



TOM CABERNET SAUVIGNON MERLOT 2020

WINEMAKERS

Chris Scott, Craig Thomas

VITICULTURISTS

Graham Bartleet, Claire Pinker

“Made only in exceptional vintages, Our TOM wines are dedicated to the memory of Tom McDonald, a visionary Hawke’s Bay winemaker who was one of the most influential pioneers of New Zealand’s quality focussed wine renaissance. Simply put, these are our best wines. No effort is spared. They represent the culmination of the collective experience and understanding of our team past and present, applied to some of the best parcels of winegrowing land in Hawke’s Bay.”

Chris Scott, Chief Winemaker

VINEYARD

Redstone Vineyard (61%):

Situated in the Bridge Pa Triangle Winegrowing District, Redstone is approximately 40 M above sea level, far enough inland to be sheltered from the sea breeze and in the lee of Roy’s Hill which protects the site from cold air draining out of the mountains to the west. This makes Redstone one of the warmest vineyards in Hawke’s Bay, perfect for the cultivation of later ripening varieties. The soils here are known as red metals, formed by a 10,000 year old, free draining, alluvial greywacke gravel riverbed since covered by a shallow layer of wind-blown loess and iron rich volcanic ash that is responsible for the distinctive rust coloured staining of the stones. It typically produces ripe, supple and aromatic wines; with an underlying ferrous-like minerality, Redstone brings flesh and perfume to a blend.

Gimblett Vineyard (39%):

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 area typically produces dark fruited, firmly structured wines that complement the Redstone Vineyard, bringing a more brooding undertone to the nose and enhancing drive and definition on the palate.

VITICULTURE

2020 was an 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. The vines were trained to 2 cane VSP and we employed extensive shoot and fruit thinning, along with bunch positioning, declumping, 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

Cepage: 69% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Merlot

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.

Predominant Clones: 60% UCD7 and 8% UCD8 Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% BDX481 Merlot

WINEMAKING

Selectively harvested in separate parcels, the fruit was then destemmed and crushed for fermentation. The fruit was immediately inoculated with a selected yeast strain. Fermentation was allowed to peak at 34 deg C ensuring good extraction of colour and ripe tannin. Each wine was tasted daily post fermentation to determine cap management, aeration requirements and to determine the optimum time to press off skins. Extended macerations are generally very positive on such high-quality fruit, and each tank had a total of 3 to 4 weeks on skins. Regular aeration during this time helped to stabilise colour, increase age-worthiness and integrate the tannin, while downplaying leafier notes and accentuating lifted ripe fruit and floral aromas. Once the wines reached an optimum level of evolution, they were drained and pressed before we filled French oak barriques (73% new) to complete malolactic fermentation and subsequent maturation for 18 months. The final blend was decided only after a rigorous barrel selection tasting of our very best components. The wine was racked for clarity and bottled without fining, cold stabilisation or filtration.

WINE

A complex, dense wine with a core of dark berry fruit and plum, lifted by top notes of rosewood, cedar, lavender and vanilla. Beneath this a savoury dark earthy complexity and a thread of graphite and iron brings a more serious, brooding undertone to the wine. On the palate the wine is full bodied yet focused, with the fruit weight balanced by gentle acidity and a long, firm tannin structure. A wine of restrained power and great depth which will reward long term cellaring until 2030 – 2045.

Alc 14.5% v/v | TA 5.37g/L | pH 3.75 | RS 1.7g/L