



MERLOT

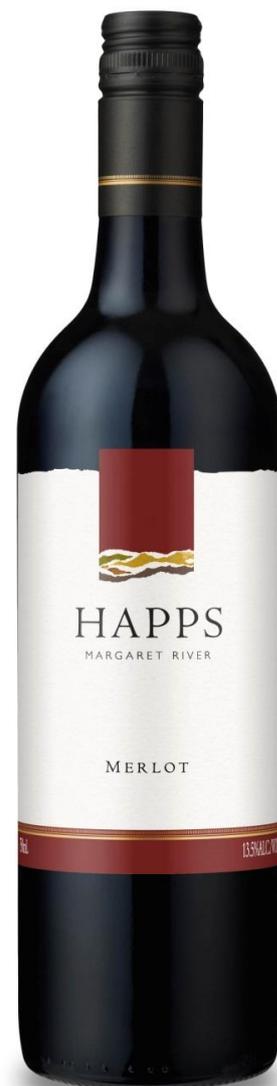
Background:

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 a 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 our Merlot is always sourced from our Karridale vineyard where Merlot is our most planted red grape and we have high hopes of raising the bar yet again.



Current Release: 2020 Vintage

Viticultural & vinification notes

VINTAGE CONDITIONS	A warm, dry spring resulted in an early start to harvest but the summer that followed was mild and ideal for flavour development in all varieties
VINEYARD	Three Hills Karridale Hand pruned to rods Hand picked
GRAPE VARIETY	91% Merlot + 7% Petit Verdot + 2 % Cabernet
MATURATION	13 months in French oak puncheons followed by maturation in bottle under screw cap.
WINE ANALYSIS	Alc/Vol: 13.6% Acidity: 6.2g/l pH: 3.48 Residual Sugar: <0.5g/l

Winemaker comments

COLOUR	Medium intensity red with a red hue
NOSE	A lifted aroma of red fruits, cranberry, green plum and cherry with hints of strawberry, coffee, toast and liqueur cherry.
PALATE	This medium-full bodied wine shows red currant, blueberry, plum skin and mulberry flavours with notes of cola, sage and red capsicum.. The tannins are soft as one expects with Merlot though slightly chalky on the finish.

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