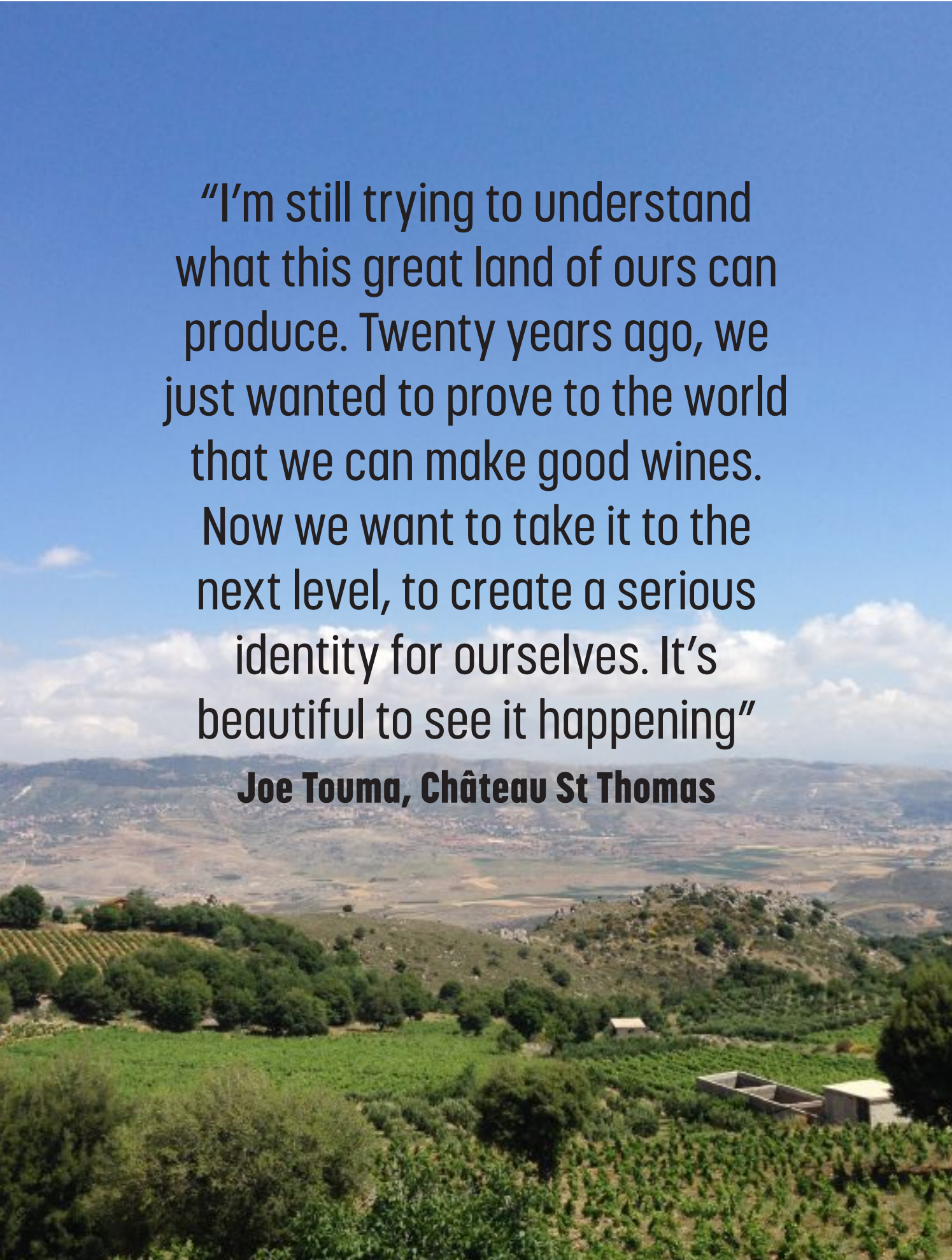


LEBANON

HARPERS WINE & SPIRIT

REPORT 2023





“I’m still trying to understand what this great land of ours can produce. Twenty years ago, we just wanted to prove to the world that we can make good wines. Now we want to take it to the next level, to create a serious identity for ourselves. It’s beautiful to see it happening”

Joe Touma, Château St Thomas

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A supplement to
Harpers Wine & Spirit

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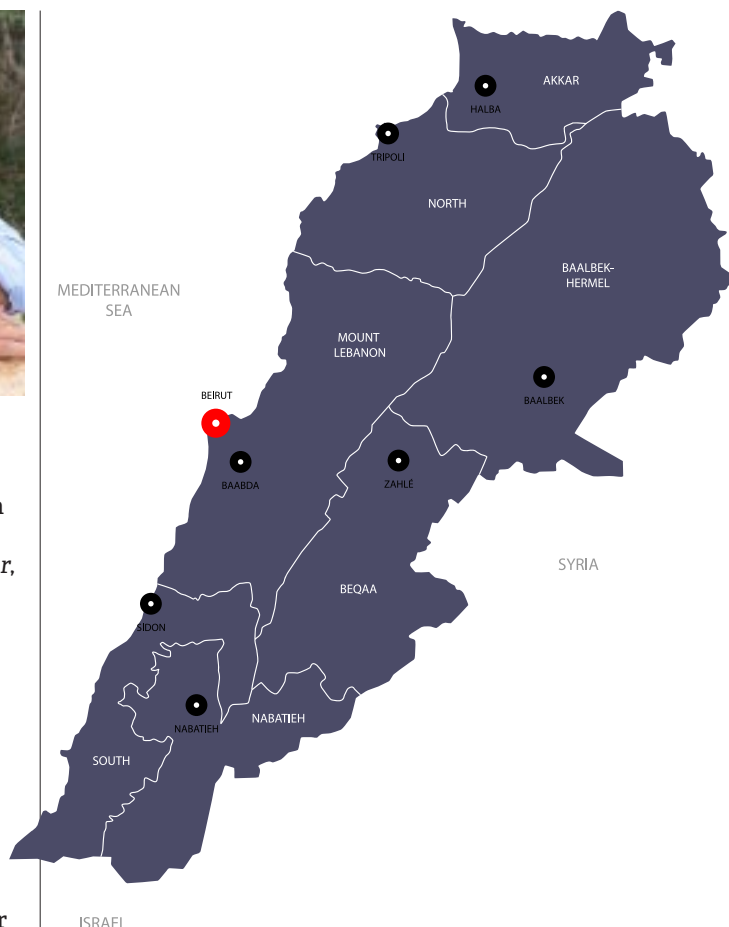
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LEBANON REPORT Introduction



Lebanon Report's author Michael Karam has written about wine in *The Spectator*, *Decanter*, *Harpers Wine & Spirit*, *Drinks Business* and on jancisrobinson.com. He is also the author of several wine and drinks books, including *The Wines of Lebanon*, which won the Gourmand Award for the Best New World Wine Book in 2005. Currently the Lebanon country contributor to Jancis Robinson's *The Oxford Companion to Wine*, *The World Atlas of Wine*, *Hugh Johnson's Pocket Wine Book* and *The Sotheby's Wine Encyclopedia*, he also co-wrote and starred in the feature length documentary *Wine and War*, which was released in September 2020.

Cover image: The snow-covered vines of Chateau Kefraya



LEBANON AT A GLANCE

- **Category:** Ancient World/Eastern Mediterranean
- **Industry established:** Approx 7000 BC
- **No of producers 2022:** 61 (according to the Ministry of Agriculture)
- **Total volume:** 11 million bottles (8.25 million litres)
- **Area under vine for wine production:** 3,000ha
- **Average yield:** 45hl/ha
- **Exports:** 50%
- **Annual local consumption:** 5.5 million bottles
- **Per capita consumption:** 1.5 litres
- **Main production region:** Bekaa Valley
- **Other regions:** Batroun, Mount Lebanon, South Lebanon
- **Indigenous and local red varieties:** Asmi Noir, Assouad Karech, Marini, Sobbaghieh, and Zawtarani
- **Indigenous and local white varieties:** Obeideh, Merwah, Meksassi, Jouzani, Youssefi, Zitani
- **Most popular international red varieties:** Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault, Carignan, Syrah, Grenache, Merlot
- **Most popular international white varieties:** Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier, Clairette, Semillon, Muscat

RECOVERY AND RENEWAL

Michael Karam delves into the deep-rooted history of Lebanon's wine culture and outlines why the Phoenicians were the first wine merchants

Lebanon's place in the story of wine is due to its position on the Levantine coastline, from where the Canaanites in the third millennium BC, and later the Phoenicians in the second millennium BC, exported their wine and winemaking expertise across the region. From their power bases in the ancient cities of Beirut, Byblos, Sidon and Tyre, the ancient Lebanese went first to Palestine and the Nile Delta, where their technicians planted vineyards with dazzling success. A millennium later, they sailed to Crete, Carthage, Egypt, Rome, Greece, Sardinia and Spain, where wine was a key commodity and an early marketing tool, often used in the form of a gift when establishing

business relations and trading posts. Thus, the Phoenicians became the first wine merchants. They gave the gift of wine to the rest of humanity. But, while there was a continuous wine culture in the region, mainly thanks to the presence of the church, it would be nearly another 3,000 years before the creation of a wine industry as we know it.



THE MODERN ERA

The Jesuits, the evangelical order of Catholic clerics who engage in education and science as well as humanitarian work, have had a presence in what is now Lebanon since the 1640s, when they founded missions in Beirut, Sidon and Tripoli, from where they moved inland to the Bekaa Valley and established a presence in Zahle and Moulalqa.

In 1857, they began farming, a 25ha plot of land situated between Tanail and Zahle and, possessing a solid education in agriculture and the sciences, set out to produce the area's first 'dry' red wine using Cinsault, Carignan and Grenache from Algeria – the

↑ **EARLY
20TH-CENTURY
WINEMAKING AT
CHATEAU KSARA**

The Phoenicians gave the gift of wine to the rest of humanity

most important of France's colonial wine-producing territories at the time. Their efforts would lead to the creation of Chateau Ksara and lay the foundation of the modern industry.

In 1860, three years after the Jesuits began making their wine, François-Eugène Brun, a 24-year-old French military engineer, arrived in the Bekaa Valley to work on the Beirut–Damascus Road. Very soon, the young man from Chézery Forens in the Rhône Alps, immediately fell in love with the Bekaa town of Chtaura and by 1868 he had ditched engineering and founded Domaine des Tourelles, Lebanon's first commercial winery. Winning medals in London at the turn of the century, the winery would stay in the Brun family for another 132 years.

Lebanon and Syria would remain under Ottoman rule until the end of the First World War, when French occupation and then formal mandate rule would sprinkle much-needed fairy dust on Lebanon's budding wine culture with the arrival of tens of thousands of French civil servants and soldiers, all of whom needed a regular supply of wine, which the authorities would buy from anyone who made it. It would be the beginning of a Lebanese love affair with France and all things French, ensuring that the wine culture, planted by the Jesuits and François Eugène Brun half a century earlier, would take root with more vigour than in any other country in the Levant.

