



MOSS WOOD
MARGARET RIVER
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Moss Wood Ribbon Vale Vineyard 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot and Merlot



Vintage Notes

In the Moss Wood viticultural history, there has never been a run of 4 great years, such as we have had from 2008 to 2011. The level of quality has provided an embarrassment of riches, but interestingly enough, while all are of a high standard, each one has its own individual style. Of the foursome, the one to capture the purist's attention is the 2009.

As with all of them, Mother Nature provided just about everything a non-irrigated vineyard could need. Sufficient rainfall during the Spring and Autumn to ensure at least moderate growth and yield, and plenty of warm but not hot days, to provide consistent ripening.

It must be said the Spring had its ups and downs with some bouts of heavy rain and occasional hail. This is reflected in the yields, which were lower than expected. Cabernet Sauvignon cropped at 6.04 tonnes per hectare, down by 22%; Merlot yielded

7.74 tonnes per hectare, down by 11%; Cabernet Franc produced 6.80 tonnes per hectare, down by 26%. We weren't surprised when a check of bunch weights revealed these were down across the 3 varieties. Grapevines are resilient against many things but hail is not one of them.

These cooler conditions were also reflected in later than average flowering dates; although across the 3 varieties the delay was only small, with Merlot the latest at 6 days.

As with all things viticultural, the Summer conditions, described above, produced differing ripening results across the varieties. Cabernet Sauvignon was picked on 29th March, which is one day earlier than average and it had taken 117 days to go from flowering to harvest, 3 days faster than average. The median harvest date for Merlot was 28th March but this was 10 days later than average and the period from flowering to harvest was 121 days, 4 days longer than average.

Cabernet Franc was picked 4 days earlier than average, on 10th March and its period from flowering to harvest was 111 days, one week faster than usual. For Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, the consistent warmth of the summer and small crop allowed them catch up but Merlot being Merlot; it did the opposite and slowed during ripening. Having been the slowest to flower, it then didn't make up any time over the Summer. Perhaps its relatively larger crop was a factor.

Despite these nuances of the season, all varieties reached full ripeness for sugar, flavours and tannins. The consistent warmth but with an absence of extreme heat spikes, meant they all made steady progress and we had time to watch and wait and, hopefully, take each one at optimum maturity. For completeness sake, the picking ripeness of Cabernet Sauvignon was 13.4° Baume, very slightly behind its average of 13.6. Merlot came in at exactly average, at 13.2° Baume and Cabernet Franc finished at 12.6° Baume, quite a bit earlier than its average of 13.5. It can be seen from this last figure and the discussion above, about time elapsed from flowering to harvest, there was something about 2009 that promoted good early flavours in the Cabernet Franc compared to other years.

Production Notes

Median Harvest Dates:

Cabernet Sauvignon -
29th March, 2009

Merlot -
28th March, 2009

Cabernet Franc -
10th March, 2009

Harvest Ripeness:

Cabernet Sauvignon –
13.4° Baume

Merlot –
13.1° Baume

Cabernet Franc –
13.2° Baume

As with all our wines, the fruit was hand-picked. It was then delivered to the winery and destemmed into small, open, stainless steel fermenters. Fermentations were initiated using pure yeast cultures and then monitored and maintained at a maximum temperature of 28°C. All batches were hand plunged up to four times per day and was tasted daily to confirm tannin balance. The timing of pressing followed our usual policy of leaving each batch on skins until the best balance had been achieved. With Cabernet Sauvignon this was 20 days, for Merlot, 14 days and for Cabernet Franc, 11 days.

Once pressed, each wine was allowed to settle for a week and was then racked into barrel. After malolactic fermentation took place the wines were racked back to stainless steel tanks, adjusted for acidity then returned to barrel, where they stayed until October 2009.



