

### **THE FRUIT**

When I planted the initial six acres of merlot on my Hillcot vineyard in 1982 it was the first commercial planting of this premium red variety in the Barossa. When I first produced a straight merlot wine, there were only two others available on the Australian market. The fruit from these now 20-year-old vines and the subsequent planting of Merlot on the Hillcot vineyard is intensely concentrated, yet soft as we have come to expect of premium merlot. For this wine the grapes were harvested at optimum ripeness at about 13.5° Baumé.

### **THE WINEMAKING**

The fruit was crushed and the juice fermented on skins in overhead stainless-steel fermenters for five-to-six days to extract ample colour and flavour. Following fermentation the juice was transferred to American oak puncheons (about 40 per cent new and 60 per cent one-year-old) for a total of 18 months. Barrel fermentation accentuates the softness of this wine while adding complexity and structure.

## ( 2 0 0 1 H i l l c o t M E R L O T )

*The Grant Burge 2001 Hillcot Merlot is an excellent dark purple colour with crimson edges. The wine is rich in ripe raspberry-like fruit aromas and subtle American oak overtones. There is terrific concentration of flavour on the soft, attractive palate which is made even more approachable by delicate tannins and a smooth finish. This stylish wine has the structure to live for at least eight years. Enjoy with a luncheon of lighter meat dishes, pasta or Mediterranean cuisine.*

