lebanon. Hosted by me and Michael Karam, the leading authority on Lebanese wines, we will have a hoot, fuelled by the 2017 Ch. Musar red and white along with a brace of wines each from Domaine de Tourelles, Ixsir, Mas-saya and Ch. Ksara. For more information and to register your interest, email Chloe Smith at [club@spectator.co.uk](mailto:club@spectator.co.uk)



## ORDER FORM *Spectator Wine Offer*

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<i>Prices in form are per case of 12 unless otherwise stated</i>				<i>List price</i>	<i>Club price</i>	<i>No.</i>
<b>White</b>	1	2017 Ch. Musar White, 11.5%vol (six bottles)		<del>£227.70</del>	£203.70	
<b>Red</b>	2	2020 Musar Jeune Red, 14.5%		<del>£203.40</del>	£179.40	
	3	2019 Hochar Père et Fils Red, 13.5%		<del>£299.40</del>	£263.40	
	4	2017 Ch. Musar, 14% (six bottles)		<del>£239.70</del>	£215.70	
<b>Mixed</b>	5	Musar Experience Case		<del>£359.40</del>	£320.40	
	6	Musar Museum Collection (six bottles)			£315.00	

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Start date ..... Expiry date ..... Sec. code .....

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### Total

Prices include VAT and delivery on the British mainland. Payment should be made either by cheque with the order, payable to Mr Wheeler, or by debit or credit card, details of which may be telephoned or faxed. This offer, which is subject to availability, closes on 29 April.

**Terms and conditions:** This week's Wine Offer is managed by Mr Wheeler. For full details on its T&Cs, email [hello@mrwheelerwine.com](mailto:hello@mrwheelerwine.com)

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