



“Merlot at its best should be a seductive wine with rich, dark plummy fruit, fragrant floral notes and a rich, mouth-filling and supple palate. Over the last few years, we have sourced an increasing amount of fruit from the warm, low-vigour soils in the south western Heretaunga Plains, the Gimblett Gravels and Red Metal Triangle sub-regions of Hawke’s Bay in particular. The warm meso-climates and light, stony soils give low crops of concentrated, fully ripe, fragrant fruit that produces classically-structured wines with power, elegance, fragrance and finesse.”

Chris Scott, Winemaker



Church Road Cuve Merlot is rich, ripe and serious with good palate weight and length. Harvested on the warm, stony soils around Gimblett Road, ripe fruit from an exceptional vintage was fermented in oak cuves and 70-year-old concrete fermenters prior to maturation in French Oak barriques for a further 22 months.





TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

GROWING SEASON CLIMATE DATA (Sept-Apr)

HAWKE'S BAY GROWING SEASON	
GROWING DEGREE DAYS:	1384°C
RAINFALL:	331mm
MEAN JANUARY TEMPERATURE:	18.3°C
PRUNING REGIME:	2-Cane VSP
HARVEST DATE:	Late March

MATURITY ANALYSIS AT HARVEST (Average)

°BRIX:	23.0°Bx
TITRATABLE ACIDITY: (AS TARTARIC ACID)	6.0g/l
pH:	3.40
WINE ANALYSIS	
ALCOHOL:	14.0% v/v
RESIDUAL SUGAR:	<1.0g/l
TITRATABLE ACIDITY: (AS TARTARIC ACID)	5.8g/l
pH:	3.55

THE 2008 GROWING SEASON

The 2008 growing season was characterised by a very warm, dry summer and early Autumn. By April the weather had started to cool, but conditions remained generally dry allowing us to hang fruit until good ripeness was achieved. The warm weather early on meant good flavour and texture ripeness was achieved at relatively low brix, providing wines with great balance.

SOIL TYPE

The Gimblett Gravels are deep alluvial gravels and silt, with very low nutrient content and water-holding capacity.

CLONAL/ROOTSTOCK SELECTION

Clone BDX181, all grown on low-vigour rootstock

WINEMAKING DETAILS

The fruit was destemmed and crushed straight into one of our 70-year-old concrete vats and 2 open-top French oak Cuves. The ferments reached temperatures of 32°C and lasted 5 days. The wines spent between 4 and 5 weeks on skins (determined by daily tasting) before being drained and pressed. Press wine was blended back if it offered a positive contribution. To retain the full weight and flavour of the wine, it was not fined or filtered. As a result, some precipitation may occur with time and decanting is recommended.

OAK REGIME

The new wine is filled to 225 litre French oak barriques of which 44% are new, where it undergoes malolactic fermentation. Total maturation time was 22 months in barrel, during which time each wine was 'racked and returned' several times. This process leaves any sediment behind in the barrel, giving a natural clarification process and allows for periodic aeration to aide the development of supple tannins.

AROMA AND PALATE

This wine is fragrant and appealing with rich dark berry and plum fruit, fragrant violet notes and a touch of spice complemented by subtle savoury oak complexity. On the palate the wine is rich and full, yet dry with a backbone of fine ripe tannins. A sensuous and ripe Hawke's Bay Merlot.

CELLARING AND FOOD MATCHING

Good Merlot, with its flesh and structure, is well matched to a range of savoury game and red meat dishes. If designing a meal to match this wine, think savoury and avoid any overtly sweet sauces. This wine is best served at approximately 18°C. While this wine is excellent drinking now, careful cellaring for up to 10 years will lead to increased suppleness and complexity.



The Church Road Cuve Range

The Church Road Cuve Range is a selection of wines that enable us to continuously explore and refine our winemaking. Expect each new release to be a unique expression of a variety, vintage and winemaking technique. The Cuve Range takes its name from our French oak cuves. We were the first New Zealand winery to use these large oak fermenters, testament to our commitment to innovation.