

THE FRUIT

The merlot grapes were harvested at **optimum ripeness** from our Hillcot Vineyard at about 13.5° baumé. I have blended approximately 10 per cent cabernet sauvignon with the merlot to give this wine added complexity and body.

THE WINEMAKING

The fruit was crushed and the juice fermented on skins for six-to-seven days to extract ample colour and flavour. The fermenting juice was then transferred at about 3° baumé to **new American oak puncheons** to finish fermentation.

Barrel fermentation gives softness and complexity to this very fleshy wine.

(1999 *Hillcot* **MERLOT**).

The Grant Burge 1999 Hillcot Merlot shows excellent purple colour and the bouquet has a depth of raspberry-like fruit with attractive oak in the background. The palate has solid structure and flavour, yet is still very soft and fleshy. The inclusion of the small proportion of cabernet sauvignon has given the wine a good tannin balance to ensure the longevity I expect of all my red wines.