At this stage, a series of tasting trials were done to decide on the best blend for the two “finished” wines. The Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot combination looked best with 59% Cabernet Sauvignon, 33% Merlot and 8% Cabernet Franc. The Merlot looked best with 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc. These two blends were prepared and the wines were racked to barrel. All the barrels were French oak and for the Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot, 38% were new and for the Merlot, 35% were new.

In May 2011 both blends were racked from barrel to be prepared for bottling. In all, they had spent 25 months in oak. Fining trials were carried out and tasted and it was decided to fine the Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot with skim milk and the

Merlot with egg whites. The wines were then fined, filtered and finally bottled on 1st July, 2011.

Moss Wood Ribbon Vale Vineyard 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot

Tasting Notes

Colour and condition: deep brick red, in bright condition

Nose: Complex. It combines primary fruits of red currant, briar and toffee apple with a background of cedar, leather and earth.

Palate: There are initial generous, red fruit flavours across the front and mid palate; cedar, charry and spicy notes on the finish; tannins are firm but balanced and leave the wine with a long smooth finish.

Cellaring: this is a wine with appealing young fruit flavours and is relatively enjoyable now. However, it has the fruit depth and tannin structure to age successfully and compares very favourably, in terms of style, with 2001 vintage which at 10 years of age is still very youthful and only just beginning to show some bottle bouquet. On this basis, we would recommend cellaring the 2009 for at least 10 years but suggest that it will need to be at least 15 years old before it will show full bottle development.

Moss Wood Ribbon Vale Vineyard 2009 Merlot

Tasting Notes

Colour and condition: deep brick red, in bright condition

Nose: the initial impression is a vibrant nose, with lifted red and dark fruits of mulberry, red currant and blackberry, as well as a suggestion of aromatic spices. There are complex notes in the background of leather and earth.

Palate: this is full bodied, with generous and lively dark fruit flavours to the front and then a good finish combining toasty oak, tar, cedar and leather. Tannins are firm but do not interfere with the texture, so the wine has a long, smooth finish.

Cellaring: as with the Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot, this wine exhibits the enjoyable fruit flavours of the 2009 vintage and is quite drinkable now. However, also in common with its

sibling, there are strong similarities with the 2001 and once again, with this vintage as an example, we would recommend cellaring for at least 10 years.

Moss Wood 2010 Amy's

Vintage Notes

Discussion of vintage quality for 2010 presents something of a dilemma. Over the years, it has become something of a wine industry marketing joke that every vintage is a great vintage. At Moss Wood we have tried to develop a reputation for being as honest and objective as possible about the quality of all the vintages and how this has influenced wine styles. This means, of course, we hope it can be taken at face value when, once again, we sing the praises of yet another very high quality vintage.

Looking back over our history, we believe 2010 shares some commonality with 1991 and could be the best overall season that Margaret River has had, with above average crops and consistent and even warmth ripen them. We had regular, indeed often heavy, rain during Spring which fortunately didn't interrupt flowering and allowed the vines to set and then successfully carry the large crops. The exception was Merlot, whose flowering coincided with some significant rain events and around the region, its crops were affected to some degree. However, on balance, it was a bountiful harvest.

At the same time, consistent warmth allowed full ripeness of sugar, flavour and tannin, allowing us to make wines with strong varietal fruit characters and inherent balance. We have very high hopes for quality.

Production Notes

Median Harvest Dates and Ripeness:

Montgomery Brothers Malbec – 10th March, 2010; 13° Baume

Glenmore Malbec – 10th March, 2010; 13.7° Baume

Glenmore Merlot – 22nd March, 2010; 12.6° Baume

Montgomery Brothers Cabernet Sauvignon - 28th March, 2010; 13.4° Baume

Glenmore Cabernet

Sauvignon –

8th April, 2010; 13.4° Baume

Glenmore Petit Verdot –

12th April, 2010; 13.2° Baume

Bantry Bay Petit Verdot –

13th April, 2010; 13.8° Baume

Montgomery Brothers Petit

Verdot –

16th April, 2010; 12.3° Baume

The Glenmore and Montgomery Brothers vineyards were both handpicked.

