CABLE BAY

VINEYARDS

FIVE HILLS 2022

MERLOT MALBEC · WAIHEKE ISLAND



VARIETIES	65% Merlot 35% Malbec
VINTAGE	2022
REGION	Waiheke Island
SINGLE VINEYARD	Yes
HARVEST DATE	4th March
YIELD	1.7kg/vine
ALCOHOL	13.5%
SWEETNESS	Dry
ACIDITY	6g/L
VINIFICATION	Whole-berry ferment, matured in French oak barrels, 20% new.
CELLARING POTENTIAL	This wine will reward cellaring for 15+ years, or will be thoroughly enjoyable upon release

TASTING NOTE

Blackberry, Medjool date and Doris plum aromatics rise cleanly from the glass. Subtle rosemary notes integrate with savoury, toasty oak-derived spices. The palate is defined by a firm tannin structure and refined shape, which will continue to harmonise with time in bottle. Layers of blackcurrant, dark chocolate and smoked undertones are supported by a distinctive mineral texture evocative of kiln-fired clay and warm volcanic stone. The natural acidity of the Malbec, combined with the character of our site, delivers precision, drive and length. These attributes collectively confirm the wine's capacity for graceful ageing.

VINEYARDS & VITICULTURE

The fruit is sourced exclusively from our Waiheke Island estate, owned and managed by Cable Bay Vineyards to ensure absolute control over quality. We practise regenerative viticulture and maintain Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand accreditation. Situated on the sun-exposed western side of the island, the vineyard occupies steep slopes overlooking Rangitoto volcano. The soils consist primarily of mineral-rich volcanic clay over Jurassic-era bedrock, contributing natural concentration, mid-palate weight and pronounced minerality in the finished wine.

WINEMAKING

Hand-harvested in March 2022, the grapes were transferred immediately to small open-top fermenters. The fermentation comprised 100% whole berries, with gentle plunging employed to achieve controlled extraction. Following fermentation, only the free-run wine was retained and racked to French oak barriques for maturation. The wine remained in oak for 17 months prior to assemblage and bottling. The final blend reflects both the characteristics of the growing season and the contribution of each variety, resulting in a wine of power, balance and enduring structure.

ABOUT FIVE HILLS

Our 'Five Hills' Merlot Malbec blend is of exceptional quality and is one of New Zealand's rarest wines. It is smouldering, deeply coloured and full-bodied. Our vines grow in salt laden ocean air on mineralised clay volcanic soils with no irrigation; island attributes which contribute salinity, minerality, natural flesh, weight and softness to our wine. The Merlot and Malbec grapes are co-fermented together, as each variety's constitution balances and brings out the best in the other. We used a small portion of beautifully developed Merlot stems in the ferment to bring a unique dimension to the tannin and flavour profile. These approaches are not common practice. Our unique vineyard and winemaking methods create a wine entirely more interesting, food worthy and enjoyable than any of its peers. Michael Cooper shared that it has none of the rusticity that sometimes detracts from Malbec, and that it's a classy wine with refined tannins, excellent complexity and richness.

"Wonderfully fruited and enticing — blackcurrant, dark plum, thyme, and fine oak aromas. The palate delivers excellent weight and depth, splendidly supported by fleshy texture and layers of polished tannins, finishing impressively long and structured. At its best: now to 2035." ***5 Stars / 95 pts — Wine Orbit***

"A restrained and complex dry red, still in its adolescence. Very good flavour concentration with layers of blackberry, earth, graphite, dried herb and black olive. Full-bodied palate supported by fresh fruity acidity and notably plush, cocoa tannins. Excellent persistence and length that will reward mid-term cellaring. Drink 2026–2036." ***94 pts — The Real Review (Stephen Wong MW)***