The demand for wine ensured that the period was one of unprecedented growth for what would become a thriving cottage industry. Vineyard owners in the Bekaa, from Jdita to Ryak, and across Mount Lebanon, were encouraged to make as much as possible and, crucially, move away from making the traditional, sweet, raisin-based wine and towards producing something the French would want to drink.

At Ksara, the Jesuits had been quick to heed the clarion call from the French, and their winery found itself selling wine that up until that point had been made for internal consumption. Now trading under the name Caves de Ksara, the men of God had planted Muscat and Ugni Blanc to complement the Cinsault and Grenache introduced a little over 60 years earlier and were ready to share their production. The 'French factor' had lit the commercial touch paper and changed the face of the winery forever.



LEBANON ON THE WINE MAP

Across the country, in the Keserwan village of Ghazir, another Lebanese turned to wine, albeit after a very different French experience. In 1928 Gaston Hochar, scion of a wealthy Maronite family, travelled to Paris to study medicine. Instead of studying, he hung out with the city's bohemian crowd and got an entirely different education. In 1929, on his return to Lebanon, he told his startled family he had no interest in becoming a doctor and wished to become a winemaker. Chateau Musar was born and would become the most famous Lebanese wine producer, mainly due to the sparkling character of Gaston's son Serge who single-handedly put Lebanon on the wine map.

In 1943, Lebanon won independence. The country could now chart its own destiny, imbued with a sense of Francophone culture that sat comfortably



Harvest time at Chateau Ksara

with its cosmopolitan Levantine outlook. The country was also entering a period of optimism and openness, becoming a glamorous and convivial hub, an oasis in a turbulent region for émigrés, bankers, businessmen, diplomats, journalists and spies – and the next 30 years would be the pinnacle of affluence and standing of pre-civil-war Lebanon.

On 15 August 1973, Caves de Ksara was sold by the Jesuits for LL10m, then equivalent to £5m and upgraded to 'Chateau' Ksara. But within two years the civil war forced the winery to put any modernisation programme on hold.

Lebanon's so-called golden age, one defined by prosperity and glamour, came to a shuddering end in 1975 with the outbreak of civil conflict. It would last for 15 years and cost 120,000 lives. Another 350,000 Lebanese would be permanently displaced, while tens of thousands would be forced to seek opportunities abroad. Wine sales plummeted by up to 90%. But Chateau Musar, which in the 1980s established something of a cult following, especially in the UK, ensured that by the time the guns fell silent in 1990, there was enough of a pulse to resuscitate an industry.

The other wineries that emerged from the war – Chateau Ksara, Domaine des Tourelles, Chateau Nakad and Chateau Kefraya, which bizarrely was established in the early years of the war – were quite literally shell-shocked, but they would recover. Elsewhere, new investors, saw the potential in wine, especially after the success of Chateau Kefraya, and Chateau Musar's newfound international fame.

They included owners of two of Lebanon's biggest arak distillers, Gantous & Abou Raad and Arak Touma, both based in the Bekaa Valley and used to working with grapes on a large scale. The Wardy family, which owned Gantous & Abou Raad, established Domaine Wardy, while two strands of the Touma family established Château St Thomas and Château Héritage respectively.

Other new producers to emerge during this period included Cave Kouroum, Chateau Belle-Vue, Château Ka, Château Houry, Clos de Cana, Coteaux de Botrys, Coteaux du Liban, Domaine de Baal, Karam Wines, Massaya and Nabise Mont Liban.

There were new names in the vineyards too, with significant plantings of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Syrah, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Viognier. The so-called *cépages nobles* had arrived and Lebanon, as it had been for thousands of years, was open for business. ■

REGIONS AND WINERIES

THE BEKAA

Roughly 90% of Lebanon's wine is made in the Bekaa Valley, also known simply as the Bekaa. Located roughly 35km east of Beirut, the Bekaa Valley is 120km long; an average of 16km wide and, despite its name, more a plateau than a valley; part of a series of faults that make up the Great Rift Valley, which runs from southern Turkey to Mozambique. The Bekaa sits at roughly 900m above sea level at its lowest part, while the slopes of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountain ranges rise to over 3,000m. Once the breadbasket of the Roman Empire's Levant provinces, the Bekaa provides 40% of Lebanon's arable land.

The northern section has an average annual rainfall of 230mm, compared with 610mm in the central valley. Two rivers originate in the Bekaa: the Orontes, which flows north into Syria and Turkey, and the Litani, which flows south, and then west, into the Mediterranean.

It has a continental climate characterised by hot summers, cold winters and minimal rainfall, with the westerly Lebanon range acting as a rain shadow that reduces the precipitation coming off the coast.

The soil is mainly (and often stony), non-homogenous red-and-brown clay and limestone, although there are also areas of alluvial soil and schist. There are two very distinct seasons: winter, a real winter, properly cold with snow; and a summer that, depending on the year,

can be very hot. Humidity is less than 40% and in the absence of serious rainfall there is little or no disease.

It is the snow that melts during the vegetative period that allows for a fresh supply of ground water. So even though the climate is hot and dry, very few vineyards are irrigated, and one still gets balanced wines with good structure and beautiful acidity due to the altitude.

In fact, altitude is Lebanon's trump card when it comes to winemaking. The Bekaa's highest vines are at 1,800m, while the highest in the country are at a lung-busting 2,400m in Kanisat al Rab, near Bcharre in North Lebanon. They are among the highest, if not the highest, vines in the northern hemisphere.

Planting vines higher and higher compensates for Lebanon's latitude, which is near the 30-degree limit at which wine can be made. The higher up they are planted, the more grapes are exposed to ultra-violet, which forces them to thicken their skins as protection, and this can deliver greater colour and more tannins. Second, cooler nights, with a temperature variation of up to 15-17°C, allow the grapes to conserve acidity. This means longer time on the vine, leading to fresher, more elegant wines with ageing potential. White grapes, which otherwise would be prone to producing 'flabby' wines, benefit from this the most.

Over the past 30 years, winemakers in the Bekaa have noticed an increase in temperatures and a decrease in rainfall with significant variations from one year to another as well as quite severe winter and spring frosts. But in the past five years, there has been a slight decrease of temperatures in the summer, allowing for longer ripening and resulting in softer tannins in the red wines and extra freshness in the whites.

Bush vine training, used since Roman times for dry farming grapes in hot dry climates where the cascading leaves offer valuable shade and there is less risk of mildew, is still widely adopted in the Bekaa.

They are easy and economical to plant and need none of the set-up required for trellis systems. They are tolerant to water stress, while the head-trained canopies provide protection, not only to thin-skinned grapes such as Grenache, but also more heat-resistant varieties such as Carignan, Cinsault and Mourvèdre, all of which have proven themselves many times over in Lebanon over the last 160 years.

Gobelet vines also allow for cross-cultivation (the mowed cover crop creating valuable moisture-retaining mulch), an important practice in dry-farming regions such as Lebanon. ■



JDITA, CHTAURA AND QAB ELIAS

One of the first wineries on the Beirut-to-Damascus highway is **Vertical 33**, sited on the descent to the Bekaa border town of Chtaura. Vertical 33 is named after Lebanon's latitudinal position, and the 2012 brainchild of Eid

Azar, a doctor of infectious diseases turned winemaker. The vines are all at over 1,000m in Kefraya, Komol and Zahle. Cinsault, Carignan and the indigenous Obeideh, as well as a high-altitude Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon, are the backbone of the winery, which produces up to 25,000 bottles a year, using wild yeast and favouring whole-bunch fermentation. Yves Confuron from Domaine Confuron-Cotetidot in Vosne-Romanée is one of the partners.

*MK likes **Obeideh** (£££ – see price key on p22). The more-than-100-year-old Obeideh vines are given expression in a spectrum of mind-blowing flavours courtesy of the formidable Bekaa terroir. It's all here: mouthfeel, acidity and notes of lemon, white flowers, honey, nuts and brioche. Eid Azar has delivered a wine that reaches back in time to deliver the taste of the land and millennia-old relationship with the grape. Also try **Cinsault du Soir** (£££).*

Near the valley floor, nestled in the village of Jdita on the outskirts of Chtaura, is **Chateau Nakad**. Founded in 1923 by George Nakad, and one of the oldest names in Lebanese wine and arak, the winery passed to his son Selim who died in 2022. He has been succeeded by his son Jalal, who makes 60,000 bottles of red, white and rosé and a chateau wine. There is a famous arak and a very moreish liqueur, like limoncello, made with afendi (mandarin) and called, not surprisingly, Afandello.

*MK likes **Cuvée du Alouette** (£). The Nakads have been making wine for a long time and have access to excellent grapes, the upshot of which is a range of brilliantly made, easy-drinking wines. The pick of them is the Cinsault-led (with a supporting cast of Cabernet Sauvignon and Carignan) **Cuvée du Alouette**, a classic Bekaa red, unoaked, precise, balanced and brimming with strawberries, cherries, spice and a whiff of garrigue. Also try **Bloom Blanc de Blancs** (Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier) (£), **Libanos**.*

In nearby Makse is **Château Ka**. Owner Akram Kassatly trained as a winemaker in Dijon in the 1960s and founded his winery in 1974. But his dream was put on hold by the 15-year civil war and the destruction of the winery by local

Vines on the banks of Lake Qaraoun in the West Bekaa



militias. Akram's daughters, Ghida and Reem, oversee the day-to-day running of the winery with winemaker Jean Tannoury. Château Ka, which was created in 2004, makes three reds using mainly Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot, Caladoc and Tempranillo, and which represent around 80% of production. The white is a blend of Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier, Muscat and Chardonnay, while the rosé is made from Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Tempranillo.

