



MT DIFFICULTY GROWERS SERIES CHINAMANS TERRACE PINOT NOIR 2015

The growing season in 2015 kicked off with a cool spring. Frosts in early November reduced production from Station Block, at the top of the Cromwell basin, but Bannockburn was untouched. Although the cool spring continued after that, temperatures warmed just before Christmas in time to make for a very successful flowering. January was cooler and wetter than average and then February onwards was very warm and dry. We experienced a protracted veraison (the point at which the grapes stop growing and start to ripen, characterised by colour change) leading to increased variability in ripeness. To counter this we introduced a late colour thin to ensure fruit arrived in optimal condition at harvest. Early autumn returned to more classic settled Central autumnal conditions, and harvest started on the 3rd of April, continuing through until the 3rd of May. It was a normal yielding year, with nice focused acidity and interesting flavour profiles reflecting, to some degree, the variability of the season.

VINEYARD:

The Growers Series is a recent addition to the Mt Difficulty portfolio, allowing us to showcase the terroir of different sub-regions. Chinamans Terrace is situated on its namesake in Bendigo at 320 metres above sea-level, on the north eastern side of Cromwell (as opposed to Bannockburn to the south). Chinamans Terrace Vineyard was planted by Lyndsey Harrison in 2005. The vineyard comprises 4.5 hectares of north facing Pinot Noir with a mix of clones 5, 115, Abel, 667 and 777. The grapes are planted at 3787 vines per hectare on a mix of clay, schist and quartz soils. The vineyard escapes the worst of winds and the slopes typically ensure a minimal frost risk.

WINEMAKING CONSIDERATIONS:

We harvested the Pinot Noir over four picks from the 10th to the 17th April; in excellent condition. All of the different clones were fermented together, to try and enhance early integration. The majority of the fruit was destemmed, with 20% retained as whole clusters to help build structural intensity and help reflect the unique characteristics of the site. The wine underwent a 9 day cold soak and was hand plunged once daily; this was followed by a 12 day natural fermentation with temperature peaking at 29°C during which time the ferment was plunged twice daily. The wine stayed on skins for 26 days in total prior to pressing, overnight settling and then to barrel for 16 months. The wine went through malolactic fermentation in the spring, was racked to tank the following winter and bottled, unfinned, in December.

TASTING NOTES:

Aromatically this wine leads with savoury dark wild berry notes with brown spice and mocha notes adding detail. Supple, open dark berry notes lead into a soft broad flow through the palate. Finally, the wine finishes with a savoury brown spice line complementing fine structural tannins. Wild dark berries flow through the structure and finish the wine.

CELLARING POTENTIAL:

Mt Difficulty Chinamans Terrace Pinot Noir will improve for 8 -12 years given optimal cellaring conditions.

ALCOHOL: 14.5%

PH: 3.73

T/ACIDITY: 5.8gL⁻¹

RESIDUAL SUGAR: < 1gL⁻¹

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