

# GREY SANDS

## GREY SANDS 'THE MATTOCK' 2013

Appellation: Tamar River Valley; Tasmania

Merlot/Malbec/Cabernet Franc

Winemaker: Peter Dredge

Closure: DIAM cork

Alcohol: 13.6%



### Vineyard

Grey Sands is a small (3.5 Ha) family owned vineyard, established in 1989 by **Robert & Rita Richter** on the western edge of the Tamar Valley, 150m above sea level in Northern Tasmania. The Richters very deliberately chose the vineyard site because of its aspect, slope and low fertility soil. They have planted the vineyard to high density as is common in Bordeaux and Burgundy to take advantage of the low fertility soils. 8800 vines/Ha combined with hard pruning keeps the yield per vine down to less than 1 kg. They do not irrigate to encourage the vines to use the full soil profile, tapping down through a layer of hard-pan to the moisture retentive clay beneath.

### Tasting notes

**Blend of Merlot (60%), Malbec (30%) and Cabernet Franc (10%)**. Deepest red in colour with a purple hue. The nose is youthful, fresh and lifted showing rhubarb, stewed plum and summer pudding aromas. The palate has an immediate aromatic sweet fruit attack, disguising, initially, the ripe tannins. The finish is persistent and pleasingly aromatic.

### Vintage

This vintage appears to be a 'tale of two seasons'... Winter & Spring were cool and very wet, delaying growth and interfering with flowering of the early varieties (Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir) leading to a subsequent reduction in yields. The later varieties, including Merlot and Shiraz, were unaffected.

Even by the end of December a late harvest seemed inevitable, but suddenly we entered a hot dry summer that ran in to mid March. Although we have had three nice falls of rain in the past fortnight, temperatures haven't plummeted, so harvest dates look to have returned to average.

The Mattock, our blend of Merlot, Malbec and Cabernet Franc, looks exceptional with rich ripe fruit and silky tannins.

### Robert Richter's Notes

Tasmania is renowned for its Pinot Noir, but has had limited 'success' with other red varieties or blends. Mainstream Australian varieties such as Shiraz & Cabernet Sauvignon are marginal and limited to the warmest sites available.

We have produced a varietal Merlot since 1998 and have ripened the fruit satisfactorily in most vintages. It ripens about 2 weeks after Pinot Noir and 2 weeks before Cabernet & Shiraz. On our site it produces a highly structured wine akin to Cabernet Sauvignon, which ages well but begins quite tannic, tight & closed. Ten years ago, while holidaying in New Zealand, I was impressed by the diversity and quality of red blends featuring Malbec. In the late 80s I was fortunate enough to taste some barrel samples of Malbec made by the late Dr Bailey Carrodus at Yarra Yering. The wine was inky in colour but only moderately tannic and possessed the most remarkable rose petal aroma. In 2005 we planted a block of 3 clones of Malbec. Finally (our vineyard is unirrigated, so establishment is slow) in 2012 we had enough volume to produce a blend that I think has some future here in Tasmania.

