



# Downes Family Merlot 2018

**Winemaker:** Kevin Watt , James Downes,  
Gordon Johnson and Nadia Cilliers.

**Appellation:** Elgin

**Varietal:** Merlot

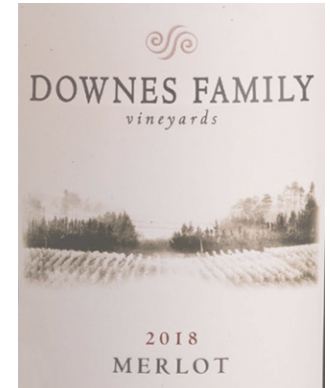
**Vines per hectare:** 3787 vines

**Filtration and fining:** Egg White Fining + light filter.

**Soil types:** Mostly Table Mountain Sandstone with a high percentage of quartz silica crystal and a deeper kaolin clay base.

**Harvest Dates:** On average last week of March and first week of April

**Planting distance:** 2.2m x 1.2m



**UPC#:**

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**Alcohol %:** 13.5 %

**Total Acid:** 5.6 g/l

**pH:** 3.53

**Residual Sugar:** 2.9 g/l

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**Tasting Notes:** Considerable emphasis is placed on maximising the different French and Italian merlot expressions in the vineyard but picked and vinified all together and matured in older French barrels before final blending. The wine has a fragrance of ripe red fruits such as plums and dark cherries, with earthy complexity and yet still expressing minerality. Maintaining a good acidity lends to outstanding freshness with a well integrated ripe and seductive tannin structure. Incorporating a minimal winemaking intervention approach, apart from the inoculated ferment and only two to three “punch downs” daily, retains silkiness and elegance.

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**Winemaker Notes:** The grapes are picked from a small 3 hectare vineyard. The vineyard is divided up into 5 different parcels each with its own respective clone and these are all picked together for a 5 way clonal co-ferment. The bunches are chilled to 30C before being sorted on a conveyor and destemmed. Berries are hand sorted, before cold maceration ensues for 3 to 6 days at 80C. The 5 way clonal ferment is inoculated with a commercial winemaking yeast. Fermentation temperatures vary between 26 - 30oC. After pressing, the wine is racked and left to complete its malolactic fermentation and maturation in old 4 to 5 year old French oak barriques for 9 months.