*MK likes **Fleur de Ka** (£££). When Château Ka launched its wines in 2005 after a nearly 30-year hiatus, it made an impressive statement of intent with **Fleur de Ka**, a muscular blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah, aged in oak for 24 months and released after 10 years. A gentle giant, depending on its age it is awash with brambles, plums, cherries, liquorice and juniper. (A bottle of 2005, opened in December 2022 had retained an impressive amount of bright primary fruit). Also try **Source de Rouge** (Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot) (££), **Alliance Wine***

On the Chtaura main road, heading towards the Syrian border, is **Domaine des Tourelles**, established by a determined French engineer, François-Eugène Brun, who arrived in the border town in the 1860s to work on the Beirut-Damascus railway. His grandson, Pierre Brun, died in 2000 with no heirs, and the business was acquired by family friends whose children now run the historic winery, which produces 600,000 bottles a year. They include winemaker Faouzi Issa,



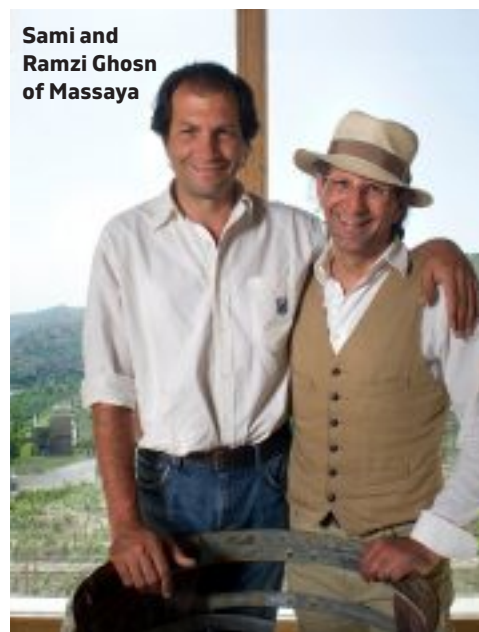
*loyal to those who kept faith with it for more than 150 years. This is a harmonious symphony of cherries, strawberries, oregano, thyme and burnt thistle. The taste of the Bekaa. Also try **Vielle Vignes Merweh & Obeidi** (££), **Boutinot**.*

Head east towards the Syrian border at Masnaa to reach the **Massaya** winery in Tanail, founded in 1996. Massaya, which means the soft, glowing light from the sky when the sun is below the horizon at dusk, is a Franco-Lebanese partnership forged between Lebanese brothers, Ramzi and Sami Ghosn, the Brunier brothers of Domaine Le Vieux Télégraphe in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, and Dominique Hébrard, once of Château Cheval Blanc in Saint-Émilion. In 2014 another winery was unveiled in Faqra, Mount Lebanon, sited near the world's highest Roman temple. The Faqra winery is used to produce white wine. Massaya's clay and chalky limestone vineyards are in Hadath Baalbek and Ras Baalbek in the north Bekaa, Tanail and Mount Lebanon, and go as high as 1,700m. The wines have strong Rhône and southern French influence. Winemaker Ramzi makes four reds, a white and rosé using Cinsault, Grenache Noir, Tempranillo, Mourvèdre, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Clairette, Rolle, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.

*MK likes **Terrasses de Baalbeck** (££). Daring and different is the Massaya hallmark, with a blending tradition firmly rooted in the southern Rhône that has paid off in spades. **Terrasses de Baalbeck** is a silky and quaffable yet heady and potent blend of Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre, brimming with blackcurrants, strawberries, plums, figs, spice with hints of cedar. Also try **Le Colombier** (Cinsault Grenache Syrah Tempranillo) (££), **Thorman Hunt**.*

In Qab Elias is **Château Héritage**, which was founded in 1995 and was part of the first wave of post-civil-war wineries. Dargham Touma – Dr D to his friends – and his brother Wissam come from the famous arak-making Touma family, which has been in alcohol production since 1888 and has strong, historic ties to the Bekaa. The brothers started the winery with their late father, Elias. The wines are honest, earthy and bulging with fruit. There are six reds, two whites, two rosés and a brace of sweet wines. The reds are made with Cinsault – a particular favorite of Dargham – Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Carignan, Grenache, Tempranillo, Merlot and Cabernet Franc; the whites with Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier and Muscat.

Sami and Ramzi Ghosn of Massaya



*MK likes **9** (£). A does-what-it-says-on-the-tin wine, **9** is a blend of nine varieties: Cinsault, Carignan, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Tempranillo, Grenache, Mourvèdre and Cabernet Franc. Punching above its weight to deliver a genuine sense of a place, it packs a fistful of Bekaa flavours into a blend that is all bramble, cherries and garrigue. Also try **Blanc de Blancs** (Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier) (£), **Amathus**.*

Château St Thomas is the other winemaking branch of the Touma family. In the early 1990s, founder, the late Said Touma and his son Joe, planted a selection of international varieties including Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Petit Verdot, Cabernet Franc, Grenache, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, but it was not until 1997 that he established Clos St Thomas. Since then, the winery has also added a Pinot Noir and Obeideh to its portfolio. Château St Thomas makes five reds: all blends, apart from the Pinot Noir and a premium Merlot, the latter being the grape Joe Touma chose for his dissertation in France. The whites include a blend, as well as a Chardonnay and Obeideh varietal. There are two rosés.

*MK likes **Pinot Noir** (££). They said it couldn't be done in such a hot climate, but Joe has succeeded in making a Pinot Noir with an oriental twist, brimming with bright red fruit, Lebanese spice, but with the signature Pinot gaminess. A superb wine, balanced, weighted and succulent, and validation that the Bekaa at altitude can deliver a diverse range of expressions. Also try **Les Gourmets** (Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault, Grenache, Syrah) (£), **Lebanese Fine Wines**.*



Faouzi Issa of Domaine des Tourelles

who trained in Montpellier and interned at Château Margaux in the Médoc and Domaine René Rostaing in Côte Rôtie. The reds are typical Bekaa blends and there is a premium Syrah varietal that is matured in new American oak, as well as old-vine Cinsault and Carignan varietals. The whites are made with Chardonnay, Muscat, Viognier and old vine Obeideh and Merwah, while the Cinsault, Syrah and Tempranillo rosé, made famous in the 1960s, is still going strong.

*MK likes **Vielle Vignes Cinsault** (££). In 2014, winemaker Faouzi Issa flew in the face of what was then conventional wisdom ('it's a blending grape. Nothing more') and made a Cinsault varietal. Looking back, it was a no-brainer. Made from old vines, the grape is generous and*

THE WEST BEKAA

Reserve Ammiq was established in 2007 by landowner-turned-producer Naji Skaff, whose family manages 100ha of vines, some of which are more than 50 years old, across the Bekaa Valley, mostly in Ammiq in the West Bekaa.

The Skaff family uses roughly 2ha to produce a modest 8,500-10,000 bottles a year – three reds, a white and a rosé – but there are plans to increase production and plant more varieties. Naji's son Peter, who studied oenology in Bordeaux and who worked in the US and New Zealand has been making the wine since 2017.

*MK likes **Château** (££). First made by Naji Skaff in 2007, this is a thoughtful Musar-esque blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Carignan and Cinsault, aged for two years in French oak; it is dry and earthy, full of strawberries, cherries, orange peel and lavender, and other garrigue sensations. Also try **Chardonnay** (££).*

Situated in the village of Kefraya, **Château Marsyas**, one of two wineries owned by the Syrian-Lebanese Saade family (the other is Domaine de Bargylus, located above the Syrian port city of Latakia). Château Marsyas made its first wines in 2007 and has since become one of the most sought-after Lebanese wines, quietly cultivating a growing international fanbase. Nestled in the lee of the Anti-Lebanon mountains, Château Marsyas' vines are planted on 65ha of stony, red clay and limestone soils at 900m, from which bothers Karim and Sandro Saadé produce two oaked reds made with Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah and Mourvèdre; two unoaked whites using Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc; and a rosé. Stéphane Derenoncourt is the consultant.

*MK likes **B-Qa de Marsyas** (££). A sumptuous blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Mourvèdre, matured in various ages of oak for eight months. The result is velvety and fresh, yet complex; a fruit-forward wine that can be drunk immediately, with notes of blackcurrant, red cherry, cranberry, plums, cloves and black pepper. Also try **Château Marsyas White** (Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc) (££), **Corney and Barrow**.*

Across the road is **Chateau Kefraya**, founded by the late Michel de Bustros in 1978, three years into the civil war, the property having grown and sold grapes since the 1950s. The winery was caught in the thick of the fighting and its French winemaker was taken hostage by the

invading Israelis in 1982, but the winery emerged from the war to become one of Lebanon's leading producers, famous for its Comte de M, the first wine to come out from under Musar's shadow. All the grapes are sourced from its 300ha estate. The French winemaker is Fabrice Guiberteau, who has been at Kefraya since 2006, and produces four reds, four whites and three rosés, as well as a range of varietal wines – as an exception to the blend-only house rule – plus specialist wines using indigenous grapes and amphora ageing. Fabrice is also keen to use more indigenous grapes, including the red Assouad Karech, which means 'black belly', and Asmi Noir.

*MK likes **Comte de M** (£££). The brainchild of the late Michel de Bustros, Comte de M is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah from one 9ha parcel at over 1,000m, aged in new oak for 24 months. The wine is defined by flavours of blackcurrants, strawberries, cherries, plums, menthol and a basket of spices with outstanding freshness and integration. The first Lebanese wine of the modern era to win international plaudits. A Parker wine, but not really a Parker wine. Also try **Les Exceptions** (Asmi Noir and Assouad Karech) (££), **Lebanese Fine Wines**.*



Below, from top:
the slopes of
the West Bekaa;
harvest time at
Chateau Kefraya



Cave Kouroum is owned by the Rahals, one of the major grape-growing families in the village of Kefraya. It was founded in 1998, by the late Bassim and Sami Rahal, who also owned Château de Mauvanne, a 50ha winery in Provence. A sleeping giant, the 180ha winery, nestled at the foot of the western slopes of the Barouk Mountain, has 44 giant fermentation tanks and a bottling plant that can fill 3,000 bottles an hour, handling 4 million litres at any one time. Current output is around 150,000 bottles. The wines are easy drinking, fruit-forward and rounded, and offer excellent value.

*MK likes **Petit Noir** (£). An excellent value, unoaked blend of Cinsault, Carignan, Syrah and Grenache.*

Terre Joie, founded in 2008, is located in the village of Khirbet Qanafar, and owned by Joe Saadé, an advertising executive-turned-winemaker and disciple of Emile Peynaud. Joe has planted eight varieties over 10ha of 30-year-old vines at 1,400m and makes four reds: a Merlot/Cabernet Franc is his flagship wine – he is passionate about both varieties – and there are also Cinsault and Grenache varietals, plus a ‘cadet’ blend. There are limited quantities of a moreish crunchy rosé made from Grenache. There are plans to bottle a 2022 Sauvignon Blanc. Production is 33,000 bottles.

*MK likes **Fleur** (££). Joe Saadé grows his Cabernet Franc and Merlot on the western slopes of the Bekaa Valley on the Yammouni Rift at 1,000m. An increasingly popular blend, the Merlot, a grape that has often struggled to live up to its reputation in Lebanon, gives a wonderful expression of soft, rounded strawberries, cherries and pork meat, while the Cabernet Franc adds spice, poise and balance. The wines are aged in oak for an average of 15 months. Also try Cinlight (Cinsault) (££).*

Next door is **Château Qanafar**, founded in 2004 by George Naim and his family. The vineyards are at an altitude of 1,200m, just above Khirbet Qanafar. The winery has 15ha from which it sources all its grapes. Today the winery uses Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah and Tempranillo for the reds and rosés, and Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier and Riesling for the whites. George’s son, Eddy, is the winemaker.

