



## Technical Notes

### Alpha Domus 2004 Merlot

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#### 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 underway, the vines showed even growth with heavy flowering. Fruit set was excellent in most varieties. The summer developed as a typical Hawke's Bay warm and dry summer until the onset of 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 fruit thinning was required only on our top end fruit. Overall this vintage gave us high Brix levels and good concentration.

#### Variety:

Merlot (78%), Malbec (9%), Cabernet Sauvignon (7%), Cabernet Franc (6%)

#### Vineyard

Fruit for this wine was sourced from both of our Maraekakaho Road vineyards. We use a variety of clones mostly grafted on 3309 and 101-14 rootstocks. 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 needed. Fruit selection is based on ripeness levels and flavour.

#### Technical Winemaking Details:

Both hand and machine harvested grapes were destemmed to tank. After 24 hours cold soak the ferment was initiated and allowed to reach 30°C. Completion took 4-5 days at which time the wine was pressed to retain varietal fruit characters. Some whole berry in the ferment produces cherry flavours and soft sweet tannins. The wine was matured in a mixture of French and American barrels and racked twice during the seven month maturation period.

**Total production:** 3000 cases

#### Analysis at bottling:

Alcohol	13.5%
pH	3.73
Titrateable Acid	5.6 g/l
RS	<2 g/l

**Harvest Dates:** 31 March – 27 April 04

**Brix at harvest:** 22.8 – 25.3

**Bottling Date:** 1 February 2005

#### Aroma

Fresh and lively red fruits with dominant plum and raspberry notes. Subtle oak adds a spicy influence.

#### Palate

A velvety soft palate with sweet raspberry, red berry and plum flavours. This is a soft, well balanced red with fine supple tannin and a hint of oak.

#### Cellaring:

This wine was produced for early drinking but may be cellared for several years.

**Food:**

Great with pizza, pasta, barbeque and lunchtime dishes.