

## mesh Eden Valley Riesling 2002

### That's another fine mesh you've got me into...

Jeffrey Grosset was worried. When people asked if he had doubts over the idea of teaming up with Robert Hill Smith of Yalumba to create a super-premium Riesling out of the Eden Valley (later to be labelled mesh), his answer was characteristically succinct: 'Only every day.'

As a perfectionist renowned not only as the master of his own destiny but as Australia's premier Riesling producer, you probably wouldn't expect him to answer any differently. When you think about it - he had something to lose. As indeed did Yalumba. The creative tension between the two must've oozed static.

That the project has gone so well - we'll get to this - must be a cause of great relief, to both parties. But then, it was always going to have every chance - for, as Grosset puts it, the brief was pretty good: 'to create the best wine we could, with no budget, no sales targets, no expense spared, just uniqueness and the chance to create a great wine in sight.'

Uniqueness indeed. Basically the idea was to take two premium Eden Valley vineyards, divide the fruit between Grosset and Yalumba, have each vinify it according to their own judgement, and then bring the parcels together, assess them blind, and work towards a final blend.

Just prior to the picking of the grapes though this was then taken a step further - instead of the grapes simply being evenly divided, every second row was picked into separate coloured buckets (yellow and blue), so that the fruit allocated to each was as close to identical as possible. It must've driven the pickers mad - but what a delicious exercise.

Once the fruit hit the respective wineries, it has to be said here that both Grosset and Yalumba thought they were taking the fruit down different, probably divergent, paths.

Here was the real tension. Two creative forces with two very different ideas of how things should be done. With not only reputations at stake - but what if the different parcels didn't produce an harmonious blend?



Jeffrey Grosset and Robert Hill Smith

What if one's effort far outdelivered the others'? What ... well ...

Which is why, when Jeffrey Grosset now talks about the process and the final result, a deep sense of wonder enters his voice. For the fact is, no matter how many times they looked at it, the undeniable truth was that a deadset 50/50 blend of the two efforts produced the best wine. It was like the fruit wanted to be re-untied with itself. Like - well, it's just a beautiful thing.

Grosset: 'My view was that we would probably end up using the component from us for one vineyard, and the component from Yalumba for the other. We never thought the wine would just go bang when the components from both of us, from both vineyards, were brought together - I don't know if we underestimated the importance of site in Riesling, but what it does show is that as a group with lots of experience with Riesling, we may have different methods and approaches - but each is valid.'

The wine itself - well, as the notes below show, this is one helluva Riesling, helped no doubt by a great Riesling vintage but enhanced by 'the undeniable synergies that exist' between Grosset and Yalumba.

The only problem with such a first up effort is that it makes follow-ups difficult - with Grosset admitting that the main work from here will be in the vineyard more than in the process and the vinification.

If you see this mesh wine and you're a Riesling fan - it's a must. Around 2000 cases were made.

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Everything about this is fabulous. It's rich, delicate, complex, yet flush and fresh and crisp. It's spicy. Yet it's got lemon and lemon rind aromas and flavours to burn. It's searingly, flyingly fruity, and yet there's a well of weighty, gravelly, minerally, savoury depth - and persistence. It's a boomer. It's intense. It's a very, very powerful Riesling.

*Campbell Mattinson*