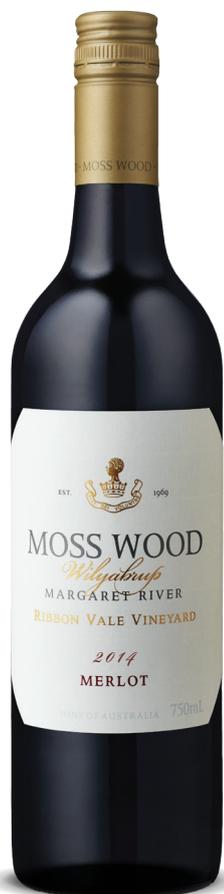




MOSS WOOD
Wilyabrup
MARGARET RIVER
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



MOSS WOOD 2014 RIBBON VALE MERLOT

TASTING NOTES

The colour is bright, deep brick red.

On the nose there are delicate aromas of cherries, roses and blackberries and layers of complexity made up of spice, cedar and tar.

There follows a juicy, firm palate with bright dark fruit notes of cherry and blackberry, sitting over a well-balanced structure. The acidity is high and tannins are concentrated and firm but the texture is silky smooth and gives the wine good length.

VINTAGE NOTES

Ripening Time from Flowering to Harvest: 2014 Ribbon Vale Merlot – 108 days / 2014 Ribbon Vale Cabernet Franc – 112 days

One thing we can say for certain about calendar year 2013 – it wasn't dry. By midnight on 31st December the rain gauge had recorded 1219mm, some 23% above average. To say the soil was at full capacity was an understatement and during the winter, some patches in the vineyard had become almost impassable.

Timing of rain is the key for us, and when flowering began in the beginning of November, things had eased and the Cabernet varieties commenced in excellent conditions. However, Mother Nature's mood changed during the last 2 weeks, delivering more wet weather and leaving us with below average yields. Cabernet Franc was down 22% and Merlot down 26%. Vines do not like rain on their flowers.

Beyond this, the summer was a delight, typified by consistent warmth without extreme heat. Cabernet Sauvignon had a positively glorious time of it, enjoying almost 1000 hours in its key temperature range of 18–28°C, when it needs around 850 to ripen fully. It did this with virtually no heat stress at all, receiving only 36 hours above 33°C. Indeed, the vineyard experienced only one day when the mercury hit 40°C and that for only 45 minutes.

The conditions were equally as good for Cabernet Franc and Merlot, if not better. Both need less heat for ripening than their big sister and so they luxuriated in abundant warmth. Similarly, the lack of extreme heat benefited them as well.

Add to this the fact that our shoot positioning, trimming and spray programs all worked a treat, so no disease or bird problems and you could say we had one of Margaret River's very finest seasons.

With small crops and good weather, the vintage was on us fairly quickly. Cabernet Franc came off on 4th March, 10 days early; Merlot on 7th March, 10 days early.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Having got half the job done, we then set about shepherding our high quality fruit carefully and safely to the bottle, applying all the usual Moss Wood techniques. Each variety was hand pick and all the fruit was destemmed into small fermenters and pumped over 3 times per day for extraction. Fermentation was by selected yeast strains and temperatures were set to a maximum of 30°C. Time on skins was 12 days for Cabernet Franc and 15 days for Merlot.

After pressing, each variety was racked to barrels, all 225 litre French oak. In December 2015 all batches were racked to stainless steel, tasted and the final blends assessed. The 2014 Ribbon Vale Merlot was deemed best at 89% Merlot and 11% Cabernet Franc. The blend was made up then returned to barrel for further aging. For the record, the Merlot received a total of 26 months in oak.

In June 2016 the wine was racked to stainless steel and fining trials were carried out. The balance was excellent, so the wine was left unfinned. It was then sterile filtered and bottled on 28th June, 2016.

CELLARING NOTES

It is certainly a drinkable young wine, with generous fruit characters but underneath sits the makings of a fine old wine. It will take at least 10 years aging for the bottle bouquet to play a major role and a further 10 years cellaring for it to reach full maturity. For those who enjoy drinking classic old wine, we recommend keeping it until 2034.

BLEND

89% Merlot
11% Cabernet Franc

MEDIAN HARVEST

Merlot – 07/03/2014
Cabernet Franc – 04/03/2014

BOTTLED

28/06/2016

RELEASED

26/08/2016

YIELD

Merlot – 6.01 t/ha
Cabernet Franc – 6.02 t/ha

BAUME

Merlot – 12.9°Be
Cabernet Franc – 12.4°Be

ALCOHOL

14%

VINTAGE RATING

10/10

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