

Moss



Wood

Newsletter

No. 2

Winter, 1987.

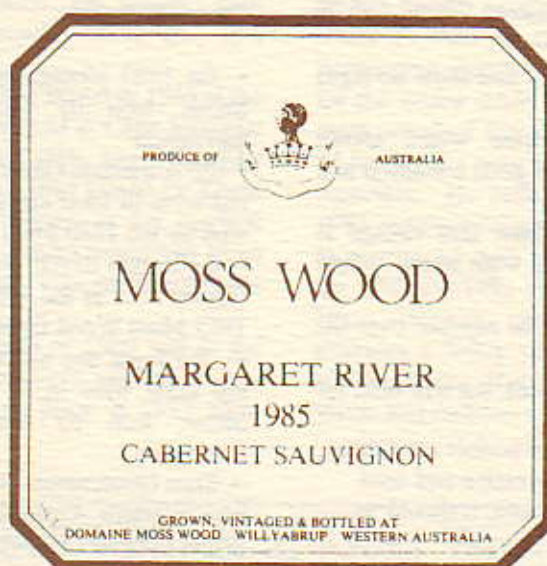
New Release: The 1985 Cabernet Sauvignon

The 1985 Cabernet Sauvignon

This wine was produced in a relatively mild growing season with good vine balance and soil moisture. The vines showed their ability to cope with difficult circumstances during a hot spell in February and have produced a wine that is both stylish and rich in fruit character.

Keith ranks the 1985 Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon, with the 1980 and 1983 Moss Wood Cabernets, as one of his favourites. It has finer fruit characters, is more restrained and is in a more classical style than the 1983. The wine has rich fruit fragrances like the 1980, but is tighter. In terms of its weight and tannin it is similar to the 1981 but has better fruit and consequently better length of flavour. It is more typical of the Moss Wood style, having a richer structure, than the fine, elegant 1984, yet has the early drinkability of the previous vintage.

The 1985 Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon has a powerful bouquet with rich, berry fruit in harmony with the excellent French oak. The palate has power, elegance and style, with the lovely fruit characters being in balance with soft tannins. The wine has excellent structure, great depth of flavour and tremendous length.



One group of experienced wine enthusiasts who tasted this wine blind thought it showed many of the qualities of the 1983 Bordeaux, and in particular the style of chateaux like Pichon Lalande, Leoville las Cases and Ducru Beaucaillou. They were most impressed by what they considered to be an extremely well-made, refined wine showing lovely fruit qualities and excellent use of oak. As well as this, they were impressed by the depth and length of flavour.

Perhaps the greatest compliment so far paid to this wine comes from Bill Pannell. In the rating system used in Robin Bradley's Australian Wine Vintages, the highest rating he had given for a previous Moss Wood Cabernet was 5 (for the 1975, 1980 and the 1983 vintages). When asked by Robin Bradley how he rated the 1985, he replied, without any hesitation, that he would have to give it 7 (out of 7).

The Moss Wood Cabernets

The method used to produce the Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon is one which has been refined over the years as the winemakers have learnt more about the vineyard and the region and as they have applied new techniques to making the wine. On each occasion, the vintage has determined exactly how the general principles outlined below are applied to making a specific wine.

The fermentation takes place in open, stainless steel tanks which keep the temperatures at about 25°C. The grapes are hand plunged between three to six times a day to encourage fermentation with the wine being left on the skins until there is an adequate extraction of colour and flavour. In most cases this lasts until fermentation is completed.

The wine is then pressed using a basket press which causes minimum damage to the skins and the seeds. This reduces the possibility of producing tannins which are extremely dominant or bitter. All pressings are then included in the blend to ensure the wine has sufficient tannin so that the wine has strength and the fruit backbone. At first, Keith Mugford was very careful about the volume of pressings that he used but it became increasingly clear that the use of the basket press and the excellent fruit produced in the vineyard would enable him to use virtually all the pressings in making this wine.

After pressing, the wine is racked (transferred) into stainless steel tanks without any fining or filtration and allowed to clarify naturally. It remains in tanks for four to five months during which time it usually undergoes its malolactic fermentation. This secondary (or malolactic) fermentation has been a feature of the Moss Wood Cabernets since 1982 and has led to more complex, classical wines being produced.

Following the clarification stage, the wine is racked into small barrells, 30% of which are new each year. It then spends about twelve months in French oak. Because each barrell gives a different flavour to the wine contained in it, it is necessary to blend the wines after their period in oak. After blending, the wine is filtered. At Moss Wood, Keith Mugford is careful not to fine too heavily or filter to such an extent that the fruit character of the wine is impaired.

Finally, the Cabernet Sauvignon is bottled and kept for six months so that the wine can recover from the relatively harsh bottling process before it is released.

The Cabernet Sauvignon Vintage Chart

1973 Drink up. There is now considerable variation: with some bottles being stunning and others disappointing.

1974 This stylish wine is still sound and show no signs of decline at this stage.

1975 This is a gentle aged wine which shows considerable complexity. It is still in good condition and can be cellared for a few more years.

