

### **THE FRUIT**

Merlot is a relatively new variety to the Barossa, with very few hectares planted. Traditionally, merlot has been used as a blending wine to soften the bigger styles. I first planted merlot on our Hillcot Vineyard in 1980, together with cabernet sauvignon and cabernet franc. The merlot produced from **these plantings so impressed** me that I decided to use this wine as a varietal. I have blended approximately 10 per cent cabernet sauvignon with the merlot to give this wine added complexity and body.

### **THE WINEMAKING**

The grapes were harvested at approximately 13° baumé. The fruit was crushed and fermented on skins for six days to give colour and flavour.

The fermenting juice was then transferred to new American oak puncheons to finish fermentation. **Barrel fermentation** gives softness and complexity to this quite fleshy and raspberry-like wine.

## (1998 *Hillcot* MERLOT).

*The Grant Burge 1998 Hillcot Merlot shows excellent purple colour and the bouquet has a depth of raspberry-like fruit with wood overtones. The palate has good structure and flavour, yet is still very soft. This wine has good balance, which will give it the longevity I require.*

### **THE COMMENTS**

*"Big smooth raspberry flavour comes through on the front of the palate and elements of spiced plum and liquorice combine on the middle palate. Persistent fruit flavour, subtle toasty oak and soft earthy tannin feature at the finish."*

John Lewis, The Newcastle Herald, 18/08/99.

