



## **WineoftheWeek.com**

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### **Mills Reef Reserve Merlot Malbec 2007**

Hawkes Bay, New Zealand

This week's Wine of the Week was actually meant to have been last week's Wine of the Week but with the holiday weekend and some writing deadlines that actually paid money, the WOTW kind of evaporated.

Nevertheless, this wine is too good not to have its moment of glory.

It is **Mills Reef Reserve Merlot Malbec 2007** from Hawkes Bay

Concentrated deep plummy red coloured with purple-crimson edges, it has sweet smoke, dried herb, concentrated berry and slight liquorice scents that lead into a juicy palate is full of sweet ripe red and black fruits. It's medium to full-bodied in palate weight and quite sensual in texture with plush firm tannins and savoury oak. Fruit is plummy and ripe integrating to the meaty, leathery, chicory backbone and the Malbec earthiness and violet / rose petal-like florals come forth on the finish. My rating: 5 stars.

The fruit for this wine comes from Mills Reef's Mere Road vineyard in Hawkes Bay, in the Gimblett Gravel designated area. There's lots of gravel here, in fact there's a gravel quarry close by.

A blend of 55% Merlot and 45% Malbec, the two varieties were kept apart until blending seven months after harvest. The Merlot matured in equal number of barrels of French and American oak with 35% new oak. The Malbec matured in 100% French oak, 37% new. It has 14% alcohol by volume and is sealed with a screwcap.

I like this wine, in fact it is very hard to think of a consistently good and better value red wine from New Zealand - apart from the fact it is creeping up in value. RRP is \$24.95 this vintage, up a couple of dollars. It used to special at around \$17.95, so even with the \$2 price rise, it may possibly still be found for under \$20.

Food match was rack of lamb with a breadcrumb and herb topping a la Neil. Tres magnifique!