1976 The rich, chocolatey wine from this vintage is still soft and ripe. It is a classic aged wine which should be drunk over the next few years.

1977 This is a big wine which can be enjoyed over the next five or six years.

1979 This wine is drinking at its peak but will hold for the next three to five years.

1980 If this wine has been cellared in perfect conditions, its tannins may be still a little too aggressive and need more time. If cellared in good conditions, it should be drinking close to its peak.

1980 (Reserve) This is a complex wine with enormous depth of flavour which is drinking superbly. However it will be five years before it reaches its peak.

1981 The 1981 will benefit from three or four years more cellaring.

1982 Drink and enjoy now or over the next three years.

1983 A huge wine which will benefit from ten years cellaring.

1984 A stylish wine that is developing beautifully. Although it should be at its best in three years or so, it is likely to hold that peak for quite some time.

The Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon Show Record

The most outstanding awards won by the Moss Wood Cabernets include:

- the 1983 Montgomery Trophy at the Royal Adelaide Show, won by the 1980 Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon
- the Australian Glass Manufacturers Trophy for the best red wine in local classes at the 1982 Perth Royal Show, won by the 1980 Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon
- the Robert Bryce Trophy for the best dry table wine in classes 8-11 at the 1983 Perth Royal Show, won by the 1982 Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon
- the Rural and Industries Bank Trophy for the best dry red table wine in all classes at the 1983 Perth Royal Show, won by the 1982 Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon
- State Government Insurance Office Awards in 1984 for best Western Australian wine, won by the 1983 Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon.

Margaret River cabernets are already rated among the best in Australia, showing distinctive, rich, ripe, berry fruit characters which often approach blackcurrents, overlaid with a grassy varietal lift. But the Moss Wood cabernets are outstanding...
Huon Hooke in the *Financial Review*.

Moss Wood Founder: Bill Pannell

Moss Wood played a major part in Bill Pannell's life for fifteen years. Now that he no longer is involved in the running of Moss Wood it seems appropriate to pay tribute to his achievements during that time.

Bill was first seduced by the charms of the grape at a birthday dinner for his wife Sandra in 1966 at the Parmelia Hotel in Perth. The wine that was responsible for changing the direction of Bill's life was the legendary 1962 Grange Hermitage - one of the most illustrious vintages of that great Australian red

Bill followed up this interest when he was based in Victoria with the Air Force in 1967 and 1968. He visited vineyards in that state, in South Australia, and in the Hunter Valley and talked to vignerons such as John Brown, Murray Tyrell and Max Lake. One person who was particularly influential was Ross Heinze of Seppelts at Drumborg. Ross had recently spent time in Western Australia and helped point Bill in the direction of Margaret River. As a result of all these discussions, he became convinced that it would be feasible to develop a small vineyard which he and Sandra could operate as a part-time venture. On his return to Western Australia, he spent six months searching for the ideal place to establish a vineyard.

Dr John Gladstones' paper outlining the suitability of the Margaret River region for making wine, and Ross Heinze's comments, focussed Bill's attention on this area. He located what he believed would be the ideal vineyard site at Willyabrup and persuaded the owner, Jack Guthrie, to sub-divide approximately 80 acres. This became Moss Wood.

Bill and Sandra Pannell started Moss Wood in 1969 at the same time as the Hohnens commenced at Cape Mentelle and just two years after Dr Tom Cullity began the first winery in the area at Vasse Felix. Bill joined Dr Kevin Cullen, of Cullens Willyabrup Wines, in his medical practice at Busselton and he and Sandra worked at Moss Wood in their "spare time" - there were no holidays for the first five years.

A nursery for cabernet was planted in 1969 and in the following year five acres of cabernet sauvignon was introduced. The first vintage took place in 1973 when

250 dozen bottles of Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon was produced. The Moss Wood Semillon was first produced in 1976, the Moss Wood Pinot Noir in 1977 and the Moss Wood Chardonnay in 1980.

Bill Pannell had been keen to plant chardonnay from the vineyard's early days but, as he was unable to obtain suitable cuttings of this variety in Western Australia, he decided to wait until these became available in 1977. Decisions such as this show Bill's refusal to compromise on quality. So too did his decision not to release a Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon in 1978 as he did not feel the wine was up to his very high standards.

Bill opted out of medicine in 1976 to work full-time in the vineyard and, during this year, discovered the strength of his attachment to medicine. From this time on, Bill realised that he would eventually scale down his involvement in the vineyard, that there was a limit to how long he could continue to do two full-time jobs properly.

The first major change came, in 1978, with the employment of Keith Mugford. Bill was able gradually to hand over more responsibility to Keith and eventually a partnership was formed between Bill and Sandra Pannell and Keith and Clare Mugford to run Moss Wood.

In 1984, the Pannells decided that, after fifteen years, it was time to move on and so sold the vineyard to the Mugfords. Bill now has a medical practice in Perth and he and Sandra have maintained their involvement in the world of wine by purchasing a share in the excellent Burgundian vineyard, Domaine de la Pousse d'Or.

