



# MOUNT PLEASANT

*Classic*

## 2003 Merlot

Mount Pleasant is situated on the slopes of the Brokenback Ridge in the Hunter Valley, NSW. The estate was established in 1921 by the legendary winemaker Maurice O'Shea who recognised the special characteristics and longevity of Hunter Valley table wines. To this day, Mount Pleasant continues to bottle-age commercial quantities of wines until they are considered at their peak to release.

**Vineyard Region** Hunter Valley, NSW.

**Vintage Conditions** The growing season prior to the 2003 vintage was dominated by the worst drought on record since 1902. Spring rainfall was virtually negligible with the only useful rainfall period recorded in December. This resulted in excellent ripening conditions producing red wines rich in colour and flavour with a fine tannin structure. Overall, an outstanding vintage for red wine.

**Grape Variety** 100% Merlot.

**Vinification & Maturation** Individual parcels of premium Merlot were fermented on skins for seven to ten days, using traditional techniques of draining, returning juice and pumping over in open top stainless steel fermenters. When fermentation was almost complete the wine was pressed from skins, and transferred to new and one year old French and American oak barrels to complete the fermentation process. The wine returned to oak to complete 15 months maturation prior to blending. During maturation, the wine was racked from barrel and returned to maximise the expression of the varietal and develop the seamless integration of fruit and oak.



### Winemaker Phil Ryan's Comments:

**Colour** Dense mid red, hints of purple and brick hues.

**Aroma** Full of ripe mulberry and spice supported with lashings of rich chocolate-like oak.

**Palate** Initial soft, ripe fruit flavours on the palate are followed by layers of fine, velvety tannin and oak. The wine possesses the unmistakable juicy mid palate of Merlot with hints of leafy complexities on the back palate.

### Chef Peter Howard's Serving Suggestions

Pasta with pancetta and mushrooms.

**Wine Analysis** **Alc/Vol:** 13.5%     **pH:** 3.35     **TA:** 6.90

**Last Tasted** November 2005

**Peak Drinking** Drinking beautifully now or can be cellared carefully until 2008.

PHIL RYAN  
Mount Pleasant Chief Winemaker  
[www.mountpleasantwines.com.au](http://www.mountpleasantwines.com.au)

