

THE FRUIT

Grant Burge was a pioneer of Merlot in the Barossa and planted the first vineyard of this red variety here at the Hillcot Vineyard in 1980. When he produced his first straight Merlot wine there were only two others available in Australia, and although there are many more now, Grant Burge Hillcot Merlot is still very popular, both in Australia and overseas. The 2005 growing season was warm but not too hot, developing good varietal characters in the fruit, which was picked at 14.8 Baume. These 20-plus year old vines have produced intensely concentrated flavours, yet display the characteristic softness usually expected of premium Merlot.

THE WINEMAKING

The fruit was crushed into static overhead fermenters and left on its skins for seven days to extract the colour and flavour of the fruit. The ferment was allowed to peak at 28C then cooled to 22 to retain characters. The juice was racked and returned every second day, and pumped over 3 times a day to further intensify the colour and flavour. The wine was matured in a combination of 1 and 2 year old American oak plus the new addition of a small amount of Hungarian oak for added complexity. 4% Cabernet Sauvignon was blended into the wine, to add extra complexity, structure and tannin.

(2005 Hillcot MERLOT)

The colour is deep crimson with dark purple hues and immediate aromas are of black cherries and warm spicy oak.

Generous and vibrant fruit characters are present on the palate which is balanced with delicious earthy flavours of charry oak and spice with approachable tannins. This medium bodied wine is greatly satisfying and is ready to enjoy now or over the next eight years. It is a terrific match with garlic and rosemary roast lamb or duck breast.

