

2020 Clare Valley Riesling

The 2020 vintage in Clare was a comparatively small one. According to Steve Baraglia, who made the top two wines, “From our perspective the growing season followed a drier than average winter and a relatively dry cool spring apart from the occasional warm day. Early December was also cool until consecutive heatwaves in late December.

We use straw mulch to conserve water, and it definitely has helped in the last few vintages, and with careful irrigation management, led to healthy vines following this heat. At the end of January we had 50mm of rainfall followed by one of the coolest Februarys on record. These perfect ripening conditions after version allowed for the great flavour development and high natural acidity. Our winemaking approach is to capture the vineyard characters with minimal winemaking influence. The dry winter and spring led to generally lower than average yields - around 25% down on riesling with a couple of exceptions (the Naked Run vineyard being average yield). The lower yields and healthy vines meant that baumés increased faster than normal, making the picking window smaller.”

This comprehensive tasting allows us to present a clear picture of how the vintage conditions impacted the rieslings of Clare. We looked for freshness, intensity of varietal character and good acid line. Our leaning was towards elegance rather than sheer power, but if you prefer the richer, full flavoured style, ★★★★★ wines like the Grossets, Kirrihill Regional Selection and 5452 By KT will fit the bill.

Here’s how our panel (Lex Howard, David Yeates and Lester Jesberg) rated the wines

2020 Naked Run The First Clare Valley Riesling A classically limey regional riesling. The vibrancy of aroma carries through to a long, acid-fresh, beautifully balanced palate. Riesling enthusiasts – don’t miss this bargain. (\$24.00) ★★★★★
<https://www.nakedrunwines.com.au/collections/all/products/the-first-riesling-1>

2020 Pikes The Merle Reserve Clare Valley Riesling The reserved floral aromatics entice with their delicacy. Although restrained at this early stage, the dry, racy, uncompromising palate is a winner. Cellar. (\$52.00) ★★★★★☆
<https://www.pikeswines.com.au/wine/2020-merle-reserve-riesling>

2020 Kirrihill Partner Series Riesling The rich, full, stone fruit/lime nose is classically regional and varietal. This is a vibrant, long-flavoured, powerful, dry riesling with lively acidity. (Not yet released) ★★★★★☆

2020 Barking Mad (Reillys) Watervale Riesling A fresh floral/lime style with a satisfyingly rich palate backed up by excellent acidity. (Not yet released – 2019 is \$20.00) ★★★★★☆

<https://www.reillyswines.com.au/2019-barking-mad-riesling>

2020 Tim Adams Clare Valley Riesling The fullish, lively lime nose has considerable appeal, as does the palate which offers intensity, length and beautifully balanced acidity. (\$24.00) ★★★★★☆

<https://www.timadamswines.com.au/product/2020-riesling/>

2020 Kirrihill Regional Selection Clare Valley Riesling A richly flavoured riesling for the shorter term, although it has plenty of acidity to ensure a lively palate. (Not yet released – 2019 is \$19.00) ★★★★★

<https://www.kirrihillwines.com.au/shop/>

2020 Grosset Polish Hill Riesling This year's Polish Hill tends to stone fruit rather than lime. It's packed with flavour backed up by lingering acidity, and should develop well over the next 3-5 years.

(\$65.00) ★★★★★

<https://www.grosset.com.au/polish-hill-riesling/>

2020 Woodvale Watervale Riesling This is a fresh, restrained limey style that's pristine, long-flavoured and dry, with racy acidity. It needs time. (Not yet released) ★★★★★

<https://www.woodvalevintners.com.au/>

2020 Kirrihill E.B.'s The Settler Riesling A rich, limey, dry riesling with good intensity and acidity. Clare typicity on show. (Not yet released – 2019 is \$35.00) ★★★★★

<https://www.kirrihillwines.com.au/>

2020 Grosset Springvale Riesling A full-on style showing rich, slightly forward apricot-peach aroma and flavour. Very enjoyable short term drinking. (\$47.00) ★★★★★

<https://www.grosset.com.au/springvale-watervale-riesling/>

2020 Pikes Traditionale Clare Valley Riesling A powerful limey riesling with a lively long palate. Style-wise, it certainly lives up to its name. (\$25.00) ★★★★★

<https://www.pikeswines.com.au/wine/2020-traditionale-riesling>

2020 5452 by KT Watervale Riesling There's a big nose here - citrus tending to stone fruit. Subliminal sweetness and long flavour are balanced by uplifting acidity. (\$29.00) ★★★★★