*MK likes **Blanc de Qanafar** (££). Lebanese whites have come into their own in the past decade as winemakers gain more experience working with relatively new*

*varieties at high altitudes. The Sauvignon Blanc in particular has shown that it can achieve its potential in the heat of the Levant. Eddie Naim’s varietal is a thrillingly crisp, luscious and complex wine with flavours of grapefruit, peach and white flowers. Also Try **Château Qanafar** (Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon) (££), **Naked Wines**.*

Umami was established in Khirbet Qanafar in 2016 by winemaker Hiba Salloum, who worked at the short-lived Château Florentine. She has 4ha of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Obeideh, making 19,000 bottles of red, white and rosé.

*MK likes **Umami Red** (££), a blend of Merlot and Cabernet Franc aged in oak for eight months. Black and red fruit, morello cherries, pork meats and tomato leaf with bags of body and freshness.*

Further south in Saghbine, on the banks of the picturesque Lake Qaraoun, is **Latourba**. Owner Elias has 65ha, 15 for livestock and 50 for grapes, of which he has 18 varieties. He began planting in 2003, but his first wines weren’t made until 2014. His first grapes were Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah, but he then planted an eclectic assemblage of Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains, Assyrtiko, Fiano, Vermentino, Albariño, Moschofilero, Primitivo, Sangiovese, Gamay, Mourvèdre and Petit Verdot. Latourba also makes Lebanon’s first traditional-method sparkling, white and rosé wines.

*MK likes **Unique** (££). With daring and innovation, Elias Chehwan has made Lebanon’s first Chardonnay-based, traditional-method, sparkling wine. Creamy with aromas of biscuit and brioche, combined with apple and citrus flavours, to produce a wine that is youthful, fruity and balanced. Also try **Simil Red** (Mourvèdre, Sangiovese and Syrah) (£).*

Other wineries in the area include **Château St Clement** in Saghbine on the shore of Lake Qaraoun, which was founded in 2010 by the owner-winemaker Nassim Abou Hamad. His Chateau is made with Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. **Mas Hélios** is owned by the hugely likeable Marwan Méchély. His Rouge de Grace is an oak-aged blend of majority Cabernet Sauvignon, a little less Merlot and a dollop of Syrah is the pick of the bunch. ■

ZAHLÉ AND THE NORTHERN BEKAA

Chateau Ksara, situated just outside the city of Zahlé on the northern route to Baalbek, was established in 1857, when Jesuit brothers began farming a 25ha plot of land between Tanail and Zahlé. In 1920, the winery became a business after increased demand from the newly arrived French authorities. Known then as Caves de Ksara, the winery became Chateau Ksara after the Jesuits sold it to the current owners in 1973 in the wake of a Papal edict that instructed the Jesuits to sell off any commercial interests.

Chateau Ksara farms 400ha of vineyards, making around 3 million bottles each year. It was the first Lebanese producer to make varietal wines – Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay – and the first to make a varietal Merwah in commercial quantities. Winemaker James Palgé has been at the helm for a quarter of a century, ensuring consistency. Chateau Ksara's range of wines offers a snapshot of styles coming out of Lebanon, from easy-drinking, fruit-forward blends that capture the Bekaa's formidable terroir to more complex wines that reflect the winery's strong French influence.

*MK likes **Blanc de Blancs** (££). An intriguing blend of oak-fermented and aged Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon. A wine of impeccable balance – oak, acidity and fruit – and yet so much verve and flavours – lemon, apples, pears, flowers, toast and nutmeg. Also try **Cuvée de Printemps** (Gamay, Tempranillo) (£), **Berkmann Wine Cellars**.*

Domaine Wardy was one of the pioneering wineries created in 1996 in the wake of the civil war, but the Wardy family has been in the arak-making business since 1893. Wardy pioneered varietal wines in the late 1990s and has been at the forefront of innovation in the post-war period. It was one of a handful of producers brave enough to use the native Obeideh both in a blend and as a varietal. Today, owners Khalil and George Wardy have around 22ha – spread between the Zahlé plains, the slopes of Kfar Zabad on the Anti-Lebanon range and Bhousha on Mount Lebanon, all at altitudes of between 900-1,250m – with 20 more to be planted between now and 2024 with the possibility of seven more. Domaine Wardy produces ten reds, five whites and a rosé (as well as two araks), using Cinsault, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier, Muscat and Obeideh. The consultant is roving winemaker Jean-Baptiste Soula,

but Khalil Wardy, a trained conductor who initially set his sights on a career in classical music, has a very hands-on role after returning as a winemaker.

*MK likes **Beqaa Valley White** (£). A blend of Obeideh, Viognier and Sauvignon Blanc. Made by the versatile Diana Salameh, this intriguing blend has excellent weight and mouthfeel, super acidity and flavours that range from lemon, pears and acacia to a smidgen of biscuit on the finish. Also try **Beqaa Valley Red** (Cinsault, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah) (£), **Bibendum**.*

Coteaux du Liban, a small, family-run winery also located in the Bekaa town of Zahlé was founded in the mid-2000s by the late Nicolas Abou Khater, who studied winemaking at the University of Burgundy. After his death in a car accident in 2009, his wife Roula took over, but now her French-trained viticulturalist son Roland and his winemaker wife Tamara run the show. The winery makes 90,000 bottles from its 15ha in the Zahlé area. The couple make three reds, three whites (including an Obeideh varietal) and a rosé, using Cinsault, Syrah, Carignan, Grenache, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Viognier and Obeideh.

*MK likes **Viognier** (££). A super little varietal wine with a grape that has made a real impact in Lebanon in the past two decades. Coteaux du Liban's version delivers body, lushness, acidity and masses of complexity with aromas of peach, pear, a hint of pineapple and white flowers. Also try **Rouge Passion** (Cabernet Sauvignon, Carignan, Cinsault, Grenache and Syrah) (£), **Lebanos**.*

Chateau Khoury was founded in 2004, by Raymond and Brigitte Khoury. There are 13ha of vineyards, producing 50,000 bottles annually. Varieties include Riesling, Pinot Gris, Chardonnay, Gewürztraminer, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Syrah, Merlot, Caladoc, Pinot Noir and Petit Verdot. The chalk and clay, south/south-east-facing sloping vineyards are sited at 1,300m with views over the Bekaa's plateau. The grapes are dry farmed with an average yield of 20hl/ha and there is a strong emphasis on organic practices. The winemaker is the founders' son, French-trained Jean-Paul Khoury, helped by his parents and brother Étienne.

*MK likes **Pinot Gris** (££). Jean-Paul Khoury is the self-confessed 'acid guy', and this crisp varietal made with Pinot Gris demonstrates just why he has earned*

Cannabis and Grenache in the Northern Bekaa





George Sara
of Chateau
Ksara

*the soubriquet. The wine, which he now ferments to dry (earlier vintages had more residual sugar), is crisp and fruity with flavours of lemons, pears and apricots, and white pepper with the overwhelming sensation of balanced freshness. Also try **St Thérèse** (Pinot Noir and Caladoc) (£).*

Domaine de Baal was established in 2006 by Jean-Paul's cousin Sebastien Khoury, who trained in St Émilion. This biodynamic micro-winery at 900m on the clay and limestone slopes of Zahlé makes oak-aged reds from Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, and whites from Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. The site covers 6ha. Sebastien has plans to plant Merwah, Vermentino and Cinsault. Annual production is 25,000 bottles, with an increase planned.

*MK likes **Petit Baal** (£££). Winemaker and owner Sebastien Khoury makes a less-butch version of his main red. **Petit Baal** is a blend of majority, whole-cluster Syrah and Merlot aged in two-year-old oak barrels, made in his winery overlooking Zahlé. It is a wine with brooding yet silky blackcurrants and plums, with soft, rounded strawberries and black pepper spice notes. Also try **Domaine de Baal** (Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc) (£££).*



Khalil Wardy,
Domaine Wardy

Domaine Wardy pioneered varietal wines in the late 1990s and has been at the forefront of innovation in the post-war period



Heading north, located in the town of the same name between Zahlé and Baalbek, is **Chateau Rayak**. These days Rayak is mostly known for its defunct railway station on the Beirut-Damascus railway and a military airbase, but it was once a thriving mini metropolis and the wine labels all pay tribute to this golden age. The winery is owned by Elias Maalouf, whose family arrived in Rayak during the First World War after fleeing the famine in Mount Lebanon. The winery's vines are planted over 10ha in Terbul, Messa and Zahlé, and Elias makes just over 5,000 bottles each year.

*MK likes **Chateau Rayak** (££). Elia Maalouf's premium wine, made with Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah aged in a combination of Austrian, Slovenian, American and French oak.*

In the north Bekaa town of Deir el Ahmar, in one of the most remote parts of the country, is **Couvent Rouge**, founded in 2010 as part a larger cooperative with, among other more mainstream ambitions, a long-term plan to replace the ubiquitous cannabis plants (for the time being they often grow side by side on the plain). There is the Bekaa altitude, the stony, red-clay-and-limestone soil and the perfect long, cool nights for extended ripening. There are eight still wines – three reds, three whites and two rosés – and a white and a rosé pet nat.

*MK Likes **Racine** (££). Walid Habchi's Viognier varietal is thrillingly austere, elegant and poised, with notes of citrus, apples, grapefruit and pears, with just the slightest hint of honey and biscuit. Also try **Pet Nat White** (££).*

Also in the northern Bekaa is **Chateau Barka**, owned by the five Geagea brothers and sited at 1,500m in the wilds of the north Bekaa. Its Chateau Barka is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah that delivers a balanced concentration of blackcurrants, plums and liquorice.

In nearby Ainata is **Muse du Liban**, whose consultant is the French winemaker Michel Rolland. Muse Le Rouge is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah, which delivers mineral freshness and bright fruit with fine tannins.

Chateau Isaac grapes are grown in Deir el Ahmar. Its Quatro Vinedo is made from Cabernet Sauvignon, Carmenère, Syrah and Tempranillo. It is a pleasantly rounded and fruit-forward red, ideal for everyday drinking. ■

BATROUN & THE CEDARS



The winery at
Domaine Najm

Take the main coastal highway, through the Nahr el-Kalb tunnel, just north of Beirut where invading armies are commemorated on fading concrete slabs. Drive through the northern suburbs Zouk, Jounieh and Tabarja, home to the famous Casino du

Liban, past the roadside vendors selling statues of Lebanese saints and the Virgin, and on to the ancient port town of Byblos, said to be the oldest continuously inhabited community on Earth, where the Phoenicians made Bybline, one of the most sought-after wines of the ancient world. Here it was loaded on to galleys that sailed out of the harbour to their various trading outposts across the Mediterranean. Go past all of these places and you will reach the coastal town of Batroun, another Phoenician port, whose mountainous interior has become Lebanon's second winemaking region.

The current wine movement in Batroun began at the end of the last century when, in 1998, retired army general Joseph Bitar planted his first vines and founded the **Edde Winery**. His first vintages were sold under the Kifane Village label. He didn't know it at the time, but he had put down a marker on what would be a revolution. Today Batroun is thriving, dotted with a growing number of micro-wineries and immaculate guesthouses attracting surfers, hikers and pleasure-seeking day trippers. Brewers and distillers followed. The locals have seen nothing like it –

at least not since Phoenician times.

