

Rieslingfreak

NO. 33

RIESLING 2023

Clare Valley, Australia



Technical Notes

The 2023 Riesling vintage in South Australia was picture perfect. The highest spring rainfalls on record in 2022 were followed by a cool and temperate summer. A combination that delivered thriving canopies and slow ripening conditions through summer, encouraging full flavour development while maintaining higher acid levels in the fruit. Grapes were machine harvested at night and the fruit was in the winery by morning – the preferred method for Riesling. Instead of pressing, John uses a spin and drain method to extract the free run juice thus ensuring the berries are handled very gently to maintain the pristine purity of the juice. The juice is then settled for 5 days with solids falling to the bottom of the tank. The clear juice was racked and fermented at around 55 degrees for 10-12 days until reaching the desired sugar level at which point the wine was chilled and sulphured to stop the ferment. The Riesling was then heat and cold stabilized to remove all haze and crystals before being filtered and bottled in June.

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About this Wine

Rieslingfreak is indeed ‘a freak’, and not simply because of its rarity as an Australian winemaker focused on a single variety. What raises Rieslingfreak beyond special to ‘freak’ status is an unconcealed passion for Riesling matched with an innate sensitivity to the versatility of the variety and the influence of a diverse vineyard landscape. This magical combination translates into a showcase of captivating wines of exquisite purity and elegance. And albeit an unintended consequence of John and Belinda Hughes’ personal reverence for Riesling, the emerging reality is Rieslingfreak has become integral to the Riesling conversation in Australia. The 2023 Rieslingfreak No.33 is crafted from fruit sourced from our two growers in the Clare Valley - Richard & Anne Hughes (John’s Parents) and Robert and Lyn Jaeschke from Polish Hill River. While wines from Clare Valley can typically be leaner and more austere, John has endeavoured to make this wine more supple in the mid palate and more immediately enjoyable – both with and without food.

Wine Analysis

Alcohol: 11.8%

Acidity: 9.1 g/l

pH: 2.89

Residual Sugar: 1.6 g/l

- ✓ VEGAN FRIENDLY
- ✓ SUSTAINABLE
- ✗ ORGANIC
- ✗ BIODYNAMIC

Climate And Vineyard Conditions

The Polish Hill River vineyard is planted on grey-brown loam, over sandy limestone and shale rock at 460m above sea level. The average rainfall is 625mm. The White Hutt vineyard is situated on the flats, in the middle of a valley, and has its own very unique micro-climate. This vineyard is planted on heavy loam and red Terra Rossa soil, with limestone subsoil. It is situated 500m above sea level, with an average rainfall of 550mm. After a decidedly typical winter that yielded average rainfall and temperatures across the region, the arrival of Spring brought record breaking rainfall paired with record breaking lows in temperature, with the maximum daily temperature being more than 3°C below the long-term average.

Scores and Reviews

93 pts – James Suckling

93 pts – Erin Larkin, Wine Advocate

– The 2023 No. 33 is a sensational depiction of Clare Valley. This is a sensational little wine here. Ripper. 12% alcohol, sealed under screw cap. The 2023 season was cool and wet, and while this may not have suited all varieties and all vineyards, there was very little disease pressure in the Rieslingfreak vineyards, and the grapes benefited from longer hang time due to the cool weather. These are pristine, long, concentrated wines with that laser, cool-vintage cut. Great. Winemaker/owner John Hughes credits this as one of his finest vintages. Part of the Growers Series, Clare Valley, this (and the No. 44) is not available inside Australia—USA, you lucky ducks!

