



SINGLE VINEYARD GIMBLETT GRAVELS

CHURCH ROAD 1 MALBEC 2021

WINEMAKERS

Chris Scott, Craig Thomas

VITICULTURISTS

Graham Bartleet, Claire Pinker

“Terroir is a French word with no direct English translation. It can be described as the flavour of the place. The same grape variety grown in different sites, even in the same region, will demonstrate a unique character related to those individual sites. Differences in soil, slope, altitude, and shelter can subtly or dramatically alter the resulting wine, even over distances of a few metres. The very best sites growing well suited varieties, will produce wines that stand out amongst their peers. Wines of recognisable personality, presence, and above all, quality. Church Road 1 is a range of single vineyard wines that showcase the terroir of our best vineyards.”

Chris Scott, Chief Winemaker

VINEYARD

Gimblett Road Vineyard:

Situated in the renowned Gimblett Gravels Winegrowing District, this is an area of very free draining alluvial gravels. This soil type is some of the lowest vigour, lowest nutrient soil in Hawke's Bay, restricting vine growth and water uptake and resulting in meagre crops of intensely flavoured fruit. The area is only 30 M above sea level, and far enough inland to be relatively well protected from the sea breeze, making this one of the warmest areas in Hawke's Bay and ideally suited to red winegrowing. This vineyard produces dense, characterful Malbec with a core of dark fruit and a fine-grained tannin structure that brings length and drive to the palate.

VITICULTURE

2021 was another exceptional year in Hawke's Bay, with warm, dry, settled weather over most of the season. A significant sustained drought period lasted from mid-summer through until well after harvest was completed, allowing for all fruit to be harvested in optimum condition. A little cooler than 2020, the vintage is characterised by exuberant aromatics and excellent structure, which should see some very long-lived wines.

The vines were trained to 2 cane VSP and we employed extensive shoot and fruit thinning, along with bunch positioning, de-clumping, close canopy trimming and 100% removal of leaf through the fruit zone, to ensure a balanced, evenly spaced and well exposed crop. Soil moisture was monitored regularly to regulate a deficit drip irrigation programme. This kept the vines in a functioning yet low vigour state that promoted both ripening and concentration. Approaching harvest time, we visited the blocks every 2 or 3 days, tasting, evaluating flavour and ripeness and checking for condition to ensure we picked at the ideal moment; our aim was to achieve a balance between density, power, freshness and precision in the resulting wines.

Clones: BDX1056

WINEMAKING

A single block of Malbec was harvested across a sorting table to remove any green material before being crushed to 2 small open top fermenters. Fermentation was allowed to peak at 34 deg C ensuring good extraction of colour and ripe tannin. The wines were allowed to undergo post fermentation maceration for a total time on skins of 5 weeks. During this time regular aeration was employed to stabilise colour, integrate the tannin and open up aromatics, accentuating dark berry fruit, floral and spice notes. We tasted daily to determine the amount of aeration and to determine the optimum time to drain and press. The wine was filled to 228 L French oak barriques (38% new) to complete malolactic fermentation and subsequent maturation for 18 months. The first 8 months were on lees to help build texture, while the final 10 months were off lees to aid the evolution of the wine. The wine was racked once more for clarity and, to avoid any unnecessary stripping effect, was bottled without any subsequent fining or filtration.

WINE

A robust and characterful Malbec with generous, juicy, dark berry fruit, lifted violet floral notes complimented by subtle oak delivering notes of cedar, cacao and warm spice. The palate is full bodied with exceptional mid-palate richness. This opulence is balanced with voluminous, fine-grained tannins that bring definition and length to the wine. While approachable now, this wine will age positively for at least 15 years if carefully cellared.

Alc 15% v/v | **TA** 5.73g/L | **pH** 3.83 | **RS** 2.3g/L