



MOSS WOOD
MARGARET RIVER
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

LATE SPRING NEWS

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The Moss Wood Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir Project

Pinot Noir has been an important part of the Moss Wood portfolio since the 1977 vintage. Yet, for many, it is something of a curiosity that we make this wine when Margaret River, in general and Moss Wood, in particular, are so highly regarded for Cabernet Sauvignon-based wines.

The explanation is simple. In terms of both its viticulture and oenology, Pinot Noir is one of the most interesting and beguiling of wines to make, and drink. While all varieties will exhibit responses to regional and seasonal differences or management inputs, Pinot Noir is extremely sensitive and will respond to the very smallest tweak. So, while we love Cabernet Sauvignon for its robust consistency, we can't help but be captivated and challenged by Pinot Noir. Furthermore, over more than 30 years, the Moss Wood vineyard has proved itself capable of producing wines that cellar for at least 20 years and develop a fine and complex bottle bouquet,

something of which we are immensely proud.

Given our knowledge of, and experience with, Pinot Noir, we have always had a yearning to try our skills on Pinot Noir wines from more highly regarded regions. Indeed, during the 1990's we produced wines from the Pemberton region in Western Australia and this gave us confidence to look even further afield for sources of good fruit. In Australia, the most likely locations are found in southern Victoria and Tasmania, where regions like Geelong, Macedon, Gippsland, Yarra Valley, Coal River Valley and Tamar Valley have numerous outstanding producers. Each of these places has regional characteristics that allow them to produce Pinot Noir styles of high quality. However, we have been consistently impressed with the wines from the Mornington Peninsula and it is from there we have chosen to source grapes.

Of course, it is not possible to give a brief summary of the benefits the region offers but there are some important reasons behind our choice. Curiously the area has much in common with Margaret River and perhaps this shows some inherent bias in our choice. Both regions share a maritime climate but instead of being surrounded on three sides by the Indian Ocean, Mornington is moderated by Port Phillip and Westernport Bays and Bass Strait. Similarly, both regions have rolling hills and therefore a topography that produces subtle but significant changes in aspect and soil type. These result in interesting variations in wine style. There is, however, a key difference - the temperature. Moss Wood at around 34 degrees south latitude is warm enough to ripen Cabernet Sauvignon, whereas Dromana, at around 38 degrees is only warm enough to ripen Pinot Noir.

Within the region, there is quite broad a range of wine styles depending on where

the vineyards are situated but importantly, all the Mornington Peninsula wines display fruit aromas that can be described as classical Pinot Noir, with perhaps a leaning to its finer, spicier spectrum.

Our grapes are sourced from a location near the town of Dromana on the lower slopes below Red Hill. The vineyard is managed according to our Moss Wood specifications, although some of the techniques are modified to meet the requirements of the different region.



Although disease controls are similar, the canopy management system is slightly different. The vines have lower vigour and are trained using simple vertical shoot positioning, rather than the Scott Henry system we use at Moss Wood. We also use more aggressive leaf removal at Margaret River because the risk of sunburn is greater in Mornington.

Winemaking is also carried out in Mornington, so the wine is grown, vintage and bottled in the region. Production is carefully specified and is virtually identical to the technique we use for Moss Wood Margaret River Pinot Noir. Clare and Keith visit the region on a regular basis to review progress and are always on hand to oversee the key stages.



2008 - The First Vintage

Growing Season

Since there are roughly 3000 kilometres separating them, it probably comes as no surprise that the growing seasons can be quite different in Mornington Peninsula compared to Margaret River. Although this is our first foray into making wine in Victoria, we've had some insight into this over the years. Collectors of wine will be familiar with the fact that the great vintages on the eastern seaboard do not necessarily coincide with the great years for those of us producing wine on the west coast.

