

**HOT OFF THE PRESS! MICHAEL COOPERS BUYER'S GUIDE TO NEW ZEALAND WINES. 2011**

**Muddy Water Dry Riesling 2009 ★★★★★**

The 2009 vintage (★★★★★) was hand-harvested at Waipara, hand-sorted to eliminate botrytis and fermented (2.4 grams/litre of residual sugar). Light lemon/green, it is medium to full-bodied, with highly concentrated, citrusy, and a crisp, lasting finish. As a prospect for cellaring, it's all there.

**Muddy Water Slowhand Pinot Noir 2007 ★★★★★**

Since 2006 (★★★★★), this label has replaced Mojo as the Waipara winery's top red. Based on the oldest vines reveals outstanding personality. Hand-picked at 24.7 to 25.4 brix from ultra low-yielding vines (2.2 tonnes/ha), outstanding 2007 vintage (★★★★★) was matured for 16 months in French oak barriques (30 per cent new). Rich and silky, with cherry, spice and herb flavour showing lovely depth, flow and complexity. An exciting mouthful.

**Muddy Water Sugar Daddy Riesling 2008 ★★★★★**

'Controlled decadence', I jotted down after tasting the 2008 vintage (★★★★★) of the Waipara winery's first 'full brix and fermented with indigenous yeasts for over 10 months, it has just 6.6 per cent alcohol. Pale gold/slight intense, apricot-like flavours, it has a powerful botrytis influence and enough acidity to balance its advanced level of sugar). Already delicious, it should be long-lived.

**Muddy Water Growers' Series James Hardwick Waipara Riesling 2009 ★★★★★½**

The 2009 vintage (★★★★½) was hand-picked and fermented with indigenous yeasts. It's a rich, medium-dry style with concentrated grapefruit and spice flavours, a hint of marmalade, minerally notes, good complexity and a crisp, lasting finish.

**Muddy Water Growers' Series Waipara Sauvignon Blanc 2009 ★★★★★½**

Hand-harvested at two sites at Waipara, the 2009 vintage (★★★★½) was fermented with indigenous yeasts. The wine was aged for six months in old barrels; the rest was handled in tanks. It's a tightly structured, concentrated wine with gently seasoned with toasty oak, fresh, balanced acidity and a basically dry (4.6 grams/litre of residual sugar) finish.

**Muddy Water Hare's Breath Pinot Noir 2008 ★★★★★½**

From 'a block on limestone slopes at the back of the property', the 2008 (★★★★½) was hand-picked at Waipara and matured for 16 months in French oak barriques (40 per cent new.) The best vintage yet, it is fragrant and generous with plum and spice flavours, complex and savoury, and the tannin structure to age.

**Muddy Water Waipara Pinotage 2009 ★★★★★½**

'Not for the faint-hearted' (in the winery's words), this is typically a robust red, full of personality. The 2009 (★★★★½) was aged in French oak casks (20 per cent new), it's like a good Cotes-du-Rhone, combining power and charm. Full of vibrant, sweet-fruit flavours of cherries and plums, and a hint of licorice, it is deliciously fruity and smooth, in a depth.

**Muddy Water Waipara Riesling Reloaded 2009 ★★★★★½**

The distinctive 2009 vintage (★★★★½) was fermented and matured on its yeast lees for eight months in old French oak (2.4 grams/litre of residual sugar), it is still very youthful, but carries the dry style well, with concentrated, ripe and good complexity. Tight and minerally, crisp and long, it's full of promise; open 2012+.

**Muddy Water Growers' Series Lough Vineyard Riesling 2008 ★★★★★**

Grown at Waipara, the debut 2008 vintage (★★★★) was hand-picked and stop-fermented in a medium style (27 per cent alcohol) with a hint of botrytis, it is mouthfilling (13 per cent alcohol) and ripe, with good complexity of citrusy, spicy, plum and generous. It's already delicious.

**Muddy Water Growers' Series Waipara Rosé 2010 ★★★★★**

The 2010 vintage (★★★★) is a great buy. Made from Pinot Noir, it is bright pink/pale red, with a floral bouquet, and a crisp, finely balanced, dry (4 grams/litre of residual sugar) finish.

**Muddy Water Unplugged Riesling 2009 ★★★★★½**

The 2008 vintage (★★★★), part of the 'Growers' Series', was hand-harvested in Waipara at 28 to 32 brix. Base was tank-fermented with indigenous yeasts and lees-aged for seven months. It's a sweet (73 grams/litre of residual sugar), with grapefruit, lime and honey flavours, balanced acidity and strong drink-young appeal. The 2009 (★★★★½), established from botrytis-infected bunches. Rich and honeyed, it is sweet (77 grams/litre of residual sugar) and crisp, with slight streak and good complexity.

**Muddy Water Waipara Chardonnay 2009 ★★★★★½**

The 2008 vintage (★★★★) was fermented with indigenous yeasts and lees-aged for 11 months in French oak barrels. A buttery wine with good intensity and drive, it's a tight-knit wine with good acid spine and complexity. The bold and fleshy, with high alcohol (14.5 per cent) and strong grapefruit and peach flavours, ripe and rounded. It's approachable and easy to drink.

**Muddy Water Waipara Pinot Noir 2008 ★★★★★**

The 2008 vintage (★★★★) was hand-picked, fermented with indigenous yeasts and matured for 14 months in French oak barrels. A rich and dark-hued, it's a harmonious, very skilfully balanced wine with sweet-fruit delights, cherry, plum and spice flavours. Moderately concentrated, it rests its case on finesse rather than power, offering delicious drinking now onwards.