Joseph Bitar died in 2007. His four daughters inherited his dream and took over the winery and 17ha of land. In 2011 the winery stopped production, but Batroun winemakers owe a debt of gratitude to a determined old soldier who believed in his region and the power of the land.

Because the hills and valleys of Batroun are within a wind corridor, which funnels cooling and shading clouds from the Mediterranean on almost a daily basis in summer, the area has a very specific microclimate, which allows it to produce fresh wines at an altitude that would probably otherwise be too low. There are cases of mildew, black rot and botrytis, while winemakers who choose to plant their grapes at altitudes over 1,000m have to contend with little water, narrow terraces, rocky land and shallow soil.

Clos du Phoenix began life in 2013 after being a partner of Joseph Bitar for several years. Now it is an independent organic microwinery that is owned by the Chédid and Anid families, whose 6ha of Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Grenache, Marsanne, Chardonnay, as well as more-than-100-year-old Merwah, are planted in the Batroun village of Edde at between 250-400m. All the whites undergo malolactic fermentation and there have been some experiments with semi-carbonic maceration and an abandonment of sulphites. Nine thousand bottles are made every year.

Batroun winemakers owe a debt of gratitude to a determined old soldier who believed in the power of the land

The winemaker is the Burgundian-born Yvan Jobard.

*MK likes **Merwah** (££). Rapidly becoming the go-to grape for those looking for a taste of Lebanese terroir, and winemaker Yvan Jobard has made a stunning example of a Lebanese varietal with beautiful mouthfeel and complexity replete with citrus, stone fruit, floral and bready aromas and flavours. Also try **Cuvée de la Citadelle** (Syrah, Mourvèdre and Grenache) (££).*

Atibaia is a microwinery founded by drinks industry businessman Jean Massoud and now run by his son David. Established in 2005, Atibaia is located in Smar Jbeil, with 5ha of vineyards in Smar Jbeil, Jrann, Mrah el Zayat and Mrah Chedid. Atibaia makes 1,000 cases of its signature red made with Syrah, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Sauvignon, and limited releases of a white, made with Viognier (and sometimes a dash of Chardonnay), a Syrah and Cinsault rosé and limited quantities of Malbec, Petit Verdot and Syrah varietals.

*MK likes **Atibaia** (£££). Made by roving winemaker Diana Salameh, with Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot and Syrah, all grown in Smar Jbeil in the Batroun region. It is silky and rounded with an abundance of strawberries, cherries, plums, kirsch, cloves and vanilla. Unashamedly international, but quite frankly, who cares? It's utterly sumptuous. Also try **Atibaia White** (£££).*

IXSIR is arguably the most significant Lebanese winery since Michel de Bustros founded Chateau Kefraya 30 years earlier. It is sited underneath a modest 17th-century stone house, where the owners built a huge Bond-villain-like cavern housing a winery that has won international awards for its sustainability and 'green' architecture. IXSIR's other selling point is wine made with grapes grown across Lebanon in different terroirs, all at altitude (the highest vines are planted at nearly 2,000m). Spanish winemaker, and one-time Spanish rugby international, Gaby Rivero makes eight wines from grapes – Cabernet Sauvignon, Tempranillo, Caladoc, Syrah, Merlot, Obeideh, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Muscat and Viognier – planted over 100ha across the country – Jezzine in south Lebanon, the Bekaa and Batroun.

*MK likes **Altitudes** (££). The red cadet wine made with Cabernet Sauvignon, Caladoc, Syrah and Tempranillo. Altitudes is a nod to the winery's*

*philosophy of planting its grapes as high as possible to extract maximum freshness and complexity. The wine is soft, dry and spicy with a spine of blackcurrant, cherries, cassis and cedar, with excellent mouthfeel and pleasing 'dusty' tannins. Also try **Grande Reserve Rosé** (Syrah) (£££), **Enotria**.*

Founded in 2003 by the affable Assaad Hark, **Batroun Mountains** was one of the first wineries to establish itself in the area. Assaad studied winemaking in the US (his 20-year-old daughter Hala – one of six children, who has been making wine since she was 13 – is currently studying at UC Davis). Assaad planted his vines between 2004 and 2006, in eight plots in six towns, a total of 11ha between 400-1,500m. He has planted Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Syrah, Chardonnay, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Muscat Hamburg, Youssfi, Merweh and Obeideh. There is a frizzante rosé made with Syrah and a still version also made with Syrah. There are three whites: a blend of seven varieties including Obeideh and Youssfi, as well as high-altitude Chardonnay and Riesling varietals. The six reds are all blends, apart from a Syrah and Cabernet varietal.

*MK likes **Riesling** (££). Assaad Hark made the first Lebanese Riesling, planted at 1,500m in sea-facing vineyards above Batroun. The wine has lovely 'fat' with flavours of lemon and pears, with further notes of white flowers. All is underpinned by the Riesling's inherent acidity, which has been maintained owing to the altitude. Also try **Syrah** (££).*

In Chabtine, Salim and Hiba Najm farm 3.5ha at 600m to produce around 5,000 bottles of an earthy red with Grenache, Mourvèdre and Cabernet Sauvignon, all made by winemaker Hiba under the name **Domaine Najm**. Harvest is often a race to see who will get the grapes first, the pickers or the wild boars that also lay claim to the region. Hiba maintains her wines are "natural wine with no additives. The grapes do all the work!"

*MK likes **North Path** (££). A garagiste red wine made with Cabernet Sauvignon, Mourvèdre and Grenache, with a style that is earthy and alive. Those of you who enjoy Chateau Musar's red wines – a hint of VA and a bit of brett – will immediately fall in love with Hiba Najm's creations, which reek of barnyards, red cherries, strawberries and brambles. Moreish.*

Deep inland in the Batroun region, in the tiny village of Nehla, is **Sept**, a biodynamic winery established in

2016 by maverick winemaker Maher Harb, who planted family land in honour of his late father, who died during the civil war. Seven is Maher's lucky number and, coincidentally, the 'numerological number' he and his late father share. The 5ha of vineyards are spread among Nehla, the Bekaa and the Chouf. Maher uses Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Tempranillo, Cinsault, Viognier, Obeideh and Merwah, the latter coming from 120-year-old vines. Sept produces around 25,000 bottles a year. In late 2022, Maher announced that he had produced 250 bottles of Zitani, the latest local grape to be rescued from obscurity from 150-year-old ungrafted vines.

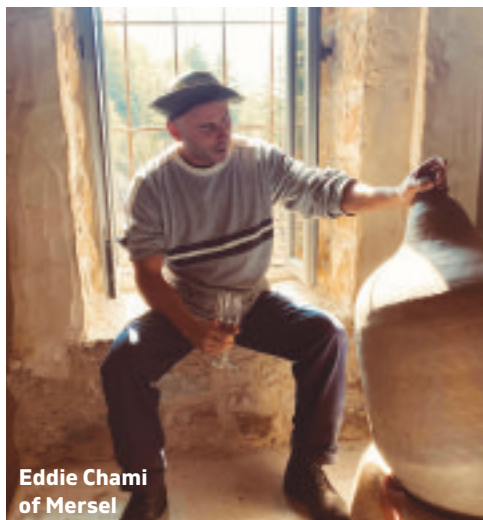
*MK likes **Merwah** (£££). Maher dives straight into the Lebanese songbook with this wild and earthy, unoaked Merwah varietal from pre-phylloxera, 100-year-old vines. Bready and oxidative with notes of lemon, orange peel, nuts, honey and brioche. Also try **Grenache** (£££).*

In the tiny inland village of Rachkedde is the **Aurora** winery, founded in 2006 by the Geara family. Aurora is named after the village of the same name where the winery's grapes grow on a hill overlooking the Nahr el Jawz ('walnut river') in the Batroun mountains. The winery, with its four vineyards, 3ha in total, sited at 900m, produces around 20,000 bottles each year. Varietals are Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Franc; there is a rosé made with Cabernet Franc and a Château, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah. Fady Geara is the winemaker, while daughter Andrea runs the winery.

*MK likes **Cabernet Franc** (££). Winemaker Fady Geara loves his Cabernet Franc and his is one of the finest expressions of the grape grown in Lebanon. Poised and elegant, brimming with strawberries, cherries, bramble, black pepper and spice. Also try **Cuvée N** (Sauvignon Blanc) (££).*

Founded in 1998 by the late Ramez Awad, **Chateau Sanctus** is a small producer from the Batroun region in the village of Marmama, where the grapes are grown organically over an area of 10ha at an altitude of 900m. The winery produces 20,000 bottles, but wants to expand production. There is a Syrah-based rosé and a Merwah varietal. The reds include Grenache, Syrah, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon varietals, and a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. Ramez's son, Fadi, has now taken





Eddie Chami
of Mersel

over the running of the business, while Batroun-based winemaker Yvan Jobard is the consultant.

MK likes Grenache (££). Not technically a varietal (there is 30% undeclared Cabernet Sauvignon), it is nonetheless beautifully aged and rounded, with red fruit, pork meat and white spice.

THE CEDARS

In 2019, Eddie Chami founded **Mersel** in Dimane, the mountainous and mystical Maronite heartland in the north of Lebanon. Eddie is a radical, intent on reclaiming Lebanon's viticultural soul; committed to making natural wines (many in traditional Georgian clay amphorae); reviving ancient varieties such as Jouzani and Marini, along with Merwah and Obeideh; and restoring the area's winemaking culture. With his collaborator, Walid Habchi at Couvent Rouge in Deir el Ahmar, he has also smashed Lebanon's high-altitude vine record (1,900m) by planting a vineyard at a lung-busting 2,400m in an area between the Cedars and Ainata el Arz. There are also vineyards in Ainata in the Bekaa Valley, Dimane and Bcharre in Wadi Qannoubine, and Bousit. Also working with Eddie is Syrian Abdullah Richi, a former barber and stonemason who fled war to make wine; and Laila Maghathe, an American winemaker of Palestinian/Sicilian descent who divides her time between the Adelaide Hills in Australia and the Mountains of North Lebanon. Production at the moment is between 35,000 and 40,000 bottles annually.

*MK likes Red Velvet (££), a Cinsault varietal made by semi-carbonic maceration. Light, fruity and crunchy red fruit. Joyous! Groovy label! Also try **Lebnani Abyad**, (Merwah, Sauvignon Blanc) (££), **Les Caves de Pyrene**.* ■

MOUNT LEBANON AND THE SOUTH

MOUNT LEBANON

The first major town on the road from Beirut to the Bekaa Valley is a once-thriving summer resort of Bhamdoun, popular in the 1960s and 1970s with vacationing Arabs who came to escape the heat of the Gulf. Bhamdoun is also home to

three wineries all established in the 21st century. The area has 45% more rain than the Bekaa Valley, and is also a few degrees cooler, allowing the grapes longer time on the vine to mature, with sea and fog a moderating influence.

