



MT DIFFICULTY

DRY RIESLING 2011

Proper care at all times in the vineyard and winery was the making of vintage 2011. Conditions were difficult but the quality of fruit was very good, provided the right decisions were made.

Spring was fantastically settled, which led to excellent flowering and fruit set. Usual spring conditions arrived late, and unsettled weather was the norm right through January and February! Despite this, it was also pretty warm; it was almost too perfect for canopy and bunch development, leading to bigger than normal berries, and higher bunch weights as a result. Finally some semblance of normality arrived in March with conditions settling. These conditions continued through autumn, other than one wet spell which high-lighted how tender and thin-skinned the berries were this season. In the winery it was a season where the fruit needed empathy, and the direction of the wine was dictated by the fruit.

VINEYARDS:

The grapes for the wines that carry the Mt Difficulty Estate label are subject to two strict criteria: they are managed under the umbrella of the Mt Difficulty viticultural team and must be sourced from vineyards situated in a very specific area - the South side of the Kawarau River at Bannockburn. Mt Difficulty has Riesling planted in Long Gully and Target Gully Vineyards, and the Dry Riesling is produced solely from Long Gully fruit. Long Gully consists of Lochar soils which are formed in older fans. They have very weakly developed, thin and wavy clay pans which are deep enough to cause no impediment to roots or drainage. These are well-drained, high pH soils ideally suited to viticulture. They generally have a 30 cm depth of top soil over fine to moderately coarse gravels.

WINEMAKING CONSIDERATIONS:

The Dry Riesling attempts to balance flavour and palate weight with the wine's natural acidity. We really tried to ripen the 2011 Dry Riesling on the vine and didn't harvest till late April. It was carefully hand-harvested and processed through the winery – some lees were racked across for fermentation to enhance palate weight further. The wine was fermented cool in stainless steel to retain maximum varietal expression. The wine whilst resting on its gross yeast lees was stirred weekly to build texture; we lees stirred the wine in this way for four months. The fermentation was left to go dry with the residual sugar appearing through back blending with a later harvest of fruit from Long Gully.

TASTING NOTES:

Ripe stonefruit intermingled with citrus blossom dominate the aroma of this Riesling. On the palate the citrus fruits are balanced with lovely grapefruit focussed acidity; there is a plushness in the mid-palate that seems to defy the mineral acidity. The wine is dry with less than five grams of residual sugar.

CELLARING POTENTIAL:

Mt Difficulty Dry Riesling will improve for 6 to 8 years given optimal cellaring conditions.

ALCOHOL: 13.5%

PH: 3.0

T/ACIDITY: 8.2g/L⁻¹

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 4g/L⁻¹