

# MERLOT

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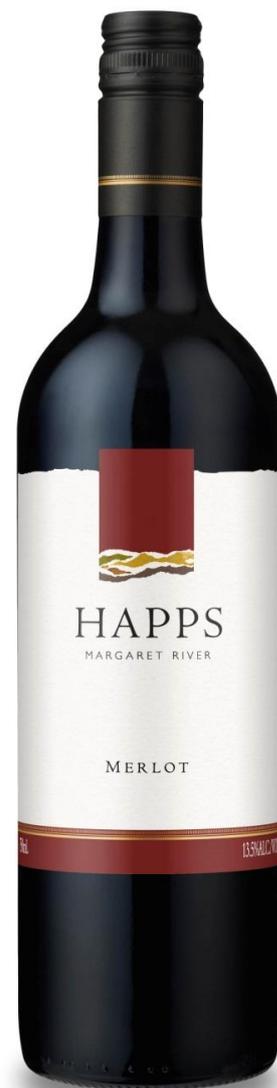
## Background:

There are very few good Merlots in Australia, but some expensive pretenders. In Bordeaux, Merlots from Pomerol are currently valued by the market above all other dry red wines. In the case of Petrus, Merlot almost stands alone, a 4% addition of Cabernet Franc the only addition. The conventional wisdom in Australia is that Merlot is useful variety to be used in small proportion to soften Cabernet. It may well be, that Merlot, like Pinot Noir, does not yield its best expression in very warm climates. It is the marriage of vineyard and variety that is important.

The advantage of Merlot, when it likes its home, is a certain sweet palatability that Cabernet Sauvignon, by its very structure, is denied. Whereas Cabernet shows a rather astringent backbone, a certain uni-dimensional stiffness in its constitution, Merlot, in its best examples, will show roundness on the palate, sweetness, and a glorious length of taste sensation that is difficult to match. Its tannin structure equals Cabernet but the mid-palate is more generous. Cabernet shows a more singular identity than Merlot in its aromatics as does Cabernet Franc and Malbec.

Happs Merlot is our best recognised and most sought after red wine. We have been making it since 1984 and it has been very successful in wine shows with gold medal winning wines being produced regularly. Over the years we have moved towards riper styles and longer skin contact. Today' Merlot is more intense in flavour, it becomes approachable at about three years of age, and will cellar for an extended period.

The fruit for the 2016 Merlot is from Karridale where Merlot is our most planted red grape and we have high hopes of raising the bar yet again.



## Current Release: 2016 Vintage

### Viticultural & vinification notes

<b>VINTAGE CONDITIONS</b>	A good vintage for Merlot in Southern Margaret River with moderate temperatures throughout ripening.
<b>VINEYARD</b>	Three Hills Karridale Hand pruned to rods Hand picked
<b>GRAPE VARIETY</b>	100% Merlot
<b>MATURATION</b>	12 months in French oak barriques followed by maturation in bottle under screw cap.
<b>WINE ANALYSIS</b>	Alc/Vol: 13.2% Acidity: 6.1g/l pH: 3.67 Residual Sugar: <0.5g/l

### Winemaker comments

<b>COLOUR</b>	Red with a red purple hue
<b>NOSE</b>	A vibrant aroma displaying red currant, black cherry, blueberry, plum and rhubarb with hints of cocoa powder, cherry cola, earth and tomato leaf.
<b>PALATE</b>	This medium bodied wine shows juicy red fruits, green plum and cranberry with notes of choc mint, toast, coffee and forest floor. The tannins are soft as one expects with Merlot though slightly chalky on the finish.