



❖ A Toast for Peace ❖

2022 is turning into one of the wettest and coldest winters of the last 10 years: since January, we have had four snowstorms in the Beqaa and more than 2 meters of snow on the slopes!

By contrast, one of our Cap Est vineyards in the region of Ras (Cap Est label) received less than 300 mm of precipitation this year. This vineyard lies behind the highest peak of the Mount Lebanon mountain range. At a summit of 3088m, it is too windy for snow to settle down, leaving the grounds barren and exposed throughout the year, and appropriately named “Qarnt as Sawda, or “black peak.”

The heights of the Mount Lebanon range, which traverses the country from North-South, are often impassable obstacles for the clouds coming from the Mediterranean. Precipitation in the Beqaa valley plateau will vary depending on the heights of these mountains. Where the Mount Lebanon range is high, less clouds will reach the Beqaa; where the mountains are lower, more rain will precipitate in the Beqaa. For this reason Zahle and Tanail, which lie in the central Beqaa receive twice as much rain as Ras, which lies more in the north, adjacent to the highest peak of the Mount Lebanon range.



This year we are experimenting with spring irrigation to extend the wet season and better prepare the vines for the long dry period lasting from June to September. We will satiate the adult vines with a good root system in early spring, at the start of the vegetative cycle, thereby creating reserves to use when water becomes scarce in the summer. Why did we opt to do this in the spring instead of winter? The answer is simple: the well's solar panels operate more regularly in the spring!

Given the current financial, societal, and economic uncertainties in Lebanon, we have not planted a lot of vines this year, but we have prepared the expansion of the Cap Est vineyard in Ras with a deep plough. We are going also to experiment with around 2000 Merwahé vine plants that we are going to plant in the Faqra region after the snow melts.

Who is the Merwahé? It is the native white grape variety of Mount Lebanon and it has piqued our interest. You may already be familiar with the Obeidi, a white grape variety from the Beqaa, used both in wine and in Arak. The Merwahé is fresher, more elegant.... I won't tell you more for now- soon you will find out!



It is impossible for me to listen to the news from Kiev without thinking of my own experience of war in Lebanon. When I see the exodus of Ukrainians, I inevitably think of our family journey that has taken us between monasteries, hotels, guest rooms, convents, chalets, accompanied by suitcases, sobs, and boxes.

The solidarity to support the Ukrainian people inevitably reminds me of the 30 Christmas cakes that my mother and I alone baked for the families of displaced people in 1977. At the sight of snowflakes, I think of the hundreds of gloves and hats that we have knitted at the monastery and dispatched to the families of the neediest who were stuck in the front-line shelters without heating.

40 years on, because of the resilience of its people the physical violence calmed down in 1990, but Lebanon is still suffering under the same warlords who have traded their army fatigues for suits. Despite the assassinations of 2 presidents, a prime minister, countless political figures, ambassadors and even the explosion of the port of Beirut in August 2020, not one serious culprit is behind bars. Will justice ever be served?



At Massaya, we are focused on celebrating life and intent on finding our own ways of asserting our beliefs in a complex, often vehement region.

We believe that wine promotes creativity and tolerance, that gathering to share in a drink creates open dialogue, friendships, and joy among people of all different religious and social backgrounds.

More and more people around the world are discovering our cuisine as a delicious healthy regiment of wholesome ingredients, slow cooking, and best shared with friends and family accompanied by a glass of Massaya. We are grateful to continue expanding our wines into the wine lists of restaurants around the world, promoting the sophistication and refinement of Lebanon's culture and gastronomy.

We refuse to give up and be victims of the senseless discord around us. For each violent action or hateful speech, we raise a glass of wine and toast to peace and tolerance, in Lebanon and around the globe. A better future lies ahead and until then, a glass of wine will help us through.



MAY SCHEDULE

MASSAYA BOUTIQUES:

Safe home deliveries from Monday till Friday

Daily winery tours and tastings, 10:00-17:00pm

RESTAURANTS - THE GATHERING:

Opens Beginning of June 2022

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