



BROADBENT

◆ SELECTIONS ◆

**Harpers.co.uk**  
Setting the news agenda for the UK wine & spirit trade

## International wine trade pays tribute following the death of Château Musar's Serge Hochar

**T**he international wine trade has united today to pay its respects to the legendary Lebanese winemaker, Serge Hochar, of Château Musar, who died over the new year.

It is understood Hochar, aged 75, died in a swimming accident whilst on holiday in Mexico.

His death will be a major loss to the Lebanese wine industry as Château Musar remains the benchmark for the country's winemaking and its most famous and celebrated winery around the world.

Hochar had headed up his father's winery since the late 1950s and helped establish it as Lebanon's flagship wine in its key international markets in the UK, across Europe and the United States.

Jancis Robinson MW led the UK tributes with her own memories of Hochar on her website,

[jancisrobinson.com](http://jancisrobinson.com). She wrote: "Serge was so much more than a winemaker and the driving force behind Lebanon's best-known winery. He had a strong spiritual character, but was very far from ascetic—positively impish in fact. Always great fun, he gave the impression of having a deep understanding of human nature and of understanding much more than superficialities. I always enjoyed his company enormously on the many occasions our paths crossed and we talked about very much more than wine matters."

Many in the trade have taken to Twitter to pay their tributes including wine importers and independent merchants who have been so important in building and maintaining Musar's profile in the UK.

Jane Cuthbertson of Barrica Wines said "he inspired so many." Handford Wines tweeted it was today paying "homage to the late great Serge Hochar."

The Wine Society said it had

"lost a legend and a great friend" whilst Alliance Wine paid tribute to his "brilliantly individual wines."

A number of wine writers and critics who had the chance to meet Hochar in Lebanon also paid their respects. William Lyons of the Wall Street Journal described Hochar as his "first wine hero". Andrew Neather of the Evening Standard described Hochar as an "inspirational" figure whilst Tim Atkin MW remembered him as being "part salesman, part winemaker, part impresario."

The Guardian's wine critic, Fiona Beckett, in her own tribute, wrote: "He was one of the most inspirational and charismatic winemakers I ever had the privilege of meeting." She added: "He was a philosopher king of winemaking who made wine fascinating, bewitching and fun."

The winery remains in the Hochar family and in the hands of Serge Hochar's son, Gaston.

[www.broadbent.com](http://www.broadbent.com)

By Paul Taggart, [harpers.co.uk](http://harpers.co.uk); January 2, 2015