

# Moss



# Wood

## Newsletter

Nº 15

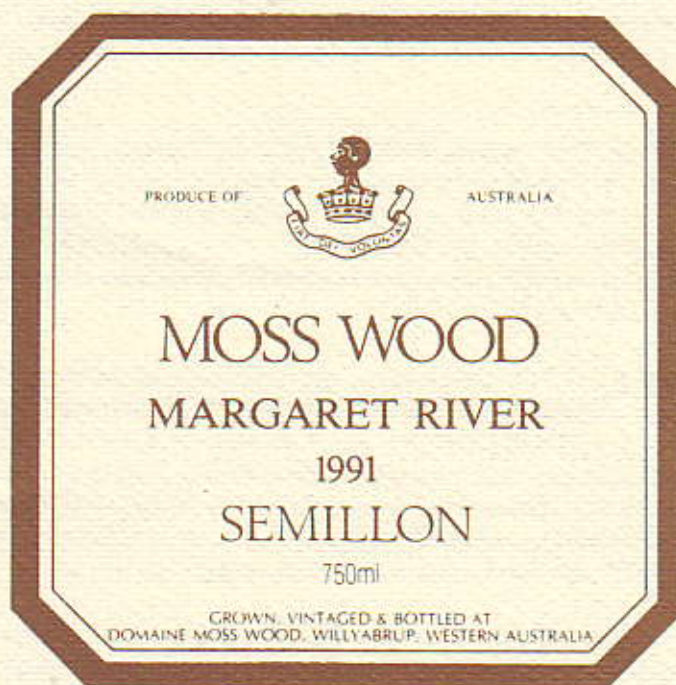
Spring, 1991

### New release: 1991 MossWood Semillon

The 1991 Moss Wood Semillon was the product of a long, dry growing season in which, unlike the previous vintage, little rain fell in January or February. There were some anxious moments with a few very hot days but, fortunately, these caused no damage to the grapes. The size of the harvest was one of the biggest ever, ten per cent above average, and yet the quality of the Semillon fruit was excellent.

As has been the case in recent years, the crop has been picked in three stages (green, ripe and extra ripe) to produce a wine of greater complexity. Some solids were retained in juice prior to fermentation to enhance the character of the wine on the nose and to encourage an attractive mouth feel. Atypically, this year's Semillon received four weeks lees contact after fermentation to give it greater complexity.

Apart from that, vinification followed the usual pattern, with the fermentation occurring at 18°C and taking two weeks to complete. The wine was fined and filtered after the lees contact and then bottled, this year using the services of Mike and Jan Davies' Portavin — a high quality, mobile bottling service which is proving popular in the region.



The 1991 wine is, in many ways, a typical Moss Wood Semillon. It has attractive, grassy, herbaceous overtones but its fruit aromas are predominantly ripe figs and honey. The nose seems to be more complex than usual with the lees character giving it the appearance of having been matured in cask. Keith sees it as being quite similar to Semillon from Graves as a result of the pre-fermentation contact with solids. On the palate, the wine has a fresh, crisp acidity, a suppleness and roundness of structure as well as a trace of tannin on the finish. It has excellent aging potential.

