



VARIETALS

Riesling 100%
Old Block St Hubertus Vineyard, Kelowna
(original Becker Test Plot, planted 1978)

TECHNICAL INFO

pH - 3.01
Total Acidity - 9.5 g/L
Residual Sugar - 18.0 g/L
Alcohol - 11.7%
Product - +799460
Production - 460 cases

THE WINE

With its mouth-watering acidity, subtle sweetness and moderate alcohol content, Riesling is arguably the ultimate example of balance in wine. This combination of sugar and acid also makes it extremely flexible when it comes to food; Riesling has aromas and flavours of citrus and tropical fruits, flowers, and spice that allows it to support a wide range of pairings. The greatest mouth-watering examples I know originate in Germany and it was Germans who brought the first Riesling to the Okanagan Valley. In fact, this Riesling is made from one of those original Becker Test Plots planted in 1978, now 39 year-old vines. Our goal each vintage is to increase the flavour intensity, so we make this wine in a Spätlese style; not sweet but just slightly off-dry enough to keep it mouth-watering and juicy. We allowed six months of fine lees contact in order to create a wine of great complexity that will be long-lived.

2017 VINTAGE

2017 was a far more "normal" growing season for the Okanagan Valley after a string of early, hot vintages starting in 2013. This must be taken with a grain of salt, however, as temperatures were still quite high compared to historical averages. The winter was extremely snowy and early spring was wet, supplying the vineyards with a good soaking and filling up the water table. This wet, cool spring led to bud break the second week of May for most of the varieties we work with. On average, this is two-to-four weeks later than 2016, depending on varietal and site. Flowering occurred in early June when our cool spring jumped right into full-on summer weather. The heat following the wet, producing full vineyard canopy growth, suckering and shoot positioning. At many sites this growth was happening all at the same time. With all the heat from early July onward, we made the decision to leave a heavier crop in order to slow the potential for early sugar ripeness. We had success with this in the past and, by the time the heavy heat and smoky skies arrived, we were happy to have chosen to do this again in 2017. Naramata saw no rain for 54 consecutive days this summer, and no rainfall accumulation for the months of July and August. Those months saw continuous temperature spikes and smoky skies. Once the fruit set, we left more than usual to ripen. Mildew was an ever-present threat from the high temperatures and minimal wind; this prompted our vineyard crew to act preventatively and quickly open the canopy to get more airflow. Veraison was a bit later than expected (the second to last week of August) but finished extremely rapidly. Our first pick of the year was on August 27th. This was for our two sparkling wines as well as the first in a series of picks for our Un-oaked Chardonnay. September brought cooler temperatures and slowed things down nicely; we had great hang-time for phenolic development. The rest of our varieties came in throughout October and all of our fruit was picked by October 27th and vinified by mid-November. Despite the hot and very dry summer, we saw low pH and lower brix levels than the previous three vintages, demonstrating that 2017 will express a cooler vintage profile. Overall, expect more freshness, minerality, and an excellent balance of acidity.

VINIFICATION

The grapes were hand-harvested and a sorting table was utilized to ensure only the healthiest fruit went into the wine. After being de-stemmed, the berries were crushed and soaked overnight at cellar temperature. We monitored closely for a desired drop in acidity without acquiring any astringency. The must was dumped by gravity into the press (a more gentle method than pumping) and a slow, gentle pressing was utilized via a pneumatic press. A two-day settling allowed us to achieve maximum flavour and nutrients in our must before it was racked for ferment. Our cooling system allowed us to maintain a clean and controlled ferment that lasted two weeks in stainless steel. The wine was left sur-lie in tank for six months before bottling to add mouthfeel and freshness to the wine. Sulphur levels were kept minimal to preserve maximum bouquet and added only after post-ferment second racking and pre-bottling. Residual sugar - necessary to balance the juicy acidity and crucial for lending definition to the intensely flavoured, old-vine fruit - was maintained via a cold-stop to the fermentation, which had already naturally slowed on its own. The wine was protein and cold stabilized ten months later, then filtered using the gentlest method, crossflow. We chose a Stelvin screw-cap closure because we feel it is the best method available to preserve the freshness that is key to this wine.

TASTING NOTE

The wine exhibits a delicate nose of dried mint and mineral. On the palate, the structure is medium-bodied, with moderate alcohol and carries 18g/L of residual sugar to balance its crisp, bright acidity. The nose carries over onto the palate where intense flavours of lemon, lime, and ginger explode in your mouth and follow through to a long, lingering, lip-smacking finish.