

2021

CHURCH
ROAD™
HAWKE'S BAY

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

"McDonald Series Cabernet Sauvignon is one of only a handful of Cabernet Sauvignons made in Hawke's Bay and reflects a renewed interest in this grape variety in the region. As warmer, lower vigour soils have been explored and planted, and viticultural techniques improved, the quality of Cabernet Sauvignon in Hawke's Bay has increased dramatically and is attracting international attention from two of the most influential wine publications in the world. The U. K's Decanter Magazine rated Hawke's Bay along with Napa Valley, as the two best New World regions for Bordeaux style red wines, while Neal Martin on behalf of Wine Advocate says, 'one forgets just how fine New Zealand Cabernet Sauvignon and Bordeaux blends can be, particularly in Hawke's Bay.'"

CHRIS SCOTT, CHIEF WINEMAKER

WINEMAKERS *Chris Scott, Craig Thomas*

VITICULTURISTS *Graham Bartleet, Claire Pinker*

VINEYARD

Bridge Pa Triangle Vineyards (51%): This area is well sheltered, warm and early ripening. The soil type is known locally as 'red metals'. Shallow wind-blown loess, and iron rich volcanic ash over deep, free draining greywacke river gravels. This area produces fragrant wines with fine grained, supple tannin structure.

Gimblett Vineyards (49%): With 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, while the gravel soils store the heat of the day, helping to make this one of the warmest areas in the region, ideally suited to red winegrowing. This vineyard tends to produce wines with a core of dark fruit and a firm tannin structure that brings length and drive to the blend.

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, aiming to achieve a balance between density, power, freshness and precision in the resulting wines.

WINEMAKING

Fully destemmed and crushed, the fruit was inoculated immediately, and fermentation was allowed to peak at 34 deg C ensuring good extraction of colour and ripe tannin. Post fermentation maceration with regular aeration was employed to stabilise colour, integrate the tannin, and open up the aromatics. We tasted daily to determine the amount of aeration and to determine the optimum time to drain and press. The wine was then filled to 228 L French oak barriques (41 % new) to complete malolactic fermentation and subsequent maturation for 18 months. The wine was racked for clarity to avoid any unnecessary stripping effect and was bottled without any fining or filtration.

WINE

This is a fragrant wine with an amalgam of black and red berry fruit, with underlying complexity of warm earth, graphite and lifted top notes of florals and fragrant wood suggestive of rosewood, cedar, lavender and violet. Layered and complex with a supple mid-palate and a long, fine grained tannin structure. With careful cellaring, we expect this wine will age gracefully for 15 years or more.

Alc 14.0% v/v | TA 5.54g/L | pH 3.83 | RS 2g/L