However, we decided on a change of plan with the Bantry Bay Petit Verdot.

This vineyard supplies to a number of wineries and the only company to hand harvest there is Moss Wood.



We intended to continue this until a large rain-bearing weather pattern caused a re-think. We didn't have enough pickers to get the fruit in ahead of the rain so decided to use the situation to trial machine harvesting. The machine picked in 2 hours what would have taken our team 12 and it picked through the night, ahead of the rain, so the fruit arrived without dilution. This part of the experiment was a success but unfortunately, we had to spend a large amount of time picking out material other than grape, because there were a huge number of leaf stems and other woody parts of the vine in the bins. We won't be repeating the experiment for a while.

Once at the winery the fruit was destemmed into a combination of small, open fermenters and large, static fermenters. In the former, extraction was by hand plunging 4 times per day and in the latter, each batch was pumped over 3 times per day.

The skin contact time was managed according to taste and pressing was done when each batch had the best tannin balance. The various different batches spent between 10 and 20 days on skins.

After pressing, each batch was allowed to settle in stainless steel tank before being racked off gross lees and undergoing malolactic fermentation. After this was completed, all the various batches were blended and the final blend was returned to barrel. The final blend consisted of 50%

Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Petit Verdot, 12% Malbec and 5% Merlot.

Since our aim with this wine is to preserve the primary fruit characters, it spends only slightly longer than one year in barrel. The 2010 was racked and blended on 2nd July, 2011, fining trials were carried out and it was decided to treat the wine with egg whites. Once this was done, the wine was sterile filtered and bottled on 18th July, 2011.

Tasting Notes

Colour and condition: deep brick red, in bright condition

Nose: the wine immediately displays lifted scents of mulberry, blueberry, dark jubes, violets, menthol and cedar. It really stands out in the glass. In the background there are leather and earthy notes.

Palate: here the impression is of plump, soft dark fruit flavours – black currant, dark jubes and mulberry. There is full body and texture is

smooth, even with a firm tannin structure.

Cellaring: this wine is made with the intention of capturing the best of its youthful fruit characters so that it provides attractive early drinking. Hence, we recommend it for early drinking. However, the fruit depth and composition are such that it will develop additional complexity and softness over the next 5 years.

Hyatt Regency Perth, Wine Week

Moss Wood Inspirations tasting

On Saturday 20 August 2011, we had the privilege of conducting a tasting of rare and special wines at the Hyatt Regency, Perth. In seeking to show some of the inspirations for Moss Wood wine styles we very cheekily allowed ourselves

the opportunity to taste some outstanding wines and compare them to their Moss Wood equivalent vintages, both young and old. There were four brackets; Semillon, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon. By virtue of the rarity or these wine it was quite a small tasting and we thought it might be interesting to share the tasting proceedings with our mailing list customers.

Firstly, we discussed the Semillon wines and of course, from our point of view, that required us to refer to the inspiration of the Hunter Valley wines for the Moss Wood wine style. Semillon from the Hunter Valley is one of Australia's few unique wines styles. The region's leading producers, Brokenwood, Drayton's, Lindeman's, Mangan, McWilliams, Tulloch, Tyrell's, to name but a few, can lay claim to making some of this country's best and longest lived white wines.



It's probably no surprise that we have tried to build the best of the Hunter Valley wines into our Semillon style. Although we have experimented with barrel aging and lees stirring, our technique has copied the Hunter, by using clean, pure yeast fermentations and early bottling to retain pristine fruit aromas.

Simplicity of technique may give some insight into our enthusiasm for this variety. If quality was measurable, it would be easy to see that "pound for pound", Semillon punches way above its weight. It grows well in the vineyard, produces good crops and is processed quickly and easily in the winery. Its more highly fancied siblings require all sorts of mollycoddling but in the end, as an old wine, Semillon can easily match them.

