



MOSS WOOD

Newsletter

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Moss Wood 1992 Semillon

The growing season for the 1992 Semillon was excellent with minimal rainfall during the mild summer and perfect weather in the two weeks prior to vintage to ripen the grapes quickly. The Semillon was picked in three stages: one third of the crop was picked in early March, and the second third was picked after a wait of one week. Two inches of rain followed in two weeks and so there was a wait of three weeks while the grapes recovered from the rain. In the second week in April, the final third of the crop was picked. Some of this had been infected by botrytis which improved its concentration.

For the first time, the Moss Wood Semillon was given eight weeks' lees contact during fermentation as Keith wanted to fill out the bouquet and enhance the wine's mouthfeel. He blended in all pressings material to give this wine greater fullness of body and a good tannin structure.



This is a clean crisp, lively wine which abounds in all the fruit characters that we've come to expect from Margaret River Semillon: grapefruit, apple and apricot. It has some restrained herbaceous characters and even a touch of leafiness. This wine is a fresh, fragrant Margaret River Semillon with good balance, a pleasing mouthfeel and good length which will give much joy for its youthful characters over the next eighteen months to two years. After that time, the wine should begin its transformation towards a toasty, figgy, honied wine of mature years. It should cellar well for ten years or more.

Moss Wood Semillon Information Chart

Vintage	Harvest Date	° Beaume	Yield (tonnes/ha)	Vintage Rating (out of 7)
1983	5 March	12.3	13.6	6
1984	5 March	12.2	12.4	5
1985	28 February	12.0	10.0	7
1986	28 February	12.4	9.1	5
1987	9 March	12.0	13.5	5
1988	18 February	12.1	9.6	5
1989	15 March	12.3	12.5	5
1990	21 March	12.4	13.0	6
1991	26 March	11.9	19.0	4
1992	3 March	12.5	13.9	6

1990 Moss Wood Pinot Noir

The 1990 vintage was excellent for both red wines at Moss Wood. The combination of mild weather and steady summer rains produced some of the best fruit seen in the vineyard. Because of this Keith Mugford used forty per cent whole bunch inclusion during the crushing of the grapes. The wine received twelve months in barrel, with a high twenty per cent being placed in new oak. This has resulted in it having a strong tannin backbone and, therefore, being a wine for the future.

Although attractive now because of the fruit, this powerful Pinot with good texture and significant length should be an excellent cellaring proposition. Keith believes that this wine is more complex than the 1981 Pinot Noir without having its dominant fruit character. In his opinion, it will be difficult to make a better Pinot in this vineyard.



The 1990 Moss Wood Pinot has deep ruby colour and intense perfumed aromas of ripe cherries and spicy oak. On the palate, it has good acid, rich, concentrated berry fruit with hints of dusty oak and powerful tannins. This is an elegant wine which is supple, has a pleasant mouthfeel, is well-balanced, and has the structure to ensure long life.

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
1992	28 February	13.5	8.8	5

Moss Wood Pinot Noir Vintage Chart

- 1979** 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** 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** An outstanding Pinot Noir with deep crimson colour, an intense bouquet of strawberries, cherries and nuances of charry oak, excellent structure, good balance and concentrated rich, ripe berry characters. This is a complex wine which is supple, has a pleasing mouthfeel and considerable length. The 1981 Moss Wood Pinot continues to drink beautifully and is the benchmark for this variety in the vineyard.
- 1982** When young, this wine was forward, soft and spicy, yet it has developed well. The 1982 Pinot is still rich and soft with good length. It has, however, developed some interesting aged pinot characters with hints of earthiness, mushrooms and cherries.
- 1983** A soft, flavoursome wine with ripe, cherry fruit and dusty oak characters on the nose and the palate. While lacking the complexity of other Moss Wood Pinots, it is attractive and well-balanced.
- 1984** Intense ripe berry aromas with hints of spicy oak and the rich, concentrated flavours of cherries, strawberries with hints of mushrooms show the benefit of cellaring Moss Wood Pinots. The wine has good weight, an almost chewy texture, lovely balance and good length. Superb current drinking.
- 1985** Has a deep ruby colour, intense, spicy aromas with gamey overtones. The 1985 Pinot has concentrated, rich, strawberry and cherry characters on the palate with hints of charry French oak. It is a soft, well-balanced and stylish wine with a pleasing mouth-feel, considerable complexity, depth of flavour and good length. This is one of the best vintages for Moss Wood Pinot Noir and, while attractive at present, will not peak for some time.
- 1986** Has a perfumed nose with hints of strawberries, cherries and mushrooms while on the palate, the wine 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 1986 Pinot has the structure, fruit and tannins to improve over the next ten years.
- 1987** A soft, fresh, flavoursome wine which drinking well. 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, balanced wine with an appealing depth of flavour and good length. Although in the lighter style of the 1982 and 1984 wines, it is gaining complexity with age and is showing more developed Pinot characters.
- 1988** 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 about three years and will cellar for ten years beyond that.
- 1989** Has a ripe, spicy nose with hints of earthiness, mushrooms and lightly charred oak. A big, rich wine which is soft, round, well-balanced and flavoursome. It is not showing at its best at present and will reward three to four years cellaring.

