



2013 Riesling 'Hell Block'

Tasting Notes

The aromatics are unashamedly floral in nature, rose, lavender, apple and citrus blossom. If we use colour descriptors rather than traditional flavour this wine would be essentially green/yellow with veins of pink and blue woven through. The former being citrus like fruit notes and the latter being ripe red apple and crunchy mineral. Either way it goes a long way to accurately expressing this vineyard in this growing season. A wine of which we are immensely proud and believe is capable of a long and happy life. Not necessarily of biblical proportions but profound nonetheless.

Wine Analysis: Alcohol 10 % Acidity 7.27 g/L pH 2.91 Residual sugar 37 g/L

Vineyard & Winemaking

The New Zealand Winegrowing region of Waipara enjoys an unenviable reputation for great Riesling of just about any style. From bone dry to sickeningly sweet and just about every place in between. In our 25 years of growing grapes at the mouth of the Waipara Gorge we have learned a thing or two about this venerable grape. Firstly it is not overly vigorous so it actually needs to be encouraged to grow. Secondly it seems to resist thermal variation better than most grapes. It bursts, flowers and ripens later than most but the latest red variety but paradoxically seems to thrive and make the most expressive wines in the coolest sites. Take the Nahe in Germany for instance, closer to the pole than the equator and yet makes incredibly expressive wines capable of Methuselah like age. Thirdly it seems to develop ripe flavour at relatively low sugar so the trick to growing this successfully is managing acidity while growing fruit with low phenolics (skin tannins). We have two blocks in the vineyard and they couldn't be more different if they tried. The upper "N" block grows on a gravelly terrace where the vines have to really struggle to put on any weight, the fruit takes for ever to ripen and with quite low acidity that tends to suit itself to a dry style. Conversely the lower "Hell" block sits atop water table where the vines can casually sip water from deep down, imparting moderate vigour and more importantly keeping the fruit shaded from the searing Waipara summer sun. This healthy canopy tends to accelerate flavour ripening while keeping the brix low allowing us to make this lovely crisp, refreshing, slightly Germanic style.

Hand picked a lowish brix by NZ standards, whole bunch pressed while the fruit is a vibrant green-gold colour. Only the free run used to avoid excessive phenolic pickup from the skins, we do this to ensure that the tannic grip that can be extracted from sun burned skins is left behind. The juice is then cold settled and racked clear for cool tank ferment. We used neutral yeast to enhance the varietal grape flavours and stopped ferment when the natural sugars balanced the crisp, zingy acidity. So what you taste is as true a reflection of this particular part of the vineyard that we can produce.

Harvest Date: 6 April 2013 Brix 20.6 - 23.5 Acidity 9.9 g/L pH 3.03