



# MOSS WOOD



Issue 55 >> September 2004

## Moss Wood 2002 Pinot Noir

In his more sanguine moments, Keith might be tempted to describe the 2002 vintage as a consumer's delight. Certainly, poor flowering of the vines meant that yields would, at best, be low. The Moss Wood team felt it necessary to crop thin more vigorously than usual and apply a fair amount of leaf removal by hand to bring the best out of the excellent mild vintage. Yields of 4.3 tonnes per hectare (or 28 hectolitres / ha) are indeed very low. All this is part of the vineyard regime, designed to develop the best possible fruit characters a little earlier than in previous years. The expectation is that this will lead to lower levels of alcohol and give more delicate texture without any herbal notes.

The wine was given the usual treatment in the winery, with hand plunging four times a day during fermentation. Afterwards, the wine was left on skins for about two weeks so that the fruit and tannin balance was correct. It was then placed in French oak barrels (30% new) where it underwent malolactic fermentation. The wine was matured in oak for 21 rather than the usual 23 months in order to retain more fruit freshness.

Keith sees this Moss Wood Pinot as having strawberry, cherry and quince jelly flavours, some spiciness from the

addition of 5% whole bunches to the ferment, and spicy charry oak character. He feels that the palate has more delicacy than it has had for years - probably because it has 1% less alcohol than usual.



The **Moss Wood 2002 Pinot Noir** has strawberry and raspberry perfumes, is soft, round and gentle in the mouth with strawberry, red cherry and mulberry flavours and fine soft tannins. It is beautifully balanced, fine and delicate yet has intensity, richness and depth of flavour. It is enticing now but will develop further over the next fifteen years.

## review

**Jeff Collerson:**

**The Daily Telegraph 20/5/04**

**Moss Wood 2001 Pinot Noir**

This is the best pinot noir I've seen from this outstanding Margaret River-based cabernet sauvignon producer. Margaret River pinots can be fine dry reds but mostly lack real pinot noir character. The Moss Wood team persists with pinot, inspired by great French Burgundies. Improving fruit sun exposure and lowering yields combine to make this a cracker.

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## RATINGS: Moss Wood Pinot Noir

Vintage	Harvest Date	° Beaume	Yield (tonnes/ha)	Rating (out of 10)
2004	14 Feb	13.0	6.4	9
2003	11 Feb	12.7	4.8	10
2002	07 Feb	13.0	4.3	10
2001	16 Feb	13.7	10.0	9+
2000	28 Feb	14.0	11.4	8
1999	22 Feb	13.6	8.0	9
1998	13 Feb	13.6	8.1	9
1997	02 Mar	14.3	6.0	8+
1996	15 Feb	13.4	9.0	9
1995	14 Feb	13.6	9.2	9+
1994	01 Mar	13.5	11.0	9
1993	03 Mar	13.3	8.2	8
1992	28 Feb	13.5	8.8	8
1991	10 Mar	13.3	10.0	9
1990	16 Mar	13.4	8.5	9
1989	15 Mar	12.9	6.5	6
1988	10 Feb	13.1	6.0	8
1987	24 Feb	12.9	5.8	8
1986	24 Feb	13.3	5.8	10
1985	25 Feb	13.3	6.4	10
1984	16 Feb	12.9	5.7	6
1983	19 Feb	12.85	6.0	6

### Optimum Drinking

Pinot Noir as a variety ages really well in the bottle. In general we would expect our pinot noir wines to start to show their full potential at 7 years from their vintage and be giving their peak performances somewhere between 10 - 15 years.

#### Please note:

These comments are only accurate when the wine has been well cellared. In the interests of accuracy, only where we have reviewed a wine during the year, will we provide optimum drinking years.



## The Moss Wood 2004 Semillon

The 2004 harvest for semillon was a very good one from the Moss Wood vineyard. The crop was slightly above average in size - a product of favourable conditions during flowering, good rainfall at the right times in winter and spring and mild conditions during the growing season. The semillon was first picked on the 16th of March (at 13.4° beaume) and, as it had not been crop thinned, yielded 13 tonnes per hectare.

In the past, there has been little pressing of whole bunches with semillon because the press was not big enough to put through sufficient volumes. This year, we spent more time on the early stage of the pressing process and compensated for this by speeding it up as draining became more efficient. As a consequence, we destemmed and pressed half the semillon and put the balance through as whole bunches. After that all went as usual at Moss Wood. The juice was settled with enzymes for 48 hours, racked into stainless steel for fermentation along with 2% solids. Fermentation by pure yeast culture took place, with stirring every day until it was complete and the wine was dry. After that it was stirred once a week until the wine was ready for fining, filtering and bottling.