The two regional styles diverge slightly as young wines because for the Hunter, this means bright citrus fruit characters, especially lemon and lime, with background notes of lanolin and a very crisp palate structure, with high acid and low alcohol, generally around 11% (v/v). On the other hand, in Margaret River, acidity tends to be slightly higher, meaning the harvest ripeness also tends to be higher because winemakers want more alcohol and body to improve balance of acidity on the palate. This means the citrus fruit notes are joined by Semillon's riper characters, like fig and honey.

However, with aging, there is convergence. Both styles develop interesting and complex bouquets with toasty, buttery, nutty and caramel characters coming to the fore after about 10 years cellaring. They also share the interesting trait of "adolescence", where in the middle years, say age 3 to 7, the wines can be subdued on the nose, having lost some of their primary fruit intensity but not having yet reached the age where the mature notes develop.

Once they've reached maturity, the Hunter Valley wines have proven themselves capable of cellaring beyond 20 years. When our first Semillons were released, we hoped they would offer the same but our recommendations were always conservative, suggesting cellaring for up to 10 years. Having been producing the style since 1977, we can now proudly claim that 20 years is achievable and encourage all who have room in their cellars to keep some Semillon for the long term.

To illustrate this we tasted through the Moss Wood 2005 Semillon, the Tyrell's 2005 Vat 1 Semillon, the Moss Wood 1997 Semillon, and the Tyrell's 1997 Vat 1 Semillon all showed well and all in attendance agreed that each wine was a great example of the style. The young wines were still very fresh, with lots of crisp citrus flavour, although there was the expected divergence in style between the regions. On the other hand, both older wines had developed

into classic Semillon. The colours were deep gold and the aromas a rich combination of citrus, butter and toast. On the palate, there was crisp acid in both but they were each beginning to round out and show nice sweetness. The Tyrell's, in particular, promised at least another 5 years cellaring – a truly great wine.

The next bracket was Chardonnay and the wines from which we drew inspiration. Moss Wood established its first Chardonnay vineyard in 1976, at a time when Australia commenced its love affair with the variety. Considering other noble French varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz had been in production for so long, the relatively late arrival of Chardonnay is surprising. It meant our now famous names were only just emerging and apart from Tyrell's, whose Vat 49 was the nation's forerunner in barrel fermented Chardonnay, names like Petaluma, Mount Mary, Leeuwin Estate, Cullen and Pierro were all still establishing themselves. Hence, our inspirations were largely from overseas and while some interesting wines were being made in California, the very best came from Burgundy. This is where we turned our attention.

The Cote D'Or produces a huge range of styles and it's not possible to generalize about villages, vineyards and producers. This diversity is one of the region's great attractions. However, our

tastings and visits gradually led us to conclude that of the three key areas, Chablis, Meursault and Puligny, the Moss Wood Chardonnay had most in common with the latter. Our wines do not have the flintiness or minerality of the former.

In essence, the technique of production for high quality Chardonnay is careful fermentation and extended aging in barrels, then bottling when the wine has achieved the best balance of fruit aroma and complexity. The complex notes are gained through a variety of techniques – wild yeast fermentation; types and amount of new oak; contact with lees; encouraging malolactic fermentation and so on. The extent to which these are used and the impact they have varies enormously between producers.

The primary fruit aromas of Chardonnay change with different ripeness. When picked early, there is a predominance of limes and grapefruit. As harvest gets later, they progress through nectarine, pear and peach to tropical notes like guava and passion fruit.

In Puligny, the wines tend to display some of the citrus notes but have a predominance of white-flesh stone fruit characters, often with lifted perfumes of honey suckle, blossoms and orange zest. Then, depending on the technique used by the producer, complexity will appear in the background as a combination of mushroom, roast nut, cheese, caramel, toast etc.

This is then presented on a palate where, almost invariably, the wines are medium to full body, with a firm structure combining high, but not intrusive acid, and some astringency. The effect is one where the bright fruit notes and complexity combine to give mouth-filling flavour and length, without the heaviness or oiliness which can be a problem in full flavoured white wines.

