



Technical Notes

Alpha Domus 2004 Merlot/Cabernet

Vintage conditions

The early spring of 2003 saw some cold frosty nights which delayed budburst in many parts of the vineyard. Once the growing season got on the way, the vines showed an even growth with heavy flowering. Fruit set was excellent in most varieties. The summer developed as a typical Hawke's Bay one with warm and dry conditions until February. From late January till late February we experienced some unusual wet weather and vine management was crucial during this period. The warm, dry conditions returned in March and the remainder of the season gave us ideal ripening conditions for all varieties. Yields were normal and some fruit thinning needed only on our top end fruit. Overall this vintage gave us high Brix levels and good concentration.

Vineyard

The grapes for this blend come from both our winery and Hoeve vineyard. We use a variety of clones mostly grafted on 3309 and 101-14. All vines are spur pruned and normal VSP is used with trimming and some leaf plucking. Crop yields are kept at a maximum of 12 tonnes/ha. Shoot thinning and bunch thinning take place as required. Fruit selection is based on ripeness levels and flavour.

Variety:

Merlot (41%), Malbec (15%), Cabernet Sauvignon (34%), Cabernet Franc (10%)

Technical Winemaking Details:

Both machine and hand harvested grapes were crushed and destemmed to purpose build red fermentation tanks. After a short cold maceration period the grapes were inoculated and the ferment heated to ~20°C.

The ferments were allowed to reach 32°C and remained on skins for between 14 and 21 days. After pressing, the wine was matured in new (15%) and older barriques, both French and American. It was racked five times over the 16 maturation period.

Total production: 3000 cases

Analysis:

Alcohol	13.0%
pH	3.72
Titrateable Acid	6.6 g/l
RS	<2 g/l

Harvest Dates: 31 March – 27 April 04

Brix at harvest: 22.8 – 25.3

Aroma

An inviting aroma of plum, prune and ripe red berries. Maturation in oak barriques contributes vanillin, licorice and savoury notes.

Palate

A supple and well balanced wine showing plum, red berries and hints of leather. Integrated spicy oak is supported by fine tannins and a firm structure.

Cellaring:

This wine will drink well from late 2005. Some cellaring will harmonise the wine.

Food:

Great with red meats and game, pasta, cheese or any full flavoured dishes.