Keith believes that the Moss Wood 2004 Semillon has vibrant aromatics with citrus and fig notes and good weight. He saw the 2003 as having ripe fig and honey characters and believes the 2004 is closer to the 2002 with its citrus, lemon sherbet characters and zippy aromatics. However, he finds the 2004 riper, with more supple fruit flavours than the 2002.

The **Moss Wood 2004 Semillon** has delightful aromatics dominated at present by zesty grassy, herby aromas while the palate is refreshingly dry, with taut lemon zest flavours complexed by some figgy, grassy notes. It has impressive weight and power, a tight structure and a dry, firm grip on the finish. Those who like the style will enjoy it now, especially with some spicy Asian dishes. However, it is made for the long haul and will appear more approachable even with short-term cellaring.

## review

### Winestate:

**Issue 194, September/October 2004**

**Moss Wood Margaret River Semillon 2003 ★★★★★**

Crisp green-apple characters on the nose, with a flinty, talcum powder edge. Obvious sweetness on the mid-palate but the tight, zesty mineral acid takes care of it.

### Ray Jordan:

**Good Drops - Fresh 18 March 2004**

**Moss Wood Semillon 2003**

Beautiful fragrant lemon scents merge with a faint smoky mineral background. Little traces of herbal character add to the complexity on the nose and palate. This is a fresh and vibrant wine with stacks of typical flavour that runs deep and long. Will continue to improve in the bottle. 90/100. Drink: Now to 2012. Food: Scallops with chilli and coriander. ★★★★★



# The Montgomery Brothers Vineyard

Max and Rita Montgomery's Montgomery Brothers vineyard is one kilometre north of Ellensbrook Road, about 10 km due south of Moss Wood. It is planted on north facing, gravelly loam slopes. Moss Wood have been consulting

for the Montgomery's since they planted the vineyard. When Hay Shed Hill were unable to buy the first crop in 2002, Keith offered to make the wine - and pay for it if he could find a buyer or give the Montgomery's the wine if that were not possible.

The Sydney super chef, Tetsuya Wakuda, long an admirer of Moss Wood, had been looking to source a Cabernet to sell under his own label. He jumped at an opportunity to buy a

batch of the Montgomery Brothers Cabernet to sell at his restaurant under his classy label, "Cabernet Sauvignon - made for Tetsuya's by Moss Wood". Tetsuya will buy another tranche of the 2003 for the restaurant.

Keith and Clare have been delighted with the progress of the Ribbon Vale vineyard and so have accepted that, because of the improved quality, the Ribbon Vale wines need to be moved to a higher price point. However, the Ribbon Vale vineyard wines have been selling well in restaurants - especially by the glass - and so the distributors made it clear that Moss Wood needed something at this price point.

The solution has been to reposition the Amy's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon to that lower price point. It was realised that once that was done, the wine would sell too quickly - and so greater quantities would be needed. It was decided to blend cabernet from the Glenmore vineyard with that from the Montgomery Brothers vineyard and produce "The Amy's Blend". The decision to call it "The Amy's Blend" in 2003 has led to some confusion - with some consumers believing it is a blend of varieties (not vineyards) and so it will be the "Amy's" from 2004. At present, Glenmore contributes two-thirds of the blend. As the Montgomery Brothers vineyard matures, it will make a greater contribution to future "Amy's" vintages.

## RATINGS: Moss Wood Semillon

Vintage	Harvest Date	° Beaume	Yield (tonnes/ha)	Rating (out of 10)
2004	16 Mar	13.4	13.0	8+
2003	12 Mar	12.9	9.2	9
2002	15 Mar	13.7	8.3	10
2001	03 Mar	12.9	12.8	9
2000	06 Mar	13.5	10.3	9
1999	16 Mar	13.1	11.2	9
1998	08 Mar	13.7	12.7	9
1997	12 Mar	13.9	9.6	9
1996	07 Mar	12.9	14.9	9
1995	23 Feb	13.2	10.8	8+
1994	10 Mar	12.9	11.0	9
1993	05 Mar	12.7	9.0	10
1992	03 Mar	12.5	13.9	8
1991	26 Mar	11.9	19.0	6
1990	21 Mar	12.4	13.0	8
1989	15 Mar	12.3	12.5	7
1988	18 Feb	12.1	9.6	7
1987	09 Mar	12.0	13.5	8
1986	28 Feb	12.4	9.1	7
1985	28 Feb	12.0	10.0	9
1984	05 Mar	12.2	12.4	7
1983	05 Mar	12.3	13.6	9

### Optimum Drinking

In general the Semillon shows fresh, fruity and lively characters up to 3 years of age. It tends to go into a sleepy dull stage between the age 3 - 5 years. Between 5 - 6 years it should start to pick up rich, honey, toasty characters. These characters are usually at their peak between 10 - 15 years and will remain enjoyable until at least 20 years old.

