



Grapes

40% Malbec
33% Cabernet Franc
27% Merlot

Region/Appellation

Hawkes Bay

Alcohol by volume

14%

Residual Sugar

less than 1 g/l

pH

3.82

Total Acidity

5.47 g/l

Drinking Window

2025 - 2035

Tasting Guide



Tasting note printed

05/01/2026

Hillside Malbec/Cabernet Franc/Merlot 2017 6x75cl

Winemaker Notes

This is dark-fruited wine and complex wine. Flavours tend towards red fruits, plum, dark cherry and spice. Earthy tobacco and cedar notes add further complexity. The wine is soft and mouth-filling with well-ripened tannins and although approachable as a young wine should continue to develop complexity for many years to come. Decant before serving.

Vineyard

The vineyard planted in Malbec, Merlot and Cabernet Franc was re-established in 1989 after sitting idle for 30 years. Densely planted, dry-farmed without irrigation and intensively managed, it was harvested on a single day and co-fermented as a field blend to capture the true essence of the vineyard.

Winemaking

The individual vineyard parcels were hand-harvested and destemmed to a single 85-year old concrete fermenter. The fermentation was gently managed with hand plunging and a period of maceration followed to soften tannins and add complexity. The new wine underwent malolactic fermentation in French oak barriques and then given a further 18 months ageing. The wine was then bottled without fining and filtration.

Vintage

This was a growing season of two halves, and quite unlike any I have encountered in my 25 years as winemaker at Esk Valley. Initially Spring was cool and the season running slightly late until mid December when a period of prolonged heat and dry conditions pushed the Hawkes Bay region into drought. Conditions at flowering had been good and an even berry size and good bunch numbers looked promising. By mid February the province was parched. Vineyards had been bunch thinned and netted, all we had to do was wait. Then over 100mm of rain fell in a 24 hour period before the weather brightened again, leaving the province green in the lead up to harvest. Harvest began in early March with intermittent periods of rain and dry spells. Picking decisions were made quickly as the weather offered its windows of opportunity. This was a very short harvest lasting a few days over four weeks.

Food match

Enjoy with rich red meat and game dishes.