Chateau Belle-Vue, a microwinery was founded in 2000 by Naji Boutros and his Minnesota-born wife, Jill. The wine has since achieved close to cult status, punching well above its weight, with a global following. It is also a fitting metaphor for peace and reconciliation in the town, which suffered atrocities during the civil war. The dry-farmed vines, which are dotted around the town in small parcels, are pruned to yield just over 1 ton per hectare. The winery produces around 24,000 bottles from 24ha. There are two full-bodied reds, made with Cabernet Franc, Syrah, Merlot and Cabernet



Looking towards the Mount Lebanon range from the West Bekaa

Sauvignon. There is also a white made with Sauvignon Blanc and Viognier. The French-trained winemaker is Diana Salameh.

*MK likes **Chateau Belle-Vue** (£££). The icon wine from the modern era's first Lebanese microwinery, made by the all-woman partnership of owner Jill Boutros and consultant winemaker Diana Salameh. Blessed by the cooler Bhamdoun weather, the Chateau is an oaked blend of Cabernet Franc, Syrah, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. It is full-bodied and fresh, brimming with blackcurrants, plums, red cherries, spice and black pepper, with balance, integration and the capacity to age for years. Also try **Petit Geste** (Sauvignon Blanc and Viognier) (£££).*

Nearby in the tiny village of Btalloun is **Iris Domain**, founded by Sarmad Salibi in 2003. Sarmad makes 7,000 bottles from 5ha, mostly of red wine, but there is a white and a rosé that are sold at his on-site restaurant-cum-jazz venue. His flagship red is made with Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot, and aged in French oak. The second red is a blend of Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Syrah, seasoned in a combination of American and French oak of varying ages. The white and rosé are made with Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Muscat and Trebbiano, and Grenache and Cabernet Sauvignon respectively. Jean-Paul Khoury of Chateau Khoury is the consultant.

*MK likes **Long Shadow** (££). Sarmad Salibi's plush red is made with Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Cool, smooth and brooding, it has beautiful tannic integration and is awash with flavours and aromas of blueberry, cherries, cranberry and peppers. Not that easy to find, but well worth the effort. Also try **Iris White** (Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Muscat, Trebbiano) (££).*

Under Bhamdoun is the tiny village of Ras el Harf, which looks out across the Lamartine Valley, a beautiful swathe of country named after the French poet, writer and statesman Alphonse de Lamartine, who travelled extensively in the region in 1832. It is also home to the 13ha **Château Cana**, a winery that was established in 2000 by Fadi Gerges who, like Naji Boutros, wanted to restore viticulture to the war-blighted area. Today, the winery is run by his daughter, Joanna, but Fadi still rolls up his sleeves in the winery, making a range of Bordeaux/Rhône-style reds, as well as a Pinot Noir and red made with the local Sobbaghieh. There is a white and a rosé, the former blended with Chardonnay and the local Meksassi.

*MK likes **Les Cabires Rouge** (£). A blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Grenache, Syrah and Cinsault, a wine that takes its inspiration from the so-called Mediterranean family of grapes, with the Cabernet adding the ballast.*

*The Grenache gives spicy softness, while the Cinsault delivers a barrel-load of red cherries to complement the brooding black Syrah. Also try **Jardin Secret** (Sobbaghieh) (££), **Lebanese Fine Foods and Wines**.*

In the Kserwan village of Ghazir is **Chateau Musar**, arguably Lebanon's most celebrated winery, brought to the world's attention in the late 1970s by the efforts of Serge Hochar, eldest son of the founder, Gaston Hochar, and who studied under the great Émile Peynaud in Bordeaux in the early 1960s. Serge died in 2014, but his wines and his philosophy live on through family, especially his son Gaston, his brother Ronald, and his protégé winemaker, Tarek Sakr, a man with an eye that sees wine and life in the same way as his late mentor.

The flagship red, a cult wine with a massive following and for so long Lebanon's poster child, is made with Bekaa-grown Cabernet Sauvignon, Carignan and Cinsault in varying proportions. Hochar would say that, if his wine were a human, his "Cabernet would be the bones, the Carignan the flesh and the Cinsault the perfume". Great stuff!

The wines are aged for 12 months in 25% new oak, but their signature is in the deliberately high levels of volatile acidity and a hint of brett. The whites are a trippy blend of Merwah and Obeideh, Lebanon's dynamic duo of native grapes, from ancient vines grown on Mount Lebanon, Byblos and the Anti-Lebanon ranges. The sense is of a wine with a profound expression of terroir, complex, layered and evolved, while still retaining the mouthwatering fruit. There is a quirky rosé, made in limited quantities, a blend of white and red wines.

The winery makes other wines – most notably the mid-range Hochar Père et Fils and the 'cadet' Musar Jeune, but its global fame has been won by the reputation of the senior red and to a lesser extent the white, of which only 2,000 cases are made each year.

*MK likes **Château Rosé** (£££). Totally bonkers, but ultimately a profound expression of Lebanese terroir (yes it's a rosé!) that will nonetheless cause much pearl-clutching and consternation among the Whispering Angel crowd. A blend of Merwah and Obeideh with a dash of Cinsault added 'for colour', it is aged in used French oak for between six and nine months. More cigar box than crunchy red fruit. Hochar was making 'natural wines' before the term was coined. Also try **Château White** (Merwah, Obeideh) (£££), **Chateau Musar UK**.*



In the Mar Moussa monastery, nestled in the hills between Brummana, Bikfaya and Dhour Choueir, is the **Adyar** winery, 'HQ' of a regional 'return-to-the-land' project initiated in 2003 by the Maronite church. Making wine was the obvious choice. The vineyards are spread across the country in the Metn, Chouf, Jbeil and Batroun districts, making up a total of 50ha. Today the organic winemaking is all done at Mar Moussa under the watchful eye of French winemaker Frederic Cacchia. The winery makes 80,000 bottles spread among eight reds, two whites and two rosés.

*MK likes **Expression Monastique** (££). A blend of Grenache, Mourvèdre, Sangiovese and Syrah made at the winery in Mar Moussa in the Metn. The wine is defined by deep black fruits such as plums and blackcurrants, as well as liquorice, cloves and cinnamon. Full-bodied, concentrated and balanced. Also try **Inspiration** (Viognier, Rolle, Chardonnay) (££).*

Chateau Oumsiyat – the name means 'the beautiful night' – is located just outside Mtein, a village the North Metn region of Mount Lebanon. It began life in its current incarnation in 1996, although the Bou Sleiman family has been involved with growing grapes and making arak and wine since the 1950s. The current owner is Joseph Bou Sleiman who, with his wife Cynthia, runs the winery and distillery, making six reds, five whites, a rosé and a sweet wine.

*MK likes **Cuvée Membliarus** (££). Assyrtico, the grape made famous by the celebrated 'nest' vines on the volcanic Greek island of Santorini, is just as at home in the mountains of Lebanon from where it may even have originated. Joseph Bou Sleiman has made a commendable wine with his first plantings: austere with amazing acidity, with citrus and floral notes and a pleasing tell-tale salinity. Also try **Jaspe** (Cabernet Sauvignon, Carignan, Cinsault and Syrah) (£), **Halgarten Druitt**.*

Also in Mtein is **Domaine des Princes**. The red is a full-bodied Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah blend.

Higher up the mountain, near one of Lebanon's most popular ski resorts, is **Château Fakra**, situated in Kfardebian in Keserwan. It is one of Lebanon's most popular producers, making around 200,000 bottles with an emphasis on light, easy-drinking reds made with Grenache, Cinsault, Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon. There are bigger reds and a white and rosé.

*MK likes **Pinnacle de Fakra** (£). A blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Cinsault. The wine has a deep-purple hue and a nose of bell peppers and strawberries. There is expressive fruit in the mouth, especially red cherries, bramble and plum, underpinned by gentle white pepper.*

In Khenchara at the Cave du Monastère St Jean is **Sendiäna** (meaning 'oak tree'), established in 2012 by Dr Charles Eid.

Sendiäna, a functioning winery and monastery since 1720, makes 20,000 bottles of red wine every year. Sendiäna is a majority blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot with a supporting cast of Syrah, Grenache and Mourvèdre grown on the sea-facing slopes of Mount Lebanon. Up the road is **Riachi Winery & Distillery**, founded by Moses Riachi in 1839 in the village of Khenchara, where current owner Roy Riachi is the eighth-generation winemaker. His Syrah is aged in oak for 18 months.

Across the valley in Qleiat is **Gilbert Simon**, whose vines grow at 900-1,050m. There is a Cabernet Sauvignon that delivers by the fistful, with good structure and red fruit with notes of menthol, figs and wild herbs. Further south in Mount Lebanon, near the summer resort of Aley, is **Château Nabise**, a winery in Richmaya with 2ha planted on church land. Château Nabise is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah and Cabernet Franc matured in oak for 12 months.

Further north, in Wata el Jaouz, is **Château Byblin**. Its Chateau wine is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Carignan and Cinsault, aged for three years in oak, with flavours of cherries, strawberries, cloves and bell peppers.

In nearby Akoura in the Byblos mountains is **Chateau Wadih**. Cuvée Tanit is a pleasant, easy-drinking blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Grenache and Syrah, aged in oak for four months. Those who fancy going a bit off-piste might be intrigued by the blue wine.

THE SOUTH

In South Lebanon, in Qattine just outside Jezzine, is the area's first producer, **Karam Winery**, founded in 2003 by Habib Karam, a former commercial airline captain, who grew up in his grandparents' vineyards in the neighbouring village of Roum. Today the winery farms 21ha of Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot, Petit Verdot, Saperavi, Touriga Nacional, Norton, Diolinoir (a Rouge de Diolly and Pinot Noir cross) and the local Zawtarani. Whites include Semillon, Viognier, Muscat, Sauvignon Blanc, Albariño and Meksassi.

*MK likes **Cloud 9** (££). With a clear nod to its maker's previous day job, Cloud 9 – made with Viognier, Semillon and Sauvignon Blanc – has been the standout wine in the Karam stable for nearly two decades. Citrus and floral with notes of exotic fruits with outstanding 'fat' and length. Also try **Corpus Christi** (Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Norton, Cabernet Sauvignon) (£££).*



GRAPE VARIETIES GROWN IN LEBANON

The major wineries mentioned at the end of each entry make a varietal (mono-cépage) wine with that grape variety or use it as the core, or equal, component in a blend. The below list is by no means definitive.

RED

Arinarnoa: Created in 1956 in Bordeaux, it was initially thought to be a cross between Merlot and Petit Verdot, and not, as recent DNA tests suggest, a cross between Tannat, of Madiran fame, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Either way, it is used in extremely limited quantities in Lebanon, where its claim to fame is its presence, along with Marselan, in Le Souverain, Chateau Ksara's top wine, to which it brings structure, aromas and fine tannins.

