

CHURCH
ROAD®

HAWKE'S BAY

Church Road Grand Reserve Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon 2019

"Blends of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot are one of the most challenging and exciting wine styles to produce. There is a synergy between these two varieties that produces some of the most complete, complex, fragrant and satisfying styles of red wine in the world. Hawkes Bay, along with parts of the California's Napa Valley was identified by Decanter magazine, as one of the few New World wine regions that could challenge Bordeaux in the production of such wines."

Chris Scott, Chief Winemaker

Winemakers Chris Scott and Craig Thomas.

Viticulturalist Graham Bartleet and Claire Pinker.

Vineyard

Gimblett Vineyard (75%): Very free draining alluvial gravels, this soil type is the lowest vigour, lowest nutrient soil in Hawkes Bay, restricting vine vigour and resulting in small crops of intensely flavoured fruit. The area is only 30m above sea level, but far enough inland to be relatively well protected from the sea breeze, the vineyard is also sheltered from the cold southerly by Roys Hill. This vineyard typically produces darkly fruited, structural wines that respond well to cellaring.

Redstone Vineyard (25%): Situated on the warm soils of the renowned Bridge Pa Triangle Winegrowing District, this vineyard is only a three-minute drive from the Gimblett Vineyard but produces a distinctively different wine. The soils here are known as red metals, a 10,000-year-old, free draining, alluvial greywacke gravel riverbed since covered by a shallow layer of wind-blown loess, including iron rich volcanic ash that has rust stained the soils. It typically produces ripe, supple, and aromatic wines that balance the more structural Gimblett Vineyard wines.

Viticulture

Though it got off to a wet start, 2019 was another exceptional growing season in Hawke's Bay. By January, the early season rains had ceased, and generally warm, dry conditions prevailed. Vines were trained to two cane VSP and rigorous crop thinning, bunch placement and intensive canopy management were employed to ensure the best possible fruit quality. Approaching harvest time, we visit the block every two or three days, tasting, evaluating flavour and ripeness and checking for condition with one eye fixed firmly on the weather forecast, to ensure every parcel is harvested at the optimum moment.

Winemaking Details

Selectively harvested in separate parcels, the fruit was then destemmed and crushed for fermentation. The fruit was immediately inoculated with a selected yeast strain. Fermentation was allowed to peak at 34 deg C ensuring good extraction of colour and ripe tannin. Each was tasted daily post fermentation to determine cap management, aeration requirements and to determine the optimum time to press off skins. Extended macerations are generally very positive on this quality of fruit and each tank had a total of three to five weeks on skins. Regular aeration during this time helps to stabilise colour, increase age-worthiness, integrate the tannin, while opening up the aromatics, accentuating ripe fruit, floral and spice aromas. The wine was then drained and pressed before filling to French oak barriques (40% new) to complete malolactic fermentation and subsequent maturation for 21 months. The wine was racked for clarity and bottled without cold stabilisation or filtration.

Wine

The 2019 is heavily merlot dominant, with the typical dark berry and plum fruit of the variety. This is lifted by top notes of fragrant violet and subtle spice. A savoury dark earthy complexity brings a more serious, brooding undertone to the wine. On the palate the wine is full bodied with good mid palate flesh, finishing with a long, fine tannin structure that will soften with time and ensure good cellaring potential (2026 - 2038). Well matched to a wide range of full flavoured game and red meat dishes. For cellaring advice updated regularly, visit www.churchroad.co.nz.

Cepage: 83% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Malbec.
Alc 14.5% v/v | **TA** 5.3g/L | **pH** 3.78 | **RS** 2.0g/L

