

wine

Try these:



Cypress Chardonnay 2007
This fruit-forward chardonnay shows classic Hawke's Bay semi-ripe stonefruit characters, supported by fresh toasty oak. It's a tight, dry style with the natural acidity to partner food or make you look for another glass if you're enjoying it by itself. About \$20.



Cypress Syrah 2007
Syrah was always going to be the focus and this is an auspicious debut. A complex wine with lovely florals on the nose and a soft-spiced plum palate that has good weight and excellent persistence. If this is its entry-level syrah the reserve will be well worth waiting for. About \$25.



Cypress Merlot 2007
A deeply coloured, richly weighed merlot, its savoury elements are countered with delightful choco-berry flavours. It's quite a serious style but fleshy and generous enough to be enjoyed anytime. About \$20.

cypress

has elegant presence

Winemaker offers generous flavour and refinement

WHEN the Lawson family sold Te Awa Farm to Julian Robertson in 2002, they did not sell all their wine-growing interests.

The family had already started developing a small farm in the Gimblett region into a hillside vineyard and that development has culminated in the launch of Cypress, an exciting new label owned by Gus and Mel Lawson.

After 20 years of growing grapes in the Gimblett zone, Gus was convinced the partially terraced site would provide quality fruit with unique flavour profiles. It would also allow him to maintain an active interest in an industry he loved.

This is not a big venture by Lawson standards. Named after the trees surrounding the vineyard, Cypress is aimed at producing limited quantities of chardonnay, pinot gris, merlot and syrah.



cellar
vision

JOHN
MACPHERSON

Two tiers will be released. The drink-now wines — simply labelled Cypress — have just been launched. A reserve Cypress Terrace range is due for release early in 2009.

When Gus worked with winemaker Jenny Dobson at Te Awa Farm, their wines always had a seriousness about them. Even the entry-level Longlands wines were aimed at the discerning drinker. They were relatively restrained and understated, purposefully needing food to be seen at their best.

On the other hand, the Cypress wines are made by consultant winemaker Rod McDonald.

Rod is known for a more generous, full-bodied style so it was with great interest I tried the three now-available Cypress wines.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the results were a blend of generosity and refinement. The wines were obviously well-made but, most importantly, they were a little different from the traditional Gimblett chardonnay, merlot and syrah models.

The chardonnay was refreshingly tight and quite dry. And the reds had a savoury element to them not normally seen in this price bracket. There is no doubting this is a



solid debut. A lot of thought has gone into this new label. The wines are attractive and interesting; the packaging is elegant and has presence; and the price points are reasonable given the small quantities made.

A lot of other smaller Hawke's Bay producers could learn a lot from the Lawsons.

I look forward to the release of their Cypress Pinot Gris later this year and their premium Cypress Terrace range in due course.