## Moss Wood Pinot Noir Vintage Chart

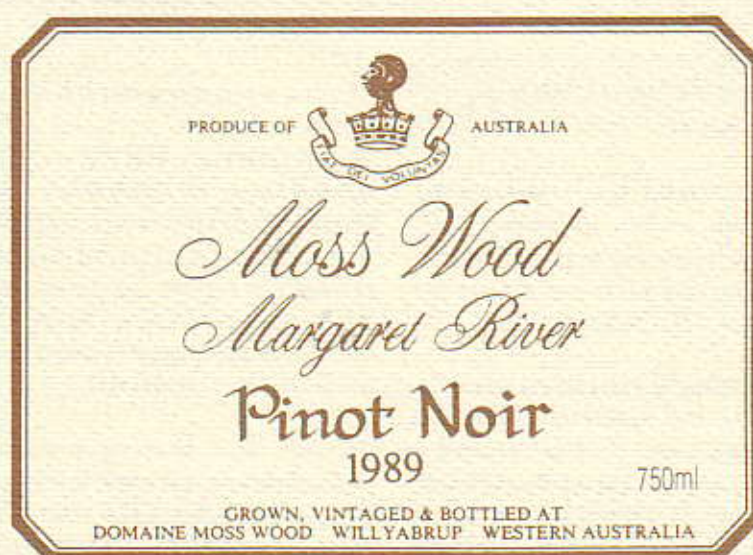
- 1979** The wine has developed classic Pinot Noir aromas, with hints of mushrooms and cherries on the palate. It is well-balanced, has good acid and reasonable length. With some bottles, the fruit may appear to be drying out but the best are still attractive drinking.
- 1980** The wine has a deep ruby colour, an intense nose with aromas of ripe berries and charry oak. On the palate, the 1980 Pinot has soft, rich, ripe berry fruit in harmony with its soft tannins and reasonable length.
- 1981** This outstanding Pinot Noir has a deep crimson colour, a superb nose with aromas of strawberries and cherries and nuances of charry oak, an excellent structure and good balance, a depth of rich, ripe berry flavour and attractive oak characters. It is a complex wine which is supple, has good weight and considerable length. The 1981 Moss Wood Pinot is the benchmark for this variety in the vineyard. It continues to drink beautifully.
- 1982** When young, this wine was forward, soft and spicy, yet it has developed well with age. The 1982 Pinot is still rich and soft with good length but has developed aged pinot characters which Keith finds reminiscent of corn beef and mushrooms but with an underlying cherry character.
- 1983** This is a soft, flavoursome wine which lacks the complexity of some of the other Moss Wood Pinots. On the nose it has ripe, cherry fruit and dusty oak aromas, while the palate is tightly structured yet balanced with its pleasant fruit and French oak characters in harmony.
- 1984** The wine has a light ruby colour, lovely strawberry-like aromas with nuances of intense charred oak. On the palate, it has strong, rich, full fruit flavours reminiscent of cherries and strawberries but with hints of fresh field mushrooms. The 1984 Pinot Noir has filled out over the past twelve months and seems to have developed more weight, and a fullness and roundness on the palate. It still has intense flavours, lovely balance and good length and is drinking well.
- 1985** The 1985 Moss Wood Pinot has a deep ruby colour, intense, spicy aromas with gamey overtones. It has concentrated, rich, strawberry and cherry characters on the palate with nuances of charry French oak. This is a soft, well-balanced and stylish wine with a pleasing mouth-feel, considerable complexity, depth of flavour and good length. While the wine is most attractive at present, it has still some time to go before it reaches its peak. This is one of the best vintages for Moss Wood Pinot Noir.
- 1986** The 1986 Pinot has a perfumed nose showing restrained strawberry character and some complex Burgundian features reminiscent of light oak, cherries and mushrooms. On the palate, it has good acid, a pleasing softness, excellent structure, clean, flavoursome Pinot fruit, powerful though not aggressive tannins, and a long finish. This is a luscious, seductive wine of considerable complexity. The tannins have softened in the past twelve months and the wine is attractive current drinking, especially with dishes such as lamb and veal. The 1986 Pinot has the structure, fruit and tannins to improve over the next ten years.
- 1987** This is a soft, fresh, flavoursome wine which is attractive current drinking. It has hints of strawberries, cherries and dusty oak on the nose, a supple mouth feel and delicate, spicy flavours and soft tannins on the palate. It is a well-structured, beautifully balanced wine with an appealing depth of flavour and good length. Like the 1982 and 1984 Pinots, its softness belies its ability to age and although it is in the lighter style of these years, it is gaining complexity with aging.
- 1988** The wine has a medium, ruby colour and shows powerful, fruity aromas with hints of cherries and plums integrated with dusty French oak. It has good acid, a depth of spicy, rich berry fruit and quite strong, fine-grained tannins. The 1988 Pinot is a supple, flavoursome wine which is well-balanced, elegant and has an attractive, lingering aftertaste. It is approachable now but will not reach its peak for three to four years and will cellar for ten years beyond that.

## New release: 1989 Moss Wood Pinot Noir

The 1989 vintage was a difficult one for Pinot Noir at Moss Wood, mainly because four inches of rain fell two weeks before harvest. Keith Mugford wanted to make a different wine from the soft, spicy yet fairly straightforward Pinot that was produced, in similar conditions, in 1982.

Firstly, he picked as late as possible to obtain maximum ripeness and the resultant wine had an amazing 14.2% alcohol. In order to maximize colour, to increase complexity (especially on the nose) and to enhance the structure on the palate, Keith wanted to emphasise the stalky character of the wine and to give it as much tannin as possible. Consequently, instead of including only 40%, Keith went for 75% uncrushed bunches in the fermentation vats. He left the wine as long as possible at 34°C rather than at 32°C, giving it fourteen rather than the more usual ten to eleven days to ferment.