Although Chardonnays made in this way are already very complex, they will improve with cellaring. The bottle bouquet enhances the toasty, caramel and nutty notes and on the palate, the astringency and acidity soften and the bottle-developed flavours add length, giving a richer, sweeter mouth feel. In both Margaret River Chardonnay and White Burgundy, this takes around 10 years to evolve and the wines continue to improve at least until 20 years of age.

The wines tasted were Moss Wood 2009 Chardonnay, Domaine Leflaive 2008 Les Folatieres, Moss Wood 2001 Chardonnay and Domaine Leflaive 2001 Les Folatieres. It was very interesting how similar these wines were to each other and gratifying that we could see a definite stylistic link. The expected stone fruit characters were evident in both the young wines, with the Leflaive showing a distinct honey note in the background, while the Moss Wood showed off its roast nuts. The older pair was still very youthful, with mostly primary fruit in evidence,

although the toasty and buttery notes were just beginning to show. Both of them are still very much in their infancy and have at least another 5 years of cellaring to show their full bottle bouquet.

We then went on to Pinot Noir. It is fascinating to reflect on how the popularity of Pinot Noir wines has changed over the last 40 years. The variety is now very much in the mainstream but when Moss Wood Pinot Noir was planted in 1973; its appeal was limited to those few who were lucky enough to have been schooled in the mysteries of Burgundy. It also meant that production of the wine was limited to a dedicated group of producers, who treated it as something of a holy grail.

As a wine style, it is far removed from the classic big Aussie red. In the early days, the grape growing and winemaking techniques required to produce it, were viewed with suspicion and those who practiced the dark arts were considered fanatical and perhaps, deranged. All too often, the question would be asked, "Why do they bother?"

The thing is they bothered because, to a person, the fanatics had experienced the classic Pinot Noir moment, when suddenly the magic revealed itself and they were destined to be forever under its spell. Unfortunately, this brings with it complications because the variety is perhaps the most sensitive of all and responds quickly and often profoundly, to the nuances of the environment, the season

and techniques of production. As a result, if not managed correctly, it can be prone to major swings in quality. This has led English wine critics, in particular, to claim that one should choose Burgundy (read Pinot Noir) as one's mistress but choose Bordeaux (read Cabernet Sauvignon) as one's wife.

So, despite all this, we are fortunate that Bill and Sandra Pannell had the imagination and enthusiasm to include Pinot Noir in the vineyard at Moss Wood and were prepared to commit the time and effort to learning about the variety and how to produce it.

Pinot Noir continues to provoke strong opinions. Even in the current market, where the spread of consumers is way beyond the traditional Burgundy "freaks", the naysayers still abound. Except these days, the question is now, "Why do they bother in Margaret River?" With so much good Pinot Noir being made in Pemberton, or the Adelaide Hills, or southern Victoria and east coast Tasmania, perhaps there's some logic to the question. However, having looked closely at our Margaret River wine, we concluded it is worthy of comparison with these, and other regions, and over the years, we have sought to improve it against the benchmark of Red Burgundy.

Once again, it's not possible to generalize about the red wine style of this region because the variations between villages, vineyards and producers are myriad. In fact, the variety's

sensitivity means they are even greater than for Chardonnay. Perhaps Moss Wood has more in common with the wines of the south of the Cote de Beaune, like Pommard or Volnay but the influences spread right across the region. Despite all its different iterations, it is possible to indentify some key traits we see as being crucial in good Pinot Noir.

As the grapes ripen, a very significant range of aromas and flavours reveal themselves. Early on, there are soft, slightly indistinct red fruits accompanied by green herbs like coriander which are then replaced by dried herbs, like cumin. The red fruits gradually become more distinct, revealing strawberry-type notes and the spices become more scented and smoky, almost barbeque-like. As ripening continues, the fruits become darker, more cherry and plum, and other complexities emerge. These can be ethereal, like rose petals, or earthy, like mushrooms, soil and leather.