Labelling

The wine industry in Western Australia is working hard to demonstrate its environmental concern by ensuring that all the packaging it uses is fully recyclable.

Attempts are being made at present to phase out the use of lead capsules which can taint slightly if the cork leaks and the neck of the bottle is not cleaned before pouring. In spite of some recent publicity, there is no danger of a person poisoning herself or himself. In fact if a person drank enough to be affected, alcohol poisoning would be more of a problem than lead.

Lead has been popular as it is soft, malleable and can be rolled or spun onto the neck of the bottle. Aluminum is harder to spin than lead and can develop sharp edges which may cut the person opening a bottle. Poly laminate is light enough to be spun but has more than one component and so there are doubts about its ability to be recycled. The stielvin capsule doesn't taint or leak and provides a high quality seal but has not been accepted by consumers. Tin is a soft metal which may be a satisfactory replacement for lead. Its major drawback is that it is twice as expensive as lead (30¢ rather than 15¢ per capsule).

All this means that there will be changes to the packaging of wine over the next few years as the industry adjusts to environmental concerns. As Kermit the Frog sang, 'It isn't easy being green'.

Tony Lord's Comment

Journalist Tony Lord included the 1989 Moss Wood Pinot Noir in a line up of a dozen Winter Reds for the *West Australian*. He commented,

Keith Mugford makes a pinot noir that has what a lot of others lack - flavour. The colour is good and strong for the variety. The aroma is a real pinot noir combination of earthiness, black cherries, hung game and mushrooms. The flavour is full, rich and soft. The acidity is there to make this wine a keeper.

WA Fine Wine Exhibition

This exhibition seems to have become an established part of the winelovers year with good attendances in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. One associated highlight was a dinner with Pierro and Plantagenet at Merrony's in Circular Quay. This classy restaurant was sold out for an excellent meal which paired the 1990 Moss Wood Pinot with a Cold Duck Liver Parfait, Fig and Prune Compote and the 1990 Moss Wood Cabernet with a Roast Sirloin with Eschallotes and Bone Marrow.

San Lorenzo

With Gary and Belinda Jones at the helm for just over two years, San Lorenzo has become one of Perth's very best restaurants. Chef, Gary Jones, has the flair and imagination to transform modern French cooking into a showcase for the best Western Australian produce. His Twice cooked Kervella Goat's Cheese Souffle is a triumph, as are the range of dishes featuring scallops, rabbit, marron, sardines, kangaroo and guinea fowl. Gary's Yorkshire accent can always be heard on the menu transforming dishes such as bubble and squeak, black pudding, pigs' ears and cheeks. Maitre d', Peter Flugge, is knowledgeable and helpful and the restaurant is popular for wine group dinners. Naturally Moss Wood features on the wine list at San Lorenzo. There's nothing like outstanding cuisine to bring out the best flavours in great wines.

The Art of Frederick McCubbin

Moss Wood Wines were proud to be one of the sponsors of the official opening of the Art of Frederick McCubbin at the Art Gallery of Western Australia. The McCubbin exhibition, which is currently touring Australia, is one of the most comprehensive displays of the work of this significant Australian artist ever put together.

Almost 800 people attended the gala opening by McCubbin's daughter, Kathleen Mangan, and enjoyed a sophisticated bush picnic under a giant marquee in the Art Gallery car park. It featured billy cans of soup, damper and the 1991 Moss Wood wood-matured Semillon, the 1991 Moss Wood Chardonnay and the 1990 Moss Wood Cabernet. A great evening. Of course, nature can be cruel and a winemaker's life is as harsh as the outback in McCubbin's time: Keith and Clare could not attend the opening because the exceptionally late harvest meant that it took place on the last day of vintage.

Beware!

Those living in or near Perth would have heard of the dreaded Ross River virus, a disease caused by mosquitos which inflicts those who catch it with fever, headaches, rashes and aching muscles and joints. Recently, Alix Mellor, the nine year old daughter of the designer of this newsletter informed her mother that she was terribly worried. When asked what the problem was, Alix explained that she was concerned lest she catch the Moss Wood virus.

Because we urge our clients to consume wine in moderation, we hope that few of you have been too severely afflicted by this virus.