



PRODUCE OF LEBANON

**NABISE**  
*Mont Liban*

2003

**BLANC DE BLANCS**  
MOUNT LEBANON - WHITE WINE  
MONT LIBAN - VIN BLANC

VIN ÉLEVÉ ET MIS EN BOUTEILLE À LA PROPRIÉTÉ

13% alc./vol. PRODUIT DU LIBAN 750ml

*Traditional Method and Cultivation  
Selection of Grapes of Noble Vine Plants  
Bottle No. 0210*



PRODUCE OF LEBANON

**NABISE**  
*Mont Liban*

**CHATEAU 2002**  
*Coteaux de Richmaza*  
*Vin Elevé en Fût de Chêne*

12.5% vol MIS EN BOUTEILLE À LA PROPRIÉTÉ 75cl

*Culture et Méthode Traditionnelles  
Sélection de Grappes de Cépages Nobles  
Cette Bouteille porte le No. 0584*

## Nabise Mont Liban

According to Nabise's owner, Nazih Metni, the name of his wine is a French variant of *Nabeeth*, Arabic for wine, a fitting name for a micro-winery with its own 2-hectare vineyard planted on church land in Richmaya in Mount Lebanon, near the summer resort of Aley.

Metni owns and runs Nabise with his wife May, producing twenty thousand bottles each year, a figure the Metnis eventually want to increase to thirty-five thousand.

The Nabise range comprises three reds (a Château, a Reserve and Equinox) and one white (a Blanc de Blancs). There are also limited quantities of rosé, arak and *vin doux*.

Started in 1999, Nabise is the culmination of a passion for Metni. He first began making wine in 1977 during the war, when, confined to his home by the fighting, he experimented with a Boots wine making kit brought to him by his father-in-law from London. It was a hobby that entered a new dimension when Metni, a respected Lebanese architect and urban planner by profession, worked on the design of the new Clos St Thomas estate in the mid-nineties. 'I saw what was happening in the Bekaa and I thought, if they are producing wine, then I can too. I am self-taught and by then knew what I could and could not do. This I could do.'

He was also spurred on by the fact that the world was drinking more wine, while whisky and even arak were being cited as significant contributors to cholesterol and triglyceride and other diseases.

'I had an argument with my brother, who is a cardiovascular surgeon in the US,' recalls Metni. 'We were discussing the differences in the American and French health systems and how the French had to wait a month for a bypass whereas in the US they operate the next day. It occurred to me that the French just don't have as many heart problems despite their fatty diet. It was all because of their wine consumption.'

The Metnis' relationship with the area goes back to when they first met in Bhamdoun, a village in which they regularly spent their summers and where Nazih had been a keen hunter. This was where he wanted his vineyard.

'When in 1997 I decided to take my wine making ambitions further, it



was in the Bhamdoun area that I started looking, but I couldn't find a suitable plot of land.' He had to widen his scope to the neighbouring towns, but it was worth the wait. 'I found a three-hundred-year-old vineyard in Richmaya that belonged to the monastery. They wanted to rent to someone who would cultivate it. For me it was perfect. It was love at first sight.' In 1999, Metni bought his vines from Mercier in France and began planting.

In 2002 his first harvest yielded 4 tons of grapes with which he produced three thousand bottles of his Château. What was left was used, with grapes from the Bekaa, to make the Reserve and Equinox. In total, including the white, he produced eighteen thousand bottles.

Six years on, the Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Syrah for the Château Nabise red are still going strong, while Metni has planted an adjacent plot with a selection of Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon and a little Muscat for the whites.

Has it been difficult for a notoriously fickle local market to take them seriously? Nazih shrugs. 'I work with small volumes and they call me *garagiste*, but in truth these people make some of the best wines because they

*The Nabise Mont Liban vineyard in Richmaya.*

can devote their attention to the details. I am an architect. I understand what goes into construction and I am still amazed that wine is made up of nine hundred components.'

May interrupts. 'What I like to tell people is that my husband is an architect who builds his wines.' He would not disagree.



*Nazih and May Metni stroll through their little slice of paradise.*