Asmi Noir: Recorded at Le Réseau Français des Conservatoires de Vigne as a grape native to the region thanks to the efforts of Fabrice Guiberteau, the winemaker at Chateau Kefraya, where it is blended with Assouad Karech. Asmi, which is vulnerable to sunburn due to its thin skin, has small berries in equally small bunches, which give concentration and richness to the wine.

Assouad Karech: Another grape championed by Fabrice Guiberteau, and one that is also on record at Le Réseau Français des Conservatoires de Vigne as being native to the area. Unlike

the Asmi Noir, with which it is blended at Chateau Kefraya, the Assouad Karech (literally 'black belly') is resistant to heat. It has good acidity and moderate alcohol, making wines that are balanced, aromatic and fresh, similar to the 'native' Cinsault.

Cabernet Sauvignon: In Lebanon, Cabernet Sauvignon has, in the past 30 years, replaced Cinsault as the backbone of the wine industry and comprises over 40% of the country's wine grapes under vine. A solid workhorse, it is used by all the major Lebanese wineries, either in blends to give structure, or varietals where it puts in a solid shift, but rarely conveys a genuine sense of place. *Adyar, Atibaia, Batroun Mountains, Chateau Belle-Vue, Château Fakra, Château Héritage, Chateau Kefraya, Chateau Ksara, Château Marsyas, Chateau Musar, Chateau Sanctus, Château St Thomas, Clos du Phoenix, Coteaux de Botrys, Domaine des Tourelles, Domaine Wardy, Iris Domain, Karam Wines, Latourba, Massaya, Sept and virtually all major producers*

Cabernet Franc: A relatively new variety to Lebanon, where it is planted in the Bekaa, Batroun and Bhamdoun. As a varietal, Cabernet Franc has, in recent years, achieved very encouraging results, producing fresh, rounded wines with depth and character, especially as a varietal. *Aurora, Chateau Belle-Vue, Chateau Kefraya, Chateau Ksara, Sept*

Carignan: Carignan has been used in Lebanon for more than 160 years, being one of the varieties introduced by the Jesuits ➔

at Ksara in the mid-19th century. It gives a beautiful dark hue, good acidity and a punch, at 14% abv. Old-vine Carignan varietals have been received enthusiastically and have added another dimension to Lebanon's wine identity. *Chateau Kefraya, Chateau Ksara, Domaine des Tourelles*

Carmenère: A variety originally planted in the Médoc region of Bordeaux as a blending grape, it has aromas and flavours of red fruit and spice. *Chateau Kefraya*

Cinsault: Known locally as Zeytouni because of its resemblance to a black olive, Cinsault is Lebanon's most celebrated red grape, and along with the Carignan is regarded as one of Lebanon's 'adopted' sons. It has been used to make wine in the Bekaa Valley for more than 160 years and today accounts for over 30% of Lebanon's total wine grapes. One of the first varieties brought in from Algeria by the Jesuits at what is now Chateau Ksara, it was for a long time, after the arrival of the so-called 'noble grapes' in the 1990s, seen as somewhat 'lower class', but Cinsault is now being given the respect it deserves and is leading the charge in creating a national identity with its medium-bodied, red fruit and spice-driven, aromatic expressions. *Chateau Kefraya, Chateau Ksara, Château Héritage, Chateau Musar, Chateau Nakad, Château St Thomas, Coteaux du Liban, Domaine des Tourelles, Domaine Wardy, Massaya, Terre Joie, Vertical 33*

Diolinoir: Created in 1970 by crossing Rouge de Diolly with Pinot Noir. *Karam Wines*

Gamay: In Lebanon Gamay is planted in extremely limited quantities for young, 'easy-drinking' red wines. *Chateau Ksara*

Grenache: A workhorse of the Bekaa for more than 160 years. It can give very good results if harvested in low yields. *Domaine Wardy, Chateau Kefraya, Massaya*

Marini: A local grape grown in the area of the Cedars, where it has been championed by natural winemaker Eddie Chami at the Mersel winery.

Marselan: Created in 1961 by crossing Cabernet Sauvignon and Grenache, Marselan is used sparingly in Lebanon, where it is blended with the equally obscure Arinarnoa in Le Souverain, Chateau Ksara's top wine. It has a deep colour and is highly aromatic with soft tannins and good aging potential.

Merlot: In Lebanon it has not performed as solidly as the Cabernet Sauvignon, but depending on where it is planted, such as the higher slopes of the Anti-Lebanon mountains in the West Bekaa, it can deliver an excellent expression of terroir, and is still a popular and significant component in the majority of upper and mid-range blends. *Chateau Belle-Vue, Chateau Ksara, Château Marsyas, Chateau Oumsiyat, Château St Thomas, Domaine Wardy, Iris Domain, Latourba and virtually all other producers*

Mourvèdre: Popular with Lebanese producers, who value its ability to contribute to well-structured wines. *Chateau Ksara, Château Marsyas, Massaya*

Norton: An American variety used in extremely limited quantities by the Karam Winery in South Lebanon.

Petit Verdot: Used in very limited quantities for those seeking colour and tannins. *Latourba*

Pinot Noir: It may be one of the world's most enigmatic grapes and the standard bearer of the great Burgundian reds, but in

Lebanon, it must be handled with care and planted at very high altitudes. Those who have tried have made intriguing wines, combining varietal expression with a sense of place. *Aurora, Château St Thomas, Reserve Ammiq, Vertical 33, Mersel*

Sobbaghieh: A local teinturier grape, named after the Arabic sabgha for dye. The Sabbaghieh still needs to be DNA tested to determine its origins, but it nonetheless produces wine with a deep colour, good tannins and flavours of juicy black fruit. *Château Cana*

Sangiovese: The fruity and earthy Italian grape gives good acidity. Lebanese Sangiovese is planted in extremely limited quantities. *Adyar, Chateau Kefraya*

Saperavi: The Georgian grape is gaining in popularity in Lebanon where it is admired for its elegant small berries, concentrated red fruit and ageing potential. *Chateau Kefraya, Karam Wines*

Syrah: The powerhouse grape behind the great wines of the northern Rhône, it has, in the past 20 years, become a firm favourite with Lebanese producers, who value its longevity as well as its aromas and flavours of prunes, spices and berry fruits. A relative newcomer, it is nonetheless genetically suited to Lebanon's climate, and its reputation as one of Lebanon's top-performing varieties is long overdue. *Batroun Mountains, Château Héritage, Chateau Kefraya, Chateau Ksara, Château Marsyas, Chateau Oumsiyat, Chateau Sanctus, Coteaux de Botrys, Clos du Phoenix, Coteaux du Liban, Domaine des Tourelles, Domaine Wardy, Karam Wines, Latourba, Massaya, Sept and virtually all other producers*



Tempranillo: Popular with a handful of Lebanese producers who value its vibrant fruit, but it can often be too tannic. *Chateau Kefraya, Chateau Ksara, Domaine des Tourelles, Domaine Wardy, Massaya*

Touriga Nacional: Portugal's outstanding grape is used in extremely limited quantities in Lebanon for its tannins and black fruit flavours. *Karam Wines*

Zawtarani: A thick-skinned local grape of unknown origin, found extensively in the Jezzine area. At altitude, it delivers freshness and good tannic structure. *Karam Wines*

WHITE

Assyrtiko: There is speculation that the superstar grape from Santorini may have originally been a Phoenician import back in the day, but what is more compelling are the results of recent plantings in Lebanese soil, which have shown that, like the ancient Phoenicians, the Assyrtiko, with its racy acidity, citrus profile, minerality and salinity, can travel well. A bright future is assured. *Chateau Oumsiyat*

Albariño: A newcomer to Lebanon, where it is grown in the Jezzine area by *Karam Wines*.

Chardonnay: Greater experience in working with this relatively new arrival, improved technology and the Bekaa's generous terroir have all contributed to the creation of hugely impressive 'classic' sur lie varietals in recent years. It has also given great results when blended with Sauvignon Blanc. *Aurora, Batroun Mountains, Chateau Kefraya, Chateau Ksara, Château Marsyas, Château Nabise, Chateau Oumsiyat, Château St Thomas, Domaine Des Tourelles, Domaine Wardy, Latourba, Reserve Ammiq and virtually all other producers*

Clairette: It is still used in 'cadet' wine, but its presence is in decline. *Chateau Ksara, Massaya*

Gewürztraminer: It is used in Lebanon in extremely limited quantities, mainly in pudding or fortified wines.

Jouzani: A local grape grown in the area of the Cedars, where it has been championed by natural winemaker Eddie Chami at the Mersel winery.

Kasoufi de la Bekaa: (see Meksassi)

Marsanne: Limited use, but can give wines ranging from the acidic and citrus to those more textured with notes of honey and nuts and apricots.

Meksassi: Also known as Kasoufi de La Bekaa, under which it is recorded at Le Réseau Français des Conservatoires de Vigne, as a native variety. A thin-skinned, gold grape with small, rounded berries, found extensively in the region of Jezzine in South Lebanon, where it grows wild, but also in other parts of Lebanon, especially the Mount Lebanon regions of the Metn and the Chouf. Historically used to make arak and other eaux de vie, it has good acidity and a pleasant 'fatty' texture, with aromas of citrus and herbs. *Karam Wines*

Merweh: An indigenous Lebanese grape, it was popular with the ancient Greeks who knew it as Byblin, and the pre-Romans, who called it Polis. Archaeologists have not discounted the theory that the Phoenicians introduced it, along with

viticulture, to France. With the Obeideh, the Merweh is growing in popularity among producers who value its weight and acidity, but also its ability to shape Lebanon's wider identity and emphasise its wine heritage. *Chateau Kefraya, Chateau Ksara, Chateau Musar, Chateau Sanctus, Clos du Phoenix, Sept*

Muscat: Planted in limited quantities in Lebanon, where it is mainly blended in small proportions to enhance the aromatic character and for its famous 'grapey' flavours.

