

MÉRITE

reserve merlot 2018



LEGEND
AUSTRALIAN WINE IMPORTS

Winemaker: Mike Kloak & Colleen Miller

Grape(s): Merlot

GI: Wrattenbully, Limestone Coast

Site(s): Estate vineyards in the Joanna sub-region

Vintage notes: 2018 started with spring rains, recharging the vines with nutrients. There was a frost event in late spring on November 4 that affected some sites and some varieties more than others; and though merlot's yields were impacted negatively, the quality was impacted positively. A dry ripening period gave no disease pressure.

Vineyard notes: This wine is made from five different merlot clones, planted both on own roots and low-vigor rootstock (rootstock is not used to protect against phylloxera, which is not in Wrattenbully, but rather to minimize frost risk and lower yields). Four clones are from France, planted in 2006, and represent a style that can be harvested at lower baumé for lower alcohol. Varied top soils, including the terra rossa red, silty clays made famous by neighboring Coonawarra, over a limestone bedrock. The vineyard sits 110m above sea level, making it the highest planting in Wrattenbully.

Winemaking: Harvest date was determined by sensory assessment, not brix/baume. Clonal batches of merlot are harvested separately and managed independently until final blending. Which clone and at what percentage varies each vintage to accentuate the attributes of that year and to create an interesting vertical story. Dawn harvest with fruit delivered to the winery by 9am, fruit was mechanically sorted by optical berry sorter. Twice daily pump-overs. Small batch stainless steel fermenters pressed after seven days. In-barrel warm fermentation. Matured in French oak barrels (40% new) in temperature controlled facility until assemblage in Nov 2019. Fined with egg white, bottled in Dec 2019.

Closure: Natural cork (Ref1) **ABV:** 14%

Tasting notes: A wine combining elegant structure, savory flavors, and plump fruit character--a merlot that represents the best of all worlds. Flavors of redcurrant, deep black cherry, and bush tomato, with a savory undercurrent of river mint and fern. The palate is juicy and supple, but not dense or weighty. Loads of structure and flavor from oak, but does not overwhelm, just adds complexity. A cellar-worthy wine that delivers a lot of pleasure in the short term.

Production size: 500 dozen

Scores: 94, James Halliday's Wine Companion