



MT DIFFICULTY

GROWERS SERIES LOWBURN

CHARDONNAY 2016

Our winter was dry so we came into the season with low soil moisture, October was significantly warmer than average leading to early bud burst, November carried this warm dry start on and whilst we had a small amount of rainfall leading into December it too was largely drier than normal. This led to an early and successful flowering. January was unseasonably changeable, whilst we had some rain it was the wind and changeability that really influenced growing conditions, delaying the onset of veraison. February cracked on with some super warm and mostly dry conditions outside of one large rainfall event late in the month. March was again unseasonably changeable and overcast with small rain events occurring through the month. Finally, the sun returned in April, along with more settled, warm weather. The variability and overcast days delayed the onset of picking. The vintage was very compact; with everything being harvested over a 24 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 moderately sandy loams with outcrops of clay. The elevation ranges from 300 to 340m.

WINEMAKING CONSIDERATIONS:

The fruit was hand picked at peak ripeness on the 9th April at Packspur and the 15th April at Golden Hills, 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 character comes through with peach notes, hints of tropical fruit and a background floral element. Some lovely ripe stonefruit elements kick off the palate these are followed up with brioche and tangerine citrus. 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: 14.4%

PH: 3.48

T/ACIDITY: 5.6g/l

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1g/l