When looking at the coincidence of high quality vintages, the 1990 is perhaps the greatest of them all, when both sides of the country produced some sensational wines. Of the difficult years, we need to look no further than 1989, when both sides of the country had to struggle through a wet and generally disappointing season. For the other years where one side was good and the other not so good, perhaps the best examples are 1998 and 2009. During the former, most eastern seaboard regions produced some of their very best wines but Western Australian growers struggled with rain. On the other hand, the latter season was very exciting for the Sandgropers

but problematic, to say the least, for South Australians and Victorians, in particular. So we approached our first vintage in what for us is a new region with considerable excitement about what the season may hold.

In the early stages, the Mornington Peninsula season was following a typically average timeline, if perhaps slightly early. Growing conditions were very favourable with no disease problems and although there were some cold nights in the late spring, the region did not suffer any frosts. Flowering went through in good conditions and reached its mid-point on 21st November. For curiosity's sake, readers may be interested that Margaret River Pinot Noir went through the same stage 10 days earlier. Bunch sizes were good and yields were expected to be at least average. Late spring rains also meant the vines had plenty of soil moisture.

Through the summer, typically mild to warm conditions prevailed and by early February the vines were making slow but steady progress and expectations continued for a mid-March harvest. Once the fruit began to change colour the birds became a threat but damage was limited by the application of nets.

By this stage we had noticed a physical difference in the Mornington fruit because its seeds were ripening more slowly than in Margaret River.

At Moss Wood the seeds progress quite quickly from soft and green to crunchy and brown but in Mornington they go through an intermediate stage of being soft and white. This leads to a distinct difference in the impact of the tannins because during this stage the seeds taste distinctly of coconut and display quite assertive and drying phenolics. These gradually changed to brown and crunchy as the season progressed but left us with the impression that seed ripeness is a slow process and we kept a close eye on it.

At the beginning of March, the temperatures began to rise and followers of motorsport will remember the Australian Grand Prix was held in extremely warm conditions. At the southern end of Port Phillip Bay the Mornington Peninsula was enjoying the heat and the vineyards picked up their ripening rates, bringing picking dates forward by a week or more. In the end, when picked on 8th March the fruit had taken 108 days from flowering to ripen. By comparison, the Margaret River Pinot Noir took 94 days and was picked on 13th February.

As expected, the good flowering conditions resulted in very reasonable yields. The 114 clone cropped at 3.7 kilograms per vine and the 115 clone was slightly higher at 4.34. This translated to 8.23 and 9.64 tonnes per hectare, respectively. Margaret River Pinot Noir, after crop thinning, produced

2.79 kilograms per vine or 4.63 tonnes per hectare. The numbers are not directly comparable because our home vineyard is planted with 1658 vines per hectare whereas the Mornington vineyard has 2222.

Production Notes

Harvest dates:

Clone 114 –

8th March

Clone 115 –

8th March

Harvest Ripeness

Clone 114 – 13.2 Baume

Clone 115 –

12.7 Baume

Given our many years of experience in producing Pinot Noir, we were reasonably confident about the technique we should employ in Mornington. We discussed possible variations but in the end used the same specifications we use to make the Margaret River wine.

That said, there are some significant differences and they, in turn, are driven by the differences in climate and vineyard site. So our biggest focus was in the vineyard. At Mornington, the evolution of the fruit flavours proceeds relatively slowly and so patience was required as we waited for the greener fruit notes to be lost. This also meant that we had to be flexible about the harvest ripeness and while we set a preferred Baume for picking, we were mindful of the need to change.



Our first concern was slower rate of seed maturity mentioned earlier and we watched with interest as they gradually became crunchy at around 12 Baume. Interestingly, their flavor was still more like coconut than coffee bean.

We also monitored the profile of fruit aromas. In the early stages there is a distinctly fresh herb character resembling coriander and bay leaves and which is not particularly attractive. This progresses into more dried herbs, similar to cumin and sits quite nicely with the cinnamon-like spices that appear later. The berry-like aromas commence as a delicate red fruit like strawberry and progress through quince jelly into cherries, plums and wild berry jubes. Our plan required us to pick after the green herbs have

been lost but before the berry fruits become confectionery, with the associated loss of acidity and freshness.