*Please note:*

These comments are only accurate when the wine has been well cellared. In the interests of accuracy, only where we have reviewed a wine during the year, will we provide optimum drinking years.

review

Greg Duncan Powell:

Label conscious  
29-30 May 2004

Moss Wood Margaret River  
Semillon 2003

You could easily be fooled into thinking this gorgeous semillon has been ever so slightly oaked, but it has never seen a stave. It's the regular stirring of the yeast lees that has given the lemon and granny smith flavours a bready, toasty, smoother flip side.



# Moss Wood 2003 “The Amy’s Blend” Cabernet Sauvignon

Keith says that the style of this wine will evolve with time: the 2003 “Amy’s” is not the final statement. The Glenmore component is true to its Yallingup origins with an elegant palate, refined structure and blueberry fruit notes. The Montgomery Brothers vineyard is somewhat in between the Margaret River vineyards to the south of the township which show a fruit profile in the region of tamarillo and the ripe, dark berry, cassis flavours of Wilyabrup. It shows redcurrants on the nose and has a breadth of red and dark berry fruit on the palate.

The same viticultural and winemaking principles apply to this wine as apply to every other Moss Wood wine. The grapes are monitored as the vines move close to full ripeness and are picked to achieve optimal flavour. There is about a week between picking on the two vineyards with the more northerly Glenmore, naturally, being first. In the winery, fruit from the two vineyards is processed in separate batches. As with the other Moss Wood reds, it is fermented in open tanks and hand plunged four times a day. After fermentation, it is left on skins and tasted to see that the tannins are balanced. At that point, they come off skins and are placed in barrel where they go through malolactic fermentation. After

both batches have been through malo, they are racked off and blended. They are then aged in French oak (25% new - less than the other cabernets) for twelve months.

With “The Amy’s Blend”, the team at Moss Wood are looking to retain more freshness, primary fruit and softness than in the Moss Wood or Ribbon Vale reds. To achieve this, the wine spends less time in barrels, but as a result has less tannin and complexity.

In years like 1981, 1986 and 1997, small crops can produce tannins that may be disjointed and too assertive. That has not been a problem in 2003. The vintage and the wines remind Keith of 1983 when there was a better balance between tannins and fruit weight than in more difficult years.

He sees the 2003 “Amy’s Blend” as having redcurrant, blueberry and dark berry flavours, soft, spicy oak and a supple palate with attractive sweet fruit ripeness. There are soft, balanced tannins and a touch of oak on the finish. While it’s a friendly easy drinking red, it’s quality should not be underestimated.

The Moss Wood 2003 “The Amy’s Blend” Cabernet Sauvignon is a delightful, approachable wine with fragrant red berry aromas, is soft with almost velvety texture, good mid-palate weight and quite firm but fine ripe tannins on the finish. It will drink well even in the short term, especially with classic meat dishes such as roast lamb or char-grilled sirloin steak, but can be cellared with confidence for up to five years.



## review

### Ray Jordan:

**Chill Factor - Fresh**  
**20 May 2004**

### Moss Wood Amy’s Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon 2002

This is quite atypically Moss Wood compared with the traditional style from the Metricup vineyard. The fruit comes from the vineyard of Moss Wood production manager Ian Bell. There’s a nice mix of integrated fruit and oak on the nose. On the palate this is more medium bodied with fine tannins and bay leaf characters dominant. It has classic cabernet structure with a slightly assertive finish. You could put this with some cheddar or parmesan cheese.



## The Moss Wood 2004 “Ribbon Vale Vineyard” Semillon Sauvignon Blanc

This was a good vintage for these varieties at the Ribbon Vale Vineyard. In spite of crop thinning, both yielded slightly above average. The warm year means that each variety has good weight and vibrant attractive aromatics. If pushed, Keith believes that the sauvignon blanc fared slightly better out of the two in 2004.

