



# ALPHA DOMUS

— HAWKES BAY —

## Technical Notes

### Alpha Domus AD 2002 The Aviator

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#### Vintage conditions

The 2002 vintage was marked by a cool summer, with higher than normal rainfall over January and February. The early budburst in 2001 put flowering ahead of normal, and cooler summer temperatures allowed for a slow ripening process, retaining excellent fruit character in the grapes. Late February and March saw a turn in the weather with hot summer days. The later varieties ripened quickly, compressing the harvest from mid March to the third week of April. The vintage was marked by high Brix levels and clean fruit.

#### Blend:

Cabernet Sauvignon (38%), Merlot (24%), Cabernet Franc (20%), Malbec (18%)

#### Vineyard:

All grapes used for the AD blends are grown with a specific target in mind. Vines are pruned to lower bud numbers, and no manual labour is spared in the vineyard. Shoot thinning, shoot positioning, lateral and bunch thinning are just a few of the passes we make through the vineyard. Seasonal adjustments are made in yields to guarantee excellent fruit ripeness and concentration.

The grapes are hand harvested to select only the optimum quality bunches. Physiological ripeness is the main criteria determining harvest date.

#### Technical Winemaking Details:

The grapes were cold soaked pre ferment, and the yeast fermentation allowed to commence by increasing the temperature. Our purpose built red fermentation tanks allow us to totally control temperature and speed of fermentation. We combine standard Bordeaux winery practice with methods that enhance the best of Hawke's Bay terroir. Tannin management and fruit extraction are important to monitor. Daily tasting gives us the best indication when to take the wine off skins. Total maceration on skins for the 2002 vintage was between 18 and 30 days. All Aviator ferments are basket pressed in our 1 tonne baskets, and transferred directly to temperature controlled barrel rooms. Malolactic fermentation took place in barrel, in 75 % new, 100% French oak.

Barrels were racked back to the same barrel after malo to give us the best blending possibilities, both from vineyard batches as well as oak influences. Final blending of varieties and batches did not take place until after 16 months barrel maturation.

The final maturation time in oak was 23 months. The wine was then blended to tank and bottled without fining and only light filtration.

**Total production:** 1000 cases

#### Analysis at bottling:

|         |       |
|---------|-------|
| Alcohol | 14.0% |
| pH      | 3.73  |
| TA      | 5.5   |
| RS      | <1.0  |

**Harvest Dates:** 2 March – 15 April 2002

**Brix at harvest:** 22.0 to 24.1

**Bottling date:** 9 March 2004

#### Aroma

An intense aroma of red fruits, spice, leather, cedar, and cigarbox notes, complemented by fine oak.

#### Palate

Sweet rounded red berry flavours are complemented by chocolate, spices and fine oak tannins. This wine shows sweet fruit, a full, silky texture and firm structure. Slightly drying tannins will fade with time to integrate with intense fruit flavours. This is a harmonious wine which will age with grace.

#### Cellaring

The Aviator is a very concentrated wine. In the early stages it may taste slightly extracted and out of balance. With time it will harmonise and become more integrated. The tannins will become supple with broader mouth feel.

Ideal drinking from 2005 until 2012.

#### General Comment

This wine was made with lots of pleasure and passion, it should be enjoyed under equally rewarding circumstances.