



MT DIFFICULTY SAUVIGNON BLANC 2013

The growing season in 2013 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 grapes for the wines that carry the Mt Difficulty Bannockburn Estate label are subject to two strict criteria: they are managed by our viticultural team and must be sourced from Bannockburn vineyards - the south side of the Kawarau River in the southern Cromwell basin. Mt Difficulty has three plantings of Sauvignon Blanc which fulfil these criteria; on Templars Hill, Mansons Farm and Saffron. Templars Hill soils vary across the vineyard from a mixture of heavy Scotland Point clay soils to drought-prone coarse gravel Bannockburn soils (classified as man-made due to the sluice mining). Mansons Farm has a small area of Bannockburn soil but is mostly comprised of Lochar Soils, which are ideally suited to viticulture. Saffron is predominantly comprised of Cromwell sands.

WINEMAKING CONSIDERATIONS:

The Sauvignon Blanc grapes were hand harvested on the 5th, 16th and 20th of April in excellent condition. We harvested slightly later than the past couple of seasons due to the lateness of the season and our desire to lock in a riper spectrum of flavours. The Saffron vineyard fruit was pressed directly to barrel, where it fermented to dryness then stayed on gross lees being stirred for four months prior to blending with the Templars Hill wine. The fruit from Templars Hill and Mansons Farm was reductively handled during processing, then gently pressed and racked clean. The wine fermented cold in stainless steel and remained on gross lees for four months post ferment whilst being stirred weekly. These practices were employed to not only retain the maximum varietal fruit character of Sauvignon Blanc but also to develop complexity, palate weight and texture.

TASTING NOTES:

A late ripening season has resulted in aromatics of lemon sorrel, wild gooseberry and wet stone. Lemon zest and gooseberry compete with savoury herbs before moving into a linear flowing mid-palate. There is a nice touch of urgency with more herbs and wet stone on the finish. This wine is ideal for sensible summer evening drinking.

CELLARING POTENTIAL:

Mt Difficulty Sauvignon Blanc will improve for 3-5 years given optimal cellaring conditions.

ALCOHOL:	14.5%	PH:	2.9
T/ACIDITY:	8.6g/L ⁻¹	RESIDUAL SUGAR:	3.5g/L ⁻¹