

# Blank Canvas

## BLANK CANVAS 'ELEMENT' SYRAH 2017

**TASTING NOTE** In the true expression of cool-climate Syrah, this wine exudes freshly cracked black pepper, crushed violets, red and black forest fruits and savoury smoky nuances. It has crunchy lifted acidity which carries the defined, fine-grain tannins and background of spicy, savoury oak. This wine is about fragrance and texture, which is assisted by our pioneering co-fermentation technique with a small proportion of Gruner Veltliner skins as well as whole-cluster fermentation. The co-fermentation gives a white pepper spice quality to the flavour spectrum and intensifies and stabilises the brilliant purple hue of Syrah. The result is layers of complexity in flavour and tannins which will allow an intriguing long-term ageing potential.

**VINTAGE** There is no arguing that 2017 in Hawkes Bay was a challenging vintage with seemingly no end to the inclement weather. The growing season started calmly with a mild spring and favourable flowering, followed by a dry, warm summer. However, heavy rain events in February and March created considerable disease risk and demanded careful sorting and attention in the vineyard. Because of the fantastic lead-up however there are excellent flavours in the Syrah.

**VITICULTURE** Element is operated by Dominic and Rachele Smith and is the smallest vineyard in the Gimblett Gravels Winegrowing District®. The Syrah is made up of mostly Chave clone, with the balance to Mass Selection/Stonecroft clone. It is VSP trained and cane pruned, and it is run with true respect to the land and environment with no herbicides or systemic controls used.

**WINEMAKING** As is becoming tradition, we again co-fermented the hand-picked Syrah with a small proportion of Gruner Veltliner skins. This is a similar technique to what is done in Northern Rhone but instead of Viognier we chose Gruner Veltliner. Although we had Viognier available for this purpose, we specifically opted for Gruner because we find it to be better matched aromatically to the savoury profile of Syrah. Viognier can have an over-sweet fruit character which we wanted to avoid, while Gruner lends its hallmark white pepper note to the finished wine. We've used a 60% whole-bunch component in the fermentation to give further complexity and tannin structure. We hand-plunged the tank and allowed the ferment and malolactic conversion to occur naturally. The wine spent 14 months in new and seasoned French oak before it was bottled without filtration on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2018 and officially released on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019.

341 cases produced.

### TECHNICAL ANALYSES

Alcohol	12.8 %	pH	3.75
Acidity	5.2 g/L	SO <sub>2</sub>	70 mg/L

