

PURIRI HILLS

WINE OF NEW ZEALAND

PURIRI HILLS ESTATE 2007

56% Merlot, 24% Carmenère, 20% Cabernet Franc

13.0% alcohol, T.A. 6.3 g/l, Residual sugar <0.5 g/l

Winemaker: Judy Fowler

Vineyard: Phil Nunweek

Consulting Winemaker: Evert Nijzink

Puriri Hills' wines were originally inspired by the great red blends of St Émilion and Pomerol. Merlot is supported by carmenère (a "lost" Bordeaux variety), cabernet franc, cabernet sauvignon and malbec. Our carmenère came to us from northern Italy, where it was thought to be a clone of cabernet franc until recent genetic fingerprinting identified it as carmenère.

Our fruit is grown and all wine produced on the 100 acre estate overlooking the Hauraki Gulf at Clevedon, southeast of Auckland. Each year the vineyard gives us a unique set of flavours to blend, so the blend varies year on year. Blending is a critical challenge in the winemaking process. The wine is not routinely fined or filtered, so will throw tartrate sediment in the bottle.

In the vineyard we handpick parcels at the peak of ripeness between mid-April and mid-May. Yields range from 1.0-2.0 kg. per vine. Total production ranges from 9-15 tonnes from 5.5 acres of vines. Vine spacing is 1 x 2.5 metres. Vine age is 13 to 15 years. The canopy and fruit are manicured by hand throughout the season. We are dry land farmers and embrace the practices of natural farming.

In the winery, bunches were 100% destemmed and 80% crushed into oak or stainless steel fermenters. Each ferment is cold soaked for 1-4 days to allow wild yeast development, then inoculated with oenological yeasts. Total time on skins ranges from 2-4 weeks depending on the varietal and the character desired. Free run wines are put to barrel and marc is lightly basket pressed. All wine is barrel-aged in French oak, 60-80% new. Élevage in oak extends for 20 months before final blending. The wine is bottled under cork on the estate and aged a further 1-4 years before release. We find that the wine ages similarly to the Right Bank Bordeaux and is best cellared until it is 5-7 years old.