



HOPE WELL
2015 IMPROBABLE RIESLING
EOLA-AMITY HILLS

100% Riesling, mixed clones
From a steep and sweeping
southeast slope

Volcanic and Sedimentary Soil
100% organically farmed
Alcohol: 15%
50 cases produced

The label image is *Ramalina menziesii*, also known as the lace lichen, or Spanish moss. *Ramalina* forms much of the lazy grace of the winterscape at Hope Well. While very common, *Ramalina* has myriad unique qualities, which is why it has been used by plants, animals and humans for millennia, as food, medicine, and even to softly wrap and preserve the dead.

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A note of disclosure. I have questions about Riesling in Oregon. Our season, ever earlier and warmer, still likes to be petulant and, well, lousy with rain in the period of time that my romantic and stubborn mind believes should be for achieving the purity and focus that I want Riesling to have. Then why is there Riesling in my vineyard, you ask? Remember stubborn and romantic.

IMPROBABLE RIESLING

There are things you do alone. Those are good things. And then there are things that you do with friends, who have some faith that you are not completely crazy. And those things are magic.

In late October of 2015, the picking crews had dispersed and all that was left for the winery folk was the last of the pressing. Everything was slowing down. Getting quiet. Stretching. One freezing morning, the dawn coming later as it does as All Hallows nears, Tito, Miguel, Joaquin, Jose Luis and I walked quietly to where I was keeping several rows of Riesling hidden from the hungry eyes of winter-prepping birds, the rest of the block harvested weeks before. We closed the vintage, our hands easily finding the rose gold clusters among the last few leaves. This was not the pulsing race of the Pinot harvest. One by one by one.

After a beautiful day spent beaming over perfect, currant sized, copper-colored grapes on the sorting table, Maggie Harrison and I shut the doors of her winery and cloistered ourselves with an infinite playlist. We spent that night watching lazy drops of viscous perfume stream forth from the press. We hand-delivered every drop to barrel. It was one of the greatest nights ever to go unnoticed.

Where it spent the next two years. One puncheon, improbably empty after all the other barrels had been filled. An improbably long growing season. An improbably nice bit of weather before Halloween, and one improbably, brilliantly close moment between two creatures whose electric forces generally have us spinning away to opposite ends of the earth.

It is pure exhilaration to be near enough to a lightning strike to smell ozone and feel all the cells in your body responding to an ancient force you have no control over. And while I cannot recommend intentionally seeking this experience so as to increase the probability of it happening, I can recommend that if the improbable moment presents itself, make peace and buckle up because if you survive you will be richly rewarded.

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