

Oyster Bay
Merlot

Hawkes Bay Wine Region

‘Gloriously ripe fruit provides a burst of richness on the palate whilst a touch of subtle oak gives lifted spice, softness and extra warmth to the length of this wine.’

A unique expression of cool climate viticulture from our Hawkes Bay Region.’

Michael Ivceovich, Chief Winemaker



The Hawkes Bay wine region is arguably the most exciting find in recent times for the cultivation of Merlot in New Zealand. Ancient alluvial river terraces provide for a superb mix of soils over gravelly free draining sub soils, with an abundance of pure river water for irrigation. With a temperate maritime climate, the vines are warmed by strong clear sunlight during the day and cooled at night by the sea breezes of the Pacific Ocean. This is the unique environment in which Merlot produces its vibrant, fully ripened varietal flavours.

Winemaking techniques are largely traditional, with a selection of new and older oak, combining to offer structure, complexity and persistence to the wine.

Essentially Oyster Bay Merlot is about elegance and intensity of fruit. The hero is always freshness of ripe fruit, spice and soft tannins on the palate.

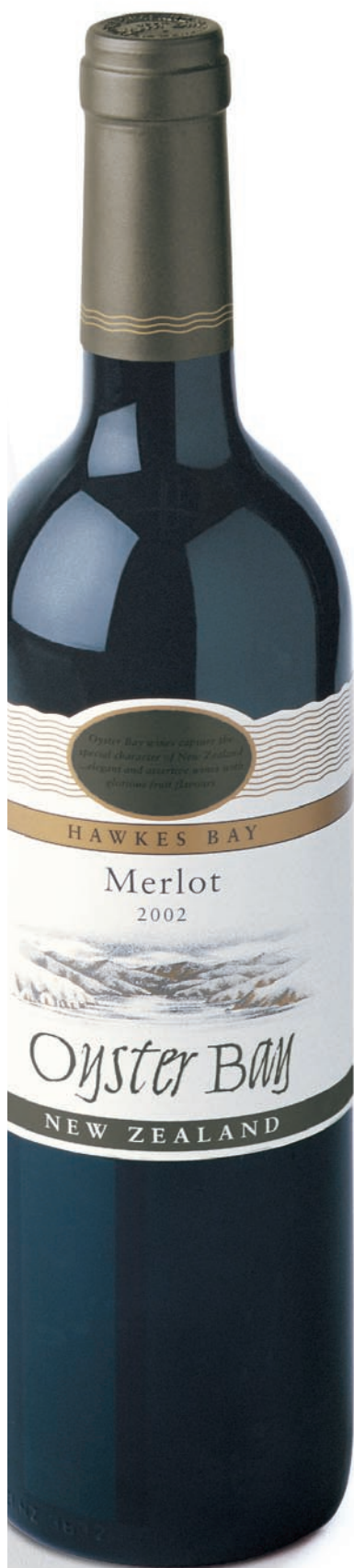


‘It’s hard to deny that New Zealand is making some of the most exciting wines in the world these days...Once known predominantly as a Sauvignon Blanc producer, it has developed a supporting cast of rich, deeply fruited Merlots, from Hawkes Bay...’

WineToday.com (USA), 15th May 2000



Oyster Bay
NEW ZEALAND



Technical Specifications

Oyster Bay Merlot 2002

Hawkes Bay growing season 2002

Following a mild winter, budburst was uniform, with warm and rainy conditions prevailing throughout early Spring. Favourable weather during the flowering period promised a great vintage.

Summer was cooler than the long term average, extending ripening and flavour development. Maintaining an open vine canopy and shoot thinning had the benefit of preparing the vines for the exceptional Autumn season, that brought clear sunny and dry conditions.

The fruit was harvested at stunning maturity and showed a magnificent concentration of flavours and balance.

Growing Season Climate Data

(October – April)

Growing degree days: 1333

Rainfall: 658mm

Mean maximum temperature: 21.4°C

Mean minimum temperature: 10.6°C

Soil Type

Omaha stony gravels (Gimblett Gravels). Predominantly fertile silt, shingle and clay soil. Fertile alluvial deposits over gravely sub soils with low water holding capacity.

Clonal / Rootstock Selection

Bordeaux clone 481: A recently introduced (1992) super premium clone selection, producing moderate yields of small berries and medium sized clusters, displaying intense flavour profiles and lowered acidity levels.

Vine Age

3 – 11 years

Pruning Regime

Spur pruned, vertical shoot positioning

Harvest Date

27th – 29th March 2002

Yield per Vine

Weighted average: 2.10kg

Yield per Hectare

Weighted average: 4.87 tonnes

Maturity Analysis at Harvest

(Weighted average)

Brix: 23.4

Titrateable acidity: 5.4g/L

pH: 3.59

Oak Selection

Bordeaux style barriques were selected from forests in the centre of France from renowned coopers Taransaud, Saury, Seguin Moreau and Demptos. These tight grained barriques were air seasoned for a minimum of 3 years, imparting subtle toasty, smoky characters, spicy complexity and structural tannin for enhanced mouth-feel and concentration.

Winemaking Techniques

The fruit was destemmed, crushed and transferred into fermenters to complete a 3 day pre-fermentation maceration. The must was inoculated with a cultured yeast and fermented for 12 days at up to a maximum temperature of 28 degrees.

Tailored rackings and pump overs were performed during fermentation to obtain delicate fruit tannins and maximise flavour and colour extraction. Following final racking and pressing, the wine underwent malolactic fermentation and then aged in French oak barriques for 12 months, during which time 3 barrel rackings were undertaken.

Upon final blending the wine was treated with a gentle egg white fining prior to bottling.

Wine Analysis

Alcohol: 13.4% v/v

Residual sugar: 2.0g/L

Titrateable acidity: 6.2g/L

pH: 3.41