



## ✦ Back to the Roots ✦

As one of the most fertile stretches of land in the region, the Beqaa was the breadbasket of the Roman Empire. However, other similarly gifted regions exist in Lebanon; our resources are extraordinary in terms of water, soil varieties, geology, micro-climates, botanic and flora diversity, and seasons. For example, Akkar in the north, southern Lebanon and the terraces of Mount Lebanon are all wonderfully cultivated zones that we are so excited to discover anew. Agrarian terraces on Mount Lebanon, which had been abandoned for at least 60 years, are now being replanted. **It is very satisfying to drive along the Beqaa and to see every inch of land being ploughed and prepared to welcome crops.** It is uplifting to see that despite the Coronavirus lockdown, the most busy traders are the nurseries and the seed retailers. This back-to-our-roots movement is accompanied by discussions of restaurant operators adopting farm-to-table principles.

Since October 2019 and the start of “revolution”, Lebanon is awakening to take advantage of its prolific resources at home.

With time we also need our seniors to teach the Facebook generation how to rely on the moon calendar, how to trust the indigenous seeds and crops that are more resistant to funguses and diseases, and to bet on varieties that require little watering. **We need to perpetuate grafting techniques and the wisdom that made our ancestors renown vintners in this region.**



While the rest of the world is witnessing a production downsizing, **Lebanon is positioning itself to retool its productive sector, starting with agriculture.** Why this optimism? Simply put, because of coronavirus, our youngsters can't move abroad anymore to develop their business careers; they are now forced to consider building a career in Lebanon.

Way before World War I, waves of Lebanese citizens emigrated to Europe, America and Australia. Later, even those who wanted to stay close to their families left Lebanon for the Arabian peninsula, where, with oil prices always on the rise, job opportunities were numerous. Eventually, after working for years, they would return to the motherland to retire or semi-retire.

With a local currency devaluation of 300% accompanying the coronavirus lockdown, Lebanon is left with few choices other than regenerating a more self-sustaining country. Let's take the wine sector as an example. **Lebanon exports 38% of its wine production, while a country as renowned as France for wine exports around 30% of its production.** How much effort did our colleagues and ourselves have to deploy in order to beat France in terms of the proportion of our product exported? With our domestic market favoring and valuing imported wines, the dynamic wine sector in Lebanon was forced to export. While we highly value wine diversity and the constant widening of our pallet horizon, this trend, along with the wine revival in Lebanon since 1998, handicapped the sustainability of wine investments in the country.



A country like Spain imports the equivalent of 1% of its wine production, while in Italy this figure is 6%. This is because these countries honor their local producers first. Yet, in Lebanon we have imported the equivalent of approximately 14% of our wine production! **Instead of trying to live sustainably and profit from our local resources, Lebanon was living above its means, like the cicada that sang all summer long ...**

Lebanon has the potential to compete with major culinary metropolises around the world. We are confident that we will remain a regional hub for nightlife and for embracing the epicurean lifestyle, but the revolution and coronavirus reminded us that these efforts should be deployed while championing local producers.

The return to our roots is the first step that will put back Lebanon on a virtuous path. As far as Massaya is concerned, these roots are part of our philosophy, and we are happy to see them trending again.



✦ Meet Gerios ✦



Gerios is from Mrouj. He was recently recruited by Massaya to work as caretaker, but quickly showed willingness to work the soil and to farm the land. So instead of standing at the gate of Massaya, he has helped with the ploughing and soil work, and we were happy to integrate him into a field position. Along with his colleagues, he is planting the on-site kitchen garden that will this summer supply the kitchen with organic cucumbers, tomatoes, beans and aromatic herbs...

## ❖ Arak Cocktails for the Summer ❖



For this summer, we have developed three cocktails that will go down delightfully at patio gatherings. These refreshing cocktails are perfect for the summer heat and can easily be made at home.

### ***Massaya Mojito***

Massaya arak (2 measures)  
10 medium mint leaves  
Two 1cm thick slices of lime  
Two heaped teaspoons of brown sugar  
Top with soda  
Decorate with a slice of lime and a sprig of mint  
Serve in a glass of crushed ice

### ***Massaya Oriental Nights***

Massaya arak (1 measure)  
Vodka (1 measure)  
Jallab (1-1.25 measures)  
Decorate with raisins and pine nuts

### ***Massaya Mulberry***

Massaya arak (1 measure)  
Mulberry syrup (1-1.5 measures)  
Water (3 measures)  
Two thin lemon slices  
Decorate with blackberries or any other black fruit



[More Cocktail Recipes](#)

## MAY SCHEDULE

Massaya Boutiques: Safe home deliveries from Monday till Friday

*Fireplace & SunsetBar:*  
Temporarily closed until further notice

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