



MOSS WOOD

Wilyabrup

MARGARET RIVER

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



BLEND

95% Cabernet Sauvignon
4% Cabernet Franc
1% Petit Verdot

ALCOHOL

14%

OAK MATURATION

28 months

HARVEST DATES

Cabernet Sauvignon: 16/03/2015
Cabernet Franc: 04/03/2015
Petit Verdo: 21/03/2015

BOTTLING DATE

14/11/2017

RELEASE DATE

16/03/2018

VINTAGE RATING

10/10

MOSS WOOD 2015 CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Vintage Notes

Way back in the 1970's, there were two vintages that came to define our Cabernet Sauvignon style, 1975 and 1976. As a consequence, we considered them almost like twins. They weren't identical and each one drew attention because of their quality and style – the older sibling classically elegant and refined, the younger one plump and generous. Much debate has surrounded which was best. In his article in the West Australian, "High Five", commemorating the 50th anniversary of the modern iteration of Margaret River, Ray Jordan noted the importance of them both but plumped for the '75, as do we.

The idea of twins has come up again as we reflect on the style and quality of our new release 2015 vintage except this time they're identical. We keep accurate records of vintage conditions and we have never had two seasons so alike as 2014 and 2015. The similarities between temperature, rainfall, season length and ripeness are remarkable. Down the track, it will be interesting to see who of the keen judges will be able to tell them apart in blind tastings.

As with human twins, their parents can usually tell them apart and we have some tips about the key things in the 2015 season which may help.

Most noteworthy is 2015 had near-perfect temperatures, with 1029 hours in the ideal range of 18 to 28°C. There was just enough extra warmth to really push Cabernet Sauvignon to ripe fruit notes, with the mercury spending 35 hours above 33°C and with a maximum for the season of 37.3°C on 3rd February, if you're interested.

We even got some useful rain in February, something we don't see too often, when 18mm fell in the first 2 weeks. The Cabernet varieties can benefit from that sort of top up, which allows them to finish the last 4 weeks of the season without excessive moisture stress.

The clue here is the '15 has a predominance of the floral and black fruit notes and a nicely ripened tannin, perhaps slightly better integrated than its older sibling.

Mother Nature never lets us have things all our own way. During Spring, while Cabernet Sauvignon was flowering we had 70mm rain and 10 nights when the temperature dropped below 8°C, both of which disrupt the process. The result is yield was down 41% to 4.31 tonnes/hectare. While disappointing, this was nothing compared to the Petit Verdot which was down a whopping 81% to 0.77 tonnes/ha. Which is, of course, the next clue, because the influence of this variety is barely perceivable in the finished wine, contributing only 0.92%.

Tasting Notes

- Colour and condition: Deep, brick red, in bright condition.
- Nose: Initially there is a real impact of bright, fresh fruit aromas, dominated by the black fruits like blackberry and cherry, something we normally associate with Cabernet Franc, plus, of course, blueberry, red currant and the perfumed notes of violets. There are soft oak notes in the background that combine with some tobacco and tarry notes that Cabernet Sauvignon builds with long term barrel age.
- Palate: This theme of lively fruit notes continues on the palate, where the generosity of the red and black fruit provides fleshy mouthfeel. This layer of red currant and blackberry flavours balances what is for Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon, quite a firm structure, with bright acidity and firm tannin. On the finish there is just a suggestion of toasty oak, tar and leather, giving the wine good length and persistence.

Production Notes

Each variety was handled in the same way. The fruit was hand-picked, destemmed, sorted and placed into small, open fermenters. Fermentation was carried out by multiple yeast strains and all batches were hand-plunged three times per day and temperatures were set to a maximum of 30°C.

The Cabernet Sauvignon batches were pressed after 16 days on skins, the Cabernet Franc after 13 days and the Petit Verdot after 14 days. All pressings were blended in straight away.

After malolactic fermentation all batches were racked to 228 litre French oak barrels, of which 14% were new.

On 29th November, 2016, all batches were racked and blended and the completed wine was returned to barrel, where it stayed until 6th November, 2017, when the final blend was assembled for bottling. The makeup is 95% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot.

Fining trials were then carried out but none of the treatments improved the wine, so it was not fined. It was then sterile filtered and bottled on 14th November, 2017.

Cellaring Notes

For those with a cellar or wine fridge, this wine is a worthy addition and will definitely match its Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon siblings for longevity. The fruit depth and structure will ensure the 2015 will follow the classic pathway. It will need 10 to 15 years cellaring to ensure the development of some bottle complexity but will reach full maturity between 20 and 25 years of age. After that, it should give at least 2 more decades of drinking pleasure.

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