



Tasting Notes 2011 Blanc de Blancs [0 & 6g/l Dosage]



Vintage After a decade of warm and dry conditions the 2011 vintage broke the drought with over 600 mm of rain during the growing season versus an average of 350mm, the cool and wet conditions resulted in our latest harvest on record (16 April v 2 April average). Yields were reduced but those grapes that were picked were of good quality – great natural acidity and lovely flavours in our Chardonnay with the Pinot Noir benefitting from the long cool ripening (second longest veraison interval, 68 days v 57 day average).

Vineyards :: Clones McCutcheon (51%), Judd (49%) :: P58 & 110V1 Chardonnay

Harvest date :: Yield Hand picked 4 March 2011 :: 4.4 tonnes/ha (1.8 t/acre, ~26.4hl/ha)

Brix :: pH :: TA 18.1-18.8° (10.1-10.4° Baume) :: 3.08-3.13 :: 13.4-14.0 g/l

Winemaking The grapes were hand-harvested, and transferred directly to press, with the first 500 litres per tonne of fruit (cuvée) collected to be used exclusively for this wine. The juice was then stirred and sent directly to old French oak barriques where an indigenous yeast fermentation proceeded before the wines lees were stirred over the course of the winter period. The base wine was then assembled and tiraged to bottle. After a period of 48 months on its yeast lees, the wine was riddled and disgorged before two versions of the dosage were made and then bottled.

Winemakers Richard McIntyre, Martin Spedding, Jeremy Magyar

Aging :: Oak 9 months :: old French oak barriques :: 48 months on lees in bottle

Malolactic Partial (80%)

Residual sugar Dosage 0 & 6 g/l

Finished pH :: TA 3.12 :: 8.2 g/l

Alcohol 12.5% (7.4 standard drinks/750ml bottle)

Production 160 dozen :: disgorged April 2016 :: cork with muselet

Release date June 2016

TASTING NOTES A key element of the Ten Minutes by Tractor ethos is inquisitiveness. Few producers dare give such a clear view into site, unmediated by winemaking trickery, even in years regarded as challenging. The Ten Minutes by Tractor sparkling wine is relatively new to the lineup and, for the 2011 wine, the curiousness that pervades this producer's other wines makes its way squarely to the bubbly end of the range.

And so there is not one but two wines, differing only in dosage (the amount of sugar added to the wine at the end of the winemaking process). One has 6 g/l added, the other has "zero dosage," meaning none at all. Divided opinion in the winery over which was better becomes the wine lover's rare opportunity to taste both and decide for themselves.

What a difference a small amount of sugar makes. These wines simply must be tasted side by side, drawing out the nuances both significant and subtle between them. Aromatically, the zero dosage wine is fine boned, savoury and delicate, throwing notes that range from bready to floral to lightly citrusy. There's a mineral tangent that adds complexity and angularity to the aroma profile, too. By contrast, the 6 g/l wine is immediately fuller to smell, flowers in this case dripping with nectar and fruit tending slightly more towards a very fine white peach. While the zero dosage wine is all cheekbones, the 6 g/l variant adds some flesh, something pliable and yielding. Both are very beautiful to smell.

These contrasts carry firmly through to the palate. In the mouth, a fresh delicacy and sprightliness characterise the zero dosage wine. Mousse is fine and acid well-controlled, meaning the absence of sugar sits properly within a mouthfeel that is taut but not overly aggressive. Indeed, its textural caress is firm yet plush, like the pads and claws of a cat's paw, charming and teasing at the same time. The addition of sugar simply rounds this out, adding a degree of weight and creating a subtly different experience in the mouth without distorting balance or proportion. There's no tease with the 6 g/l wine; it is bold and confident and strikes the mouth with well articulated impact. In both cases, flavours are properly savoury and mineral, the zero dosage marginally finer and the 6 g/l wine more muscular. Personal preference may lead the taster down a certain path, but it would be a shame to have to choose just one.

Julian Coldrey [May 2016, commissioned by TMBT]

Food :: Temperature The perfect aperitif. Serve at 6–9°C.

Best drinking 2016-2022