Of the wines made in his time at Moss Wood, Bill is most proud of the 1981 Pinot Noir, judged by many to be among the very best of this variety ever produced in Australia. He believes that the 1974, 1975, 1980 and 1983 vintages have produced the best Cabernets, and is most pleased with the 1983 Moss Wood Semillon and the 1980 and 1983 Moss Wood Chardonnays.

Huon Hooke's comment in the Financial Review provides a fitting summary: "Most great achievements are the works of exceptional people: people of energy, vision and dedication. Dr Pannell is one."

The 1987 Vintage at Moss Wood

After a terrific winter with excellent rainfall and then a dry summer, the quality of the crop has been excellent the yields have been above average and the wines well up to the standard of recent vintages. The 1987 Chardonnay looks to be an outstanding wine. It has tremendous acidity, a pleasing weight and ripeness and is similar to the 1984 in style and structure. The Pinot Noir also looks promising and at this stage is similar to the 1985 and 1986 wines. The Semillon may well provide the surprise packet of an excellent vintage. It has tremendous fresh fruit reminding Keith of the character of granny smith apples. In some ways, it is similar to the 1985 Semillon though it is not as herbaceous as that wine.

The Cabernet Sauvignon is showing delightful fragrances. It will be similar in many ways to the 1977 and the 1980 Cabernets.

Daniel (?) in the Lion's Den

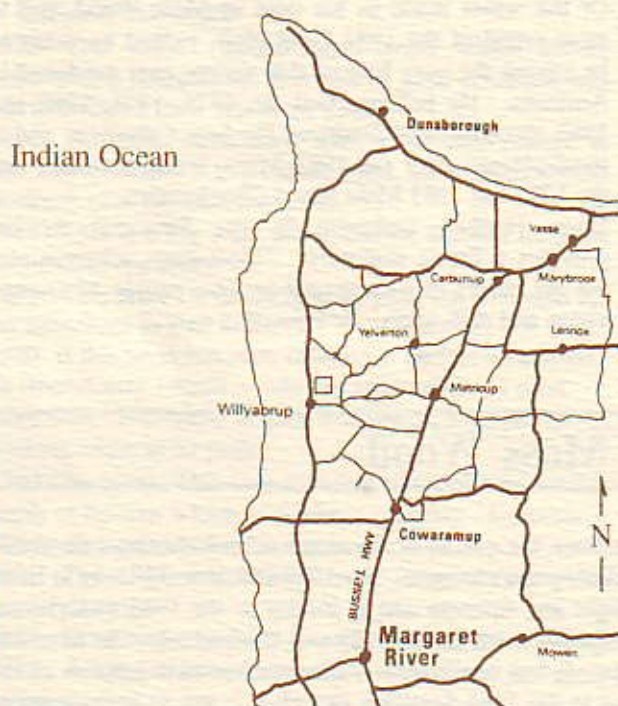
When Perth retailer, Patrick Stephenson, marries Christine Cagnat later this month at Senlis, forty-five kilometres from Paris, the wedding reception will feature the finest wines available. Not the best of Bordeaux or Burgundy as one might be forgiven for thinking, but wines shipped to France especially for the occasion - the 1986 Moss Wood wood matured Semillon and the 1984 Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon.

On the first occasion that Patrick dined with his fiancée's family, eighteen people sat down to the meal in Senlis. Determined to make a good impression on his in-laws, Patrick did what any sensible young chap would have done in similar circumstances - he brought along several bottles of the 1982 Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon and the 1983 Moss Wood Pinot Noir. As the Cabernet was served, a stunned silence fell over the table - so impressed were the entire family with the wine.

So when it came to choosing wines for the wedding, it was an easy decision. Margaret River's premier wines will grace the occasion in the heart of the world's greatest wine producing country.

Moss Wood Winery

Located on Metricup Road
Willyabrup
Western Australia



From Keith and Clare

The Newsletter

We have been delighted with your responses to the new format of the Newsletter. We hope it continues to serve as a useful source of information about what is happening at Moss Wood and the progress of our wines. The Newsletter will be produced three times each year to coincide with our new releases. If you are not already on the mailing list, or know someone who would like to be placed on it, contact us at the vineyard.

Moss Wood Wines In the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, Moss Wood wines and the Moss Wood Newsletter are available from:

Peter Diplock Limited
William Blake House
Marshall Street
LONDON W1
Phone: (01) 734 2099

Anyone in Australia wishing to have Moss Wood wines delivered in the United Kingdom should contact the vineyard for details.

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, we are happy to welcome 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. Contact us beforehand to make arrangements if you wish to visit.

Keith and Clare Mugford

Moss Wood Plantings

Cabernet Sauvignon	12.5 acres
Pinot Noir	5 acres
Chardonnay	2.5 acres
Semillon	5 acres
Cabernet Franc	2 acres
Merlot	0.5 acres