PIKES

CLARE VALLEY
Established 1984

2026 'THE MERLE' RESERVE RIESLING

VINTAGE CONDITIONS

The Cold conditions delayed budburst by two weeks, followed by a cool spring and severe frost on 13 November across our Polish Hill River estate. With estimated crop losses of up to 85%, the season was potentially the most challenging in Pikes' history. Fortunately, other Clare Valley subregions were less affected. Our established growers and a few new grower partners helped us secure additional fruit to offset the estate shortfall. Unaffected vines remained healthy and balanced, with warm January conditions supporting steady ripening. Harvest began 16 days later than 2025, with four rain interruptions testing our growers, vineyard and winemaking team. Despite these challenges, low disease pressure helped maintain excellent fruit quality, delivering bright acidity, purity and concentration.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Fruit Source: Estate Grown
Variety: Riesling
Vintage: 2026
Region: Polish Hill River, Clare Valley
Fermentation: 100% free run juice, fermented with neutral yeast in stainless steel, 4 months on lees post fermentation.
Alc/Vol 11.5% **RS** 2.9 g/L
pH 2.85 **TA** 8.3 g/L

WINEMAKING INFORMATION

Named after the family matriarch, 'The Merle' is selected from the best parcels of Riesling from our Polish Hill River Estate. This wine is intended to showcase the purest expression our estate grown Riesling from the vintage.

TASTING NOTES

Appearance: Water white with the faintest green hue and brilliant clarity.

Aroma: Lifted lemon blossom and white flowers lead into fresh lemon and lime, with a subtle saline note adding definition and complexity.

Palate: Concentrated lime juice is carried by mouth-watering acidity through the centre of the palate. Juicy and finely balanced, with a gentle grip and mineral, saline finish that gives the wine excellent length.

Summary: A poised and tightly focused release from an exceptionally small vintage, with less than half the intended volume produced. The purity of citrus fruit, fine structure and persistent mineral finish make it compelling now, while providing the framework to cellar confidently for 15 years or more. Incredibly versatile, it pairs beautifully with freshly shucked Pacific oysters.