Although the Semillon Sauvignon Blanc is made to maximise immediate enjoyment of the wine - whereas the Semillon is built for structure and longevity - the approach in the Ribbon Vale vineyard to achieve this is every bit as rigorous as it is in the Moss Wood vineyard. To maintain concentration of flavour, one quarter of sauvignon blanc and one third of semillon was dropped from the vines. Amusingly, the vineyard still cropped at the level that staff had

estimated before thinning took place. They dread to think what might have happened if it hadn't been cut back.

The grapes were picked in two halves: the sauvignon blanc commenced on the 3rd of March when it was 12° beaume and the yield 12 tonnes / hectare; the semillon began on the 19th of March when it was 13.4° beaume and yielding 11.6 tonnes / hectare.

Keith believes that Josh Bahen relates better to this wine than he does himself and suggests that 2004 will prove a breakthrough vintage for Josh and the Moss Wood team. The sauvignon blanc provides fragrant aromatics while the ripe semillon fills out the palate. It has very up-front flavours with guava, passionfruit and a touch of green leaf from the sauvignon blanc and some fig

and lemon sherbet notes from the semillon. Compared to the very good 2002 - which came second in a large Australia-wide tasting of the blend by the Australian Gourmet Traveller WINE panel - Keith believes that it has better texture, longer flavours and is cleaner and fresher with no phenolics.

The Moss Wood 2004 “Ribbon Vale Vineyard” Semillon Sauvignon Blanc is delightfully fragrant, has tropical flavours of passionfruit, lychee and guava as well as grassy yet restrained herbal notes and a squeeze of lemon citrus. It is vibrant, juicy, pristine and finer than most expressions of this blend. Flavour builds in the glass before a finish that is refreshingly crisp with zippy acidity and an aftertaste that is dry and lingering.





## Gossip: comings and goings among the staff at Moss Wood

The trouble with the staff at Moss Wood is that they think they can do things just as well as the experts. The problem I have with that is that they seem perfectly capable of doing most things with aplomb. Take Amy Sobol, for instance. A perfectly capable newsletter writer asks for a little bit of information to include in the important news section. Instead, he gets witty lively copy from Amy that doesn't need his talents for it to spring to life. So there's a fair bit of Amy in what follows.

We have two new staff members in the office (yay!). Following the huge gap left by Emma Amos, **Leah Gould** has taken over the reception / front of house job (which includes taking heaps of the admin duties from Amy) as well as helping Jane look after visitors to the winery. Her level of patience and sense of humour have been refined by working for big name accountancy firms in Perth and London. Leah's parents own Deep Woods in the Yallingup area of Margaret River where her brothers work as winemaker and viticulturist.

Accounts Assistant, **Sue Henderson**, is leaving to have her second child. As Sue has decided to remain blissfully ignorant

of the youngster's gender, we don't know if Tarik will have a brother or sister. However, if Sue's size is any indication, he may well end up with both. She is vehement in asserting that the ultrasound only shows one baby, but we're still not sure. We are sure, however, that we will miss her warm and bubbly personality.

**Luana Dwyer**, who was born and bred at Karridale in the deep south of the Margaret River region, is currently being trained by Sue to take over from her. Luana brings a lively, bright personality and towering intellect, having recently received a Bachelor of Economics from the University of Western Australia. She is delighted to no longer be an impoverished student and excited to finally be in a position to afford her first car. She had hoped for a Holden EH, but is settling for her cousins grandfathers 1992 Mitsubishi Lancer hatchback. Luana is assisting with accounts as well as looking after our visitors.

Although we are not sure you need to know this, Leah and Luana are also being trained by Angie and Jane to operate the labelling equipment: a task that Amy notes remains driven by girl power.

Despite their already impressive qualifications, both girls had to go back to school to obtain their forklift licences.

Our other new permanent staffer is **Jarod Bawden**. He hails from South Australia and has completed a four year Horticulture apprenticeship - half in Adelaide and half on the north coast of NSW. Jarod, who has been in the Margaret River area for around four years, has previously helped with horticulture and viticulture at Moss Wood on a casual basis. It is this interest in working in the great outdoors, and of course his amiable nature, that sees him joining the Moss Wood viticultural team on a permanent basis. He has just completed a course in Perth that now promotes him to the position of Moss Wood Chief Fire Warden.

Ed Bugden, our leading cellar hand, also completed the course and becomes Moss Wood's Deputy Fire Warden.

Amy finishes, as she began, by commenting "We're expecting to see them in their white hats training the rest of us mere mortals in pyrotechnics avoidance very soon!"