This is an excellent wine from a difficult vintage but it lacks the style, elegance or complexity of recent vintages of Moss Wood Pinot — factors which have been taken into account in pricing the wine.



The 1989 Moss Wood Pinot Noir has a ripe, spicy nose with hints of cinnamon, mushrooms and lightly charred oak. It is a big, rich, wine which is soft, round, well-balanced and full of flavour, with an aftertaste which lingers. This is delicious current drinking and most will choose to consume it while young. Judging from experience with the 1982 Pinot and considering its high alcoholic content and method of fermentation, the wine should cellar for seven to ten years.

### Moss Wood Pinot Noir Information Chart

Vintage	Harvest Date	° Beaume	Yield (tonnes/ha)	Vintage Rating (out of 7)
1979	17 February	12.3	6.6	3
1980	29 February	14.2	3.5	3
1981	4 March	13.1	3.8	7
1982	13 March	12.95	8.2	4
1983	19 February	12.85	6.0	5
1984	16 February	12.9	5.7	5
1985	25 February	13.3	6.4	7
1986	24 February	13.3	5.8	6
1987	24 February	12.9	5.8	6
1988	10 February	13.1	6.0	6
1989	15 March	12.9	6.5	5
1990	16 March	13.4	8.5	6
1991	10 March	13.3	10.0	6

## WA Wine Exhibition 1991

The first WA Wine Exhibition held in Melbourne was a resounding success with tremendous response from both the trade and individuals. The fourth exhibition in Sydney was bigger and better than ever and seems to have become a regular date. Keith certainly enjoyed the opportunity to meet consumers and hear their reaction to his wines.

Almost thirty wineries from all regions of Western Australia presented their new releases to consumers and the trade in both centres. Congratulations and thanks go to the organising committee, the Wine Industry Association and the Western Australian Department of State Development and, in particular, to Ted Avery and Joan McGuren.

## For the sake of the winery

Ian 'Tinker' Bell, well-known for his prowess in the vineyard and around the winery is adding self-sacrifice to his list of attributes. He is spending two months in France picking and pressing grapes for the *Domaine de la Pousse d'Or* in Burgundy.

The connection between Moss Wood and *Pousse d'Or* is has been a long term one. Bill and Sandra Pannell established the connection when they purchased a share in the Volnay vineyard on selling Moss Wood. Keith and Clare Mugford and Gerard and Françoise Potel have visited each other's wineries and have found the exchange mutually beneficial. As well as this, Nicholas Potel has worked at Moss Wood during vintage.

No doubt Moss Wood will benefit in some ways from Tinker Bell's experience. It's hard work - but someone has to do it.

## Visiting the Winery

Because of the relatively small volume of wine produced, there is no cellar door facility provided for the general public and visits to the winery are by appointment only.

However, people on the mailing list or those interested in wine who wish to see over the winery and/or to taste the current Moss Wood releases, are welcome.

Contact Keith or Clare beforehand to make arrangements if you wish to visit.

## Books about the wines of the West

Mike Zekulich's new book *Wines and Wineries of the West*, published by St George Books, will be enjoyed by all with an interest in wine. This beautifully illustrated book offers the most comprehensive documentation of the history of the wine industry in Western Australia.

James Halliday's recently released *Wine Atlas of Australia and New Zealand* also provides much useful and up-to-date information about the wineries of Western Australia. He rates them in terms of the quality of their wines and their value for money.

## Becoming a Friend

There's even more reason for wine lovers living in Perth to become a friend of the Margaret River Grape Growers and Wine Producers Association. Friends were recently invited to a trade day held by the producers in Perth to exhibit their new releases. The encouraging turnout means that the Association is likely to repeat this invitation. For Friends, the trade day provided an ideal opportunity to talk to the winemakers and to taste the wide range of wines produced in the district.

Friends also receive a bi-monthly newsletter, invitations to tutored tastings and a calendar of events throughout the year. The Executive Officer will also assist Friends with visits to local vineyards and wineries.

To become a friend of the Margaret River Grape Growers and Wine Producers Association (annual subscription \$25), contact the Executive Officer:

Sue Bussau  
PO Box 204  
MARGARET RIVER WA 6285

Office address: 135 Bussell Highway, Margaret River.

Phone: (097) 586 772

## Fun Run

Casual readers of the results of the *Sunday Times* City to Surf Fun Run would have noticed that the 773rd competitor to cross the line in a time of 52.28 minutes was the speedy Moss Wood winemaker, Keith Mugford. He beat 4,343 other competitors home in the twelve kilometre race.