

Oyster Bay Merlot 2003  
Hawke's Bay

"Gloriously ripe fruit provides a burst of richness while a touch of subtle oak gives lifted spice and softness to the wine."

Michael Ivceovich,  
Chief Winemaker

The philosophy of Oyster Bay is to produce fine, distinctly regional wines that are elegant and assertive with glorious fruit flavours. The Hawke's 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.

*Oyster Bay*  
NEW ZEALAND

*Sometimes the world really is your oyster.*



## Technical Specifications

### Oyster Bay Merlot 2003

#### 2003 Hawke's Bay Growing Season

Unseasonable frost events occurring in late November had a widespread effect on all vineyards in the Hawke's Bay region, including those in the coastal areas. The least effected sites were in the Gimblett Gravels district, where old river stones and gravels retained and radiated the warmth of the day's sunshine. These frosts were early in the growing season, allowing for a small secondary budburst. Summer was beautifully warm and dry and these excellent conditions prevailed up until harvest, which commenced on the 5th of April. A challenging but rewarding growing season, producing low yields. The berries and clusters were small in size, displaying a good sugar/acid balance and hallmark merlot characters.

#### Soil Type

Omahu stony gravels (Gimblett Gravels). Predominantly fertile silt, shingle and clay soil. Fertile alluvial deposits over gravelly 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.

#### 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°C. 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 was 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.

GROWING SEASON CLIMATE DATA (October – April)	
GROWING DEGREE DAYS:	1265
RAINFALL:	378mm
MEAN MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE:	21.0°C
MEAN MINIMUM TEMPERATURE:	9.9°C

VINE AGE:	3–12 years
PRUNING REGIME:	Spur Pruned, Vertical Shoot Positioning
HARVEST DATE:	5th – 15th April 2004
YIELD PER HECTARE: (weighted average)	3.5 tonnes
YIELD PER VINE: (weighted average)	1.5kg

MATURITY ANALYSIS AT HARVEST (weighted average)	
BRIX:	22.5
TITRATABLE ACIDITY:	6.9g/L
pH:	3.36

WINE ANALYSIS	
ALCOHOL:	12.5% v/v
RESIDUAL SUGAR:	2.0g/L
TITRATABLE ACIDITY:	6.0g/L
pH:	3.53



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