This array of smells replays as flavours across the palate, making it long and complex. At the same time, there is no heaviness to the structure, with astringency that is rarely aggressive and does not intrude on the smooth texture and rounded mouth feel.

Inherent complexity and balance in young Pinot Noirs makes them very attractive to drink early and many can be written off as too soft to benefit from aging. However, the variety develops a classic

bottle bouquet which builds the leather and earth notes and further integrates the astringency. Generally, the wines take around 10 years to show the benefit of cellaring, becoming gradually more complex with each passing year, achieving full complexity between 15 and 20 years old.

In this bracket were the Moss Wood 2008 Pinot Noir, Comte Armand 2008 Pommard Clos des Epeneaux, Moss Wood 2001 Pinot Noir and Comte George de Vogue 2000 Chambolle Musigny Premier Cru. We did see some commonality in the style between Moss Wood and the Clos des Epeneaux. Both showed dark berry fruit notes and earthy complexity, with the tannin structure slightly firmer in the Pommard. The older pair was also similar in style, although the Chambolle Musigny showed its class with lifted earthy and spicy fruit notes.

Finally we discussed our inspirations for Cabernet Sauvignon wines at Moss Wood. When Dr. John Gladstones first proposed Margaret River as a viticultural region, it was on the basis that its maritime climate shared similarities with Bordeaux and was therefore likely to be suitable for producing Cabernet Sauvignon-based wines. This prompted the early pioneers into action and soon enough people like Tom Cullity, Bill and Sandra Pannell and Kevin and Di Cullen had Cabernet Sauvignon vines in the ground. When the first

vintages were released in the early to mid 1970's, the results were encouraging, with the wines showing very good characters. History has since shown Dr. Gladstones was right.

The new producers sought styles against which they could judge themselves and since Bordeaux was (and remains) the pre-eminent Cabernet Sauvignon region in the world, the wines from the Medoc, in particular, were continually used as a benchmark. Australian inspiration, if slightly less significant, came primarily from Coonawarra, where the wines from Wynn's, Mildara, Brands and Redman were highly regarded. There were also new producers emerging there, like Bowen Estate. Finally, the other region that appeared to be developing in parallel with Margaret River was the Yarra Valley, where producers like Fergusons, St. Hubert's and the great Mount Mary made wines that captured people's attention.

If Medoc wines were the benchmark, one of the favourites was the famous second growth from Pauillac, Chateau Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande. From its simple classical label, to its generous (for a Medoc) wine style, it gave insight into not only how Cabernet Sauvignon could be made but also how it could be sold. The design inspiration eventually caused problems because after 30 years, Moss Wood was well enough known overseas to be appearing regularly with Pichon Lalande in wine

tastings and on retail shelves. The similarity of the labels produced often less than favourable comments and so the Moss Wood design was altered to make sure it was seen as individual in its own right and not a copy.

In the early days, the great vintages like 1959, 1961, 1966, 1975 and 1976 were well known but remained rare treats for Margaret River winemakers. However, Bordeaux went through something of a renaissance from 1978 onwards and the wines produced over the next 10 vintages were more widely available and were closely examined, especially 1982, 1983 and 1985.

Gradually the relationship, if we can call it that began to wane slightly – the ardour had cooled. With hindsight this seems obvious but we finally came to understand that Bordeaux produced Bordeaux wine and consumers wanted Margaret River wine from us. It was not that we thought any less of the Bordeaux growers but we realized the importance of capturing and highlighting the positive things that Cabernet Sauvignon produced in our vineyard.

This led to small but important changes, including the introduction of the different blending varieties to complement the backbone of Cabernet Sauvignon; a clearer understanding of the ripening and flavour development; evolution of winemaking technique to improve fruit depth and tannin balance.

The list goes on.