In 2008, these various pieces of the jigsaw puzzle began to fall into place once ripeness passed 12 Baume and eventually we settled for a pick at approximately 13. The fruit was then hand harvested and destemmed into both open and closed fermenters. The choice of the closed option gave us a chance to look at the impact on wine style although this has since been discontinued with the 2009. In both fermenter types, the must was chilled and held for cold soaking for 72 hours then they were allowed to warm up and seeded with pure yeast culture. Fermentations were carried out at higher temperatures, with a maximum set at 30C

and open tanks were hand plunged up to four times per day and closed tanks gently pumped over twice per day. Once ferment was completed, the different batches were tasted each day to monitor tannin balance and once this was achieved the wines were pressed and racked to stainless steel. After settling they were then racked off gross lees and into barrel, where they completed the malolactic fermentation. They were then racked and adjusted and the two clones were blended for the first time and then the finished wine was returned to barrel.

All the barrels were French oak barriques and 40% were new. We used the opportunity to trial a range of coopers, based on our experience at Moss Wood, with the intention of fine tuning our choices for future

Mornington wines as the impact of each one became clear. At the end of May 2009 the wine was racked from barrel and fining trials were carried. We trialed various agents, none of which added improvement, so the wine was left unfinned. It was then sterile filtered and bottled on 16th June 2009.

Tasting Notes

Colour and condition: medium to deep ruby hue, in bright condition

Nose: a complex and vibrant display of scented, almost floral notes. The fruit aromas are of fresh strawberry and strawberry jam, with hints of cherry and plum and these combine with smells from the garden of herb, rhubarb and earth. The oak barrels have imparted a background of light toast and char which adds to the wines scented lift.

Palate: there are initial flavours of strawberry and cherry that fill the front and middle palate. The impression is one of vibrancy as they sit over medium to full

body and then merge with earthy notes on the finish. The tannins are firm but balanced giving a smooth texture and the finish is completed by some sweet, toasty oak notes. We hope we have been able to capture the classical and sought after Pinot Noir trait intensity without heaviness.

Cellaring Notes

In the short term, this wine is all about its fruit depth and drinkability and is very attractive now. However, we are excited about its ageing prospects and encourage anyone with the opportunity to cellar the wine, to do so. The composition and flavor complexity suggest to us the wine will develop further complex bottle bouquet for at least the next five years and our expectation is that it should cellar for at least a further five years after that. Please be assured that since this is our first vintage with this wine, we are being very conservative about these recommendations.

Bulletin Board

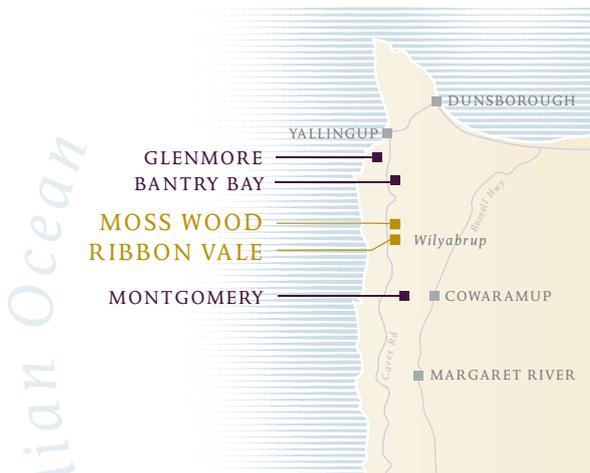
Welcome to Angie and Jarod's new baby Lucy

Lucy Bawden was born at 2.20pm on Friday the 4th of September, 2009. She weighed 3.68 kgs and was 48cm long.

Angie is loving being a Mum second time round, she says, "you know little tricks that it took you months to figure out the first time!" Lucy is eating and sleeping well, too which is always good. Pia isn't that keen on sharing her Mums time, but she is getting used to it.



Lucy Bawden



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