<https://winesbykt.com/wines/riesling/5452-by-kt-watervale-riesling>

2020 Knappstein Ackland Vineyard Watervale Riesling The nose is highlighted by attractive limey notes. The palate is tight, delicate, long and dry. Give it time. (\$30.00) ★★★★★

<https://www.knappstein.com.au/product/2020-Ackland-Vineyard-Riesling>

2020 Shut The Gate Rosie's Patch Watervale Riesling An intense, slightly forward limey nose, with a clean, lively palate. Well made and dry. (Not yet released – 2019 was \$20.00) ★★★★★
<https://shutthegate.withwine.com/>

2020 Freya and Jules Watervale Riesling A richly flavoured riesling showing a little development. The palate is satisfying, offering plenty of varietal flavour. ★★★☆

2020 Jim Barry Watervale Riesling A typical limey style which is already beginning to drink well. (\$20.00) ★★★☆
<https://www.jimbarry.com/wine/2020-watervale-riesling-pre-release>

2020 Jim Barry Lodge Hill Riesling Although it's a little forward, this limey riesling is a good short-term drink. (\$23.00) ★★★☆

2020 Leo Buring Clare Valley Dry Riesling The limey aromas have slight honey and beeswax overtones. The long palate finishes with racy acidity. (\$16.00) ★★★☆

2020 KT Churinga Watervale Riesling Rich but slightly forward. The palate has a fine, talc-like grip, good acidity and persistence. (\$34.00) ★★★

2020 Woodvale Skilly Riesling A delicate citrus style which is a little flattened by SO₂ at the moment. (Not yet released) ★★★

2020 Pauletts Polish Hill River Riesling Floral, tight and decidedly dry. It needs a couple of years to build up flavour. (Not yet released – 2019 is \$28.00) ★★★

2020 Matriarch & Rogue Dot Clare Valley Riesling Rich, fresh and limey, with a touch of SO₂. The palate is powerful and dry, with good acidity. Give it time to settle down. (\$25.00) ★★★

2020 KT Peglidis Watervale Riesling Quite full-flavoured, showing a little development. Fresh acidity lifts the finish. (\$38.00) ★★★

2020 Knappstein Clare Valley Riesling There's plenty of limey flavour here, with slight honey/toast overtones. The finish is acid-fresh. (\$22.00) ★★★

2020 Kilikanoon Killerman's Run Riesling Shows varietal character but is a little too forward. (\$22.00) ★★★

2020 Reillys Watervale Riesling Rich but forward - towards tropical/stone fruit. Good acid balance. (Not yet released – 2019 was \$25.00) ★★★

2020 Paulett Wines 109 Riesling A little tropical, with slight banana overtones. A dry, linear style that needs time. (Not yet released) ★★★

2020 Kilikanoon Mort's Reserve Watervale Riesling Fairly forward flavours with plenty of acidity that freshens the finish.. (Not yet released) ★★★

2020 Jaeschke's Hill River Riesling Showing a little development but offers plenty of varietal flavour. (Not yet released – 2019 was \$18.00) ★★★

2020 Eldredge Spring Gully Riesling Shows passionfruit overtones at this early stage. Finishes nicely dry, but needs time to show its true form. (\$20.00) ★★★

2020 Knappstein Enterprise Vineyard Clare Riesling A slightly forward limey style. (\$30.00) ★★☆☆

2020 Kilikanoon Mort's Block Watervale Riesling Showing honeyed development. Flavourful and dry. Lingering acidity. (Not yet released) ★★☆☆

2020 Shut The Gate Watervale Riesling The tropical fruit overtones are a little flattened by SO₂. (\$30.00) ★★☆☆

Sweet & semi-sweet styles

2020 Paulett Wines Alison Botrytis Riesling The vibrant peachy lime nose is greatly enhanced by marmalade botrytis character and a whiff of ginger. A luscious, lively, very well made sweet white. Try it with tarte tatin. (\$30.00/500ml) ★★★★★☆
<https://www.paulettwines.com.au/product/2020-Alison-Botrytis-Riesling>

2020 Grosset Alea Riesling A full-on lime/stone fruit style of considerable power and good acid balance. A versatile wine that is only slightly sweet. (\$42.00) ★★★★★☆
<https://www.grosset.com.au/alea-riesling/>

2020 Shut The Gate Blossom 24 grs Riesling An attractive limey riesling that needs just a little more acidity to balance the sweetness. (\$22.00) ★★☆☆

2020 Melva by KT Watervale Riesling Fairly forward and medium-sweet, with balance between sweetness and acidity. A left-fielder that was barrel fermented with lees contact and, it certainly provides flavour with textural interest. (\$34.00) ★★★

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