Although we are proud of our individuality, there are still some features in the Medoc wines, loosely referred to as the "Claret" characters, we want to retain in ours. Cabernet Sauvignon, just as we have seen with the other varieties, changes its aromas as the grapes ripen. Initially it shows general red berry notes, with a very distinct herbaecousness, similar to cut grass, capsicum or eucalypt. The aromas then progress through red and then dark fruits like red currant, mulberry and, when very ripe, plum. The perfumed notes change to violets, cedar and tar, the Claret characters and at their best, the Bordeaux wines show just about the perfect combination of these.

The cellaring potential of Bordeaux wine is legendary. The great Chateaux have proven themselves capable of making vintages that will keep for decades, so whether these wines should be aged is beyond doubt. However, it's worth examining how the wines change and what is appropriate as a minimum cellaring time, so the wines can be enjoyed with a reasonable amount of bottle-derived improvement. After all, very few of us are drinking our grandparents' cellars. Instead, most are buying wine now, with the hope we can retain a little of it for mature drinking.

As a general rule, Cabernet Sauvignon-based wines take at least 10 years to reveal their bottle bouquet, after

which steady improvement can be expected for a further decade. Beyond 20 years the accompanying changes are few, other than the gradual deterioration of bottles with poor corks. In these bottles, the colour will "brown" much faster and the fruit aromas are replaced by higher volatility on both the nose and palate. Under sound corks, the beneficial changes are an increase in the cedar, tar and leather notes, making the both the nose and the palate more complex. At the same time, softening of the tannins reduces the astringency, giving the wine a much sweeter, rounder mouth feel.

The Cabernet wines we tasted were Moss Wood 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon, Chateau Pichon Longueville, Comtesse

de Lalande 2007, Moss Wood 1996 Cabernet Sauvignon, Chateau Pichon Longueville, Comtesse de Lalande 1996. Both the young wines were typical of their vintage and region. Moss Wood showed the fruit concentration and tannin ripeness, so typical of 2008 in Margaret River. The Pichon Lalande had similar dark fruits but with more of Pauillac's complex earth and leather notes. The older wines had both developed some bottle bouquet, so there were delicious tarry and waxy notes appearing. However, each wine still retained clear and strong primary fruit aromas and flavours, suggesting they still have many years to go before full maturity.

3AW 693 News Talk 2010 Wine of the Year Awards

Wine commentary has something of a proud tradition, in that those who write or speak on the subject are, without exception, a ruggedly individual bunch and the breadth of opinion on wine and wine style is probably as diverse as any artistic pursuit. To digress for a brief moment, there are times, of course, when we don't necessarily agree with critical comment but it's one of the great things about our business that everyone's opinion is valid. No matter what other people may say, all tastes are individual and people like what they like.

People outside Melbourne may not be aware of long time wine enthusiast and commentator, Kim West, who presents for radio station 3AW on Saturday afternoons. The format is wide ranging and includes discussion about new releases, wine areas, talkback and so on. Kim tastes a huge number of wines each

year and discusses them at length for his radio audience, in a style all his own. He has also been known to call winemakers at ungodly hours on a Sunday morning, to debate wine issues and hold them to account on points of quality and style, as well as pay them much respected compliments.

Luckily for us, we now have proudly on display at Moss Wood, two prized awards, the 3AW 2010 Red Wine of the Year and the 3AW Best Cabernet Sauvignon of the Year, both given for the Moss Wood 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon. These were hand delivered by Kim on his recent visit to Wilyabrup for the Cullen's 40th birthday celebrations. For which they held an excellent party that we were lucky enough to attend and a weekend involving, amongst other things, a tastings of historic and outstanding Cullen wines, which was by all accounts also outstanding. Our congratulations go to the Cullen's on their forty great years and many thanks to Kim for our awards!

*Best regards,
Clare and Keith Mufford*



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MARGARET RIVER
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

926 Metricup Road, Wilyabrup WA 6284 PO Box 225, Cowaramup WA 6284
T +61 8 9755 6266 F +61 8 9755 6303 E mosswood@mosswood.com.au
www.mosswood.com.au