



MT DIFFICULTY

GROWERS SERIES LOWBURN CHARDONNAY 2015

The vines got away to a reasonably slow start: the beginning of spring bloomed dry and cool with low soil moisture coming into the season, and November was characterised by much cooler than normal temperatures. December was warm and remarkably settled leading to a compact and successful flowering. The warm settled spell continued right through January. February arrived and, whilst warm, was unusually damp, with much higher than average rainfall. March dried vineyards back out and the season finished with a warm flourish in April. We again started harvesting with lower sugars than typical at nice ripe flavours. The harvest was very compact, with everything being harvested over a 21 day period.

VINEYARDS:

The Growers Series Chardonnay was added to the Mt Difficulty portfolio in 2011 and allows us to showcase the terroir of different sub-regions. The Lowburn Chardonnay is a blend of two "Growers Series" vineyards, Packspur and Golden Hills. Both are situated in the Lowburn area to the north of Cromwell. Packspur Vineyard sits high on the foothills of the Pisa range and is the highest of Mt Difficulty's vineyards, ranging from 340 to 360m. It's north facing, and contains two plots of Chardonnay - Clone 6 and Mendoza. The grapes are close-planted on a mottled shallow mix of Waenga and Fraser sandy loam soils. Golden Hills sits at the top of Burn Cottage Road on a steep north facing slope and is comprised solely of Mendoza Chardonnay. The soils are a mix of Annan moderately sandy loams and outcrops of clay. The elevation ranges from 300 to 340m.

WINEMAKING CONSIDERATIONS:

The fruit was hand picked in peak condition on the 9th April at Golden Hills and the 19th April at Packspur, harvested cool and handled in an oxidative fashion. We fermented 100% of the juice in barrel with full solids using indigenous yeasts. 17% new French oak was used for the wine's maturation, whilst maturing no lees stirring was utilised. The wine went through a partial (~65%) malolactic fermentation in spring, after which the barrels were stirred for a period. The wine was racked from barrel and filtered before being bottled unfined in March.

TASTING NOTES:

The riper vintage character comes through in the aroma with ripe citrus, peach notes, and background brioche character. There is a delicious interplay of citrus and stonefruits with white blossom adding interest. The plush texture and focus of the wine defines the palate; with citrus framing the acidity, and ripe phenolic notes on the finish.

CELLARING POTENTIAL:

Mt Difficulty Lowburn Chardonnay will improve for 5 -7 years given optimal vintage and cellaring conditions.

ALCOHOL: 14.1%

PH: 3.43

T/ACIDITY: 6.6g/l

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1g/l