Obeideh (Obeidi, Obeidy): The most widely known Lebanese grape. Thanks to the efforts to establish its indigenous authenticity by Château St Thomas winemaker Joe Touma and global grape authority Jose Vouillamoz, Obeideh has surged in popularity in the past decade, mostly as an old-vine varietal, but also in blends. In the right hands, it can deliver weight, roundness, freshness and citrus and floral aromatics. Aged Obeideh is complex and layered, oxidative and often autolytic in character. *Chateau Kefraya, Chateau Musar, Chateau Oumsiyat, Château St Thomas, Coteaux du Liban, Domaine Wardy, Sept, Vertical 33*

Pinot Gris: Used in extremely limited quantities in Lebanon. The flavours can range from ripe tropical fruit notes of melon and mango to some botrytis-influenced flavours. *Chateau Houry*

Riesling: In Lebanon, it is planted at altitude in Batroun. Riesling is aromatic, possessing good acidity. It can adapt to most climates and make wines ranging from the bone dry to the very sweet. *Batroun Mountains*

Rolle: (see Vermentino)

Sauvignon Blanc: It is a versatile, highly acidic grape and is used extensively in Lebanese blends, most often with Chardonnay and as a varietal. *Aurora, Chateau Belle-Vue, Château Marsyas, Chateau Oumsiyat, Château Qanafar, Château St Thomas, Domaine Wardy, Iris Domain, Karam Wines, Latourba and virtually all other producers*

Semillon: It can deliver a pleasing oily/'fatty' character to blends. *Chateau Ksara, Karam Wines*

Trebbiano: (see Ugni Blanc)

Vermentino: A light-skinned grape from Italy, in Lebanon it is used as a blending grape. *Chateau Kefraya, Massaya*

Viognier: The northern Rhône variety is a recent arrival in Lebanon, where its aromatics have made it an instant hit. It has been blended successfully with Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Muscat, and also goes solo. *Chateau Belle-Vue, Château Qanafar, Coteaux du Liban, Domaine Wardy, Karam Wines, Sept*

Ugni Blanc: Also known as Trebbiano. One of the earliest imported grapes, probably by the Jesuits at Chateau Ksara, where it was used for wines, arak and other eaux de vie. The bedrock of Cognac, where it traditionally gives low alcohol and high acidity – it has not been able to replicate this in Lebanon, where a hot climate and precious little summer rain do not allow it to produce the same acidity. *Iris Domain*

Youssfi: Local grape grown for wine in the Batroun villages of Kfour el Arbi and Bchaaleh. *Batroun Mountains*

Zitani: Local grape grown for wine in the Batroun villages of Nehla and used by Maher Harb at the Sept winery. ■

LEBANESE WINES IN THE UK

KEY

£	£10-£19.99
££	£20-£29.99
£££	£30+

NB. Prices are rrp and for guidance only.
Please check with importers and/or stockists.

RED (£)

CHÂTEAU CANA

Les Cabires – Cabernet Sauvignon, Grenache, Syrah, Cinsault

CHÂTEAU HÉRITAGE

Nine – Cinsault, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Carignan, Grenache, Tempranillo, Merlot, Cabernet Franc

CHÂTEAU KA

Source de Rouge – Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot

CHATEAU KEFRAYA

Les Bretèches – Cinsault, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Tempranillo

CHATEAU KSARA

Le Pieure – Mourvèdre, Carignan, Cabernet Sauvignon
Cuvée de Printemps – Gamay, Tempranillo
Old Vine Carignan

Reserve du Couvent – Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Syrah

CHÂTEAU MARSYAS

Satyr de Marsyas – Cabernet Sauvignon

CHATEAU MUSAR

Jeune – Cinsault, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon
Levantine – Tempranillo, Cinsault, Cabernet Sauvignon

CHATEAU NAKAD

Cuvée du Alouette – Cabernet Sauvignon, Carignan, Cinsault

CHÂTEAU QANAFAR

Petit Paradis de Qanafar – Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah

Mago – Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault

CHÂTEAU ST THOMAS

Les Gourmets – Cinsault, Grenache, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon

Les Emirs – Cabernet Sauvignon, Grenache, Cinsault, Carignan

COTEAUX DU LIBAN

Rouge Passion – Cinsault, Grenache, Syrah

DOMAINE DES TOURELLES

Domaine des Tourelles – Carignan, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Cinsault

DOMAINE WARDY

Beqaa Valley – Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah
Merlot
Shiraz

Cabernet Sauvignon

Cinsault

Grenache

Tempranillo

IXSIR

Altitudes – Caladoc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah

MASSAYA

Le Colombier – Cinsault, Grenache, Syrah, Tempranillo

RED (££)

CHÂTEAU CANA

Jardin Secret – Sobbaghieh

CHÂTEAU HÉRITAGE

Syrah

CHATEAU KEFRAYA

Chateau – Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Cinsault, Cabernet Franc

Coteaux de Kefraya – Syrah, Marselan Cabernet Franc

CHATEAU KSARA

Chateau – Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot

Cabernet Sauvignon

CHÂTEAU MARSYAS

B-Qa – Cabernet Sauvignon, Mourvèdre, Merlot, Petit Verdot

CHATEAU MUSAR

Hochar Père et Fils – Cinsault, Grenache, Cabernet Sauvignon

CHÂTEAU QANAFAR

Château Qanafar – Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon
Paradis de Qanafar – Cabernet Sauvignon,
Syrah, Merlot

CHÂTEAU ST THOMAS

Pinot Noir

COTEAUX DU LIBAN

Cinsault

DOMAINE DES TOURELLES

Marquis des Beys – Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah
Vieille Vigne Carignan
Vieille Vigne Cinsault

DOMAINE WARDY

Chateau les Cedres – Cabernet Sauvignon,
Syrah, Merlot

IXSIR

Grand Réserve – Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah,
Arinarnoa

MASSAYA

Terrasses de Baalbeck – Grenache, Mourvèdre,
Syrah

Cap Est – Grenache, Mourvèdre

MERSEL

Red Velvet – Cinsault

RED (£££)

CHATEAU BELLE-VUE

Le Chateau – Cabernet Franc, Syrah, Merlot,
Cabernet Sauvignon

La Renaissance – Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon

CHÂTEAU HÉRITAGE

Family Reserve – Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah

CHÂTEAU KA

Fleur de Ka – Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah

CHATEAU KEFRAYA

Comte de M – Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah

CHATEAU KSARA

Cuvée du Troisième Millénaire – Syrah, Cabernet
Franc, Petit Verdot

CHÂTEAU MARSYAS

Château Marsyas – Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah,
Merlot

CHATEAU MUSAR

Chateau – Cinsault, Carignan, Cabernet
Sauvignon

CHÂTEAU ST THOMAS

Château St Thomas – Cabernet Sauvignon,
Merlot, Syrah

DOMAINE DES TOURELLES

Syrah du Liban

IXSIR

El – Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot

MASSAYA

Gold Reserve – Cabernet Sauvignon,
Mourvèdre, Syrah

WHITE (£)

CHÂTEAU CANA

Les Cabires – Chardonnay and Meksassi

CHÂTEAU HÉRITAGE

Blanc de Blancs – Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier,
Muscat

CHÂTEAU KA

Source Blanche – Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay

CHATEAU KEFRAYA

Les Bretèches – Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay,
Viognier

Blanc de Blancs – Viognier, Chardonnay,

Muscat à Petits Grains

CHATEAU KSARA

Blanc de L'Observatoire – Obeideh, Sauvignon
Blanc, Clairette, Muscat

Merwah

Blanc du Blancs – Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon,
Chardonnay

CHATEAU MUSAR

Jeune – Viognier, Vermentino, Chardonnay

CHÂTEAU ST THOMAS

Les Gourmets – Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier,
Chardonnay, Muscat

COTEAUX DU LIBAN

Blanc Finesse – Obeideh, Viognier, Chardonnay

DOMAINE DES TOURELLES

Domaine des Tourelles – Sauvignon Blanc,
Viognier, Obeideh, Muscat

Vieille Vigne Obeidi Merwah

DOMAINE WARDY

Beqaa Valley (white) – Viognier, Sauvignon

Blanc, Obeideh

Sauvignon Blanc

Obeidi

Viognier

IXSIR

Altitudes – Obeideh, Muscat, Viognier

MASSAYA

Massaya – Obeidi, Clairette, Sauvignon Blanc

Chardonnay, Vermentino

WHITE (££)

CHATEAU KSARA

Cuvée du Pape – Chardonnay

CHÂTEAU MARSYAS

B-Qa – Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay

CHÂTEAU MARSYAS

Château Marsyas – Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc

CHÂTEAU ST THOMAS

Obeidi – Obeideh

Chardonnay

COTEAUX DU LIBAN

Sauvignon Blanc

Obeideh

Viognier

DOMAINE DES TOURELLES

Marquis des Beys – Chardonnay

DOMAINE WARDY

Perle du Chateau – Chardonnay, Obeideh,

Muscat à Petits Grains

IXSIR

Grand Réserve – Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc,

Viognier

MERSEL

Lebnani Abyad – Merwah, Sauvignon Blanc

Skin Contact – Merwah

Piquette – Merwah, Muscat, Sauvignon Blanc

WHITE (£££)

CHATEAU BELLE VUE

Petit Geste – Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier

CHATEAU MUSAR

Chateau – Merwah, Obeideh

ROSÉ (£)

CHÂTEAU CANA

Les Cabires (rosé) – Cinsault and Syrah

CHÂTEAU HÉRITAGE

Rosé d'une Nuit – Grenache, Carignan

CHATEAU KEFRAYA

Les Bretèches – Syrah, Cabernet Franc, Cinsault

CHATEAU KSARA

Gris de Gris – Grenache Gris, Carignan

Sunset – Cabernet Franc, Syrah

CHATEAU MUSAR

Jeune – Cinsault, Mourvèdre

CHÂTEAU ST THOMAS

Les Gourmets (rosé) Cinsault, Syrah,

Petit Verdot

DOMAINE DES TOURELLES

Domaine des Tourelles (rosé) Tempranillo,

Syrah, Cinsault

DOMAINE WARDY

Beqaa Valley Cinsault, Syrah

MASSAYA

Massaya – Cinsault

ROSÉ (££)

CHATEAU KEFRAYA

Chateau – Tempranillo

CHATEAU KSARA

Nuance – Malbec, Marselan and Vermentino

CHÂTEAU ST THOMAS

Noor El Ain (rosé) – Carignan, Obeidi, Syrah

IXSIR

Grand Réserve – Syrah

MERSEL

Field Blend – Merwah, Marini

ROSÉ (£££)

CHATEAU MUSAR

Chateau – Merwah, Obeideh, Cinsault

SPARKING/PET NAT

MERSEL

LebNat Gold – Merwah, Viognier

LebNat Pink – Sangiovese, Merwah

UK IMPORTERS

- Chateau Belle-Vue: Oeno Trade
- Château Cana: Lebanese Fine Foods & Wines
- Château Ka: Alliance Wine
- Château Héritage: Amathus Drinks
- Chateau Kefraya: Lebanese Fine Wines
- Chateau Ksara: Berkman Wine Cellars
- Coteaux du Liban: Lebanos
- Château Marsyas: Corney & Barrow
- Chateau Musar: Chateau Musar UK
- Chateau Nakad: Lebanos
- Chateau Oumsiyat: Hallgarten Druitt
- Château Qanafar Naked Wines
- Château St Thomas: Lebanese Fine Wines
- Domaine des Tourelles: Boutinot
- Domaine Wardy: Lebanese Fine Wines
- IXSIR: Enotria&Coe
- Massaya: Thorman Hunt
- Mersel: Les Caves de Pyrene

HARPERS WINE & SPIRIT