



MOSS WOOD

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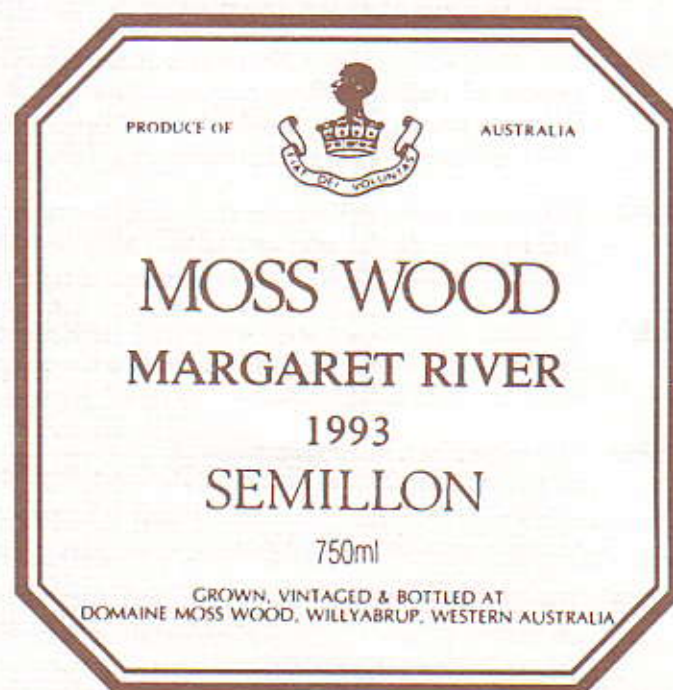
The 1993 Moss Wood Semillon

The 1993 Semillon is likely to rank with that from the 1985 wine as one of the best vintages of this variety produced at Moss Wood. It's a pity then that the November storms cut crop levels by one-third and forced Keith to abandon plans to produce the wood-matured Semillon from 1993.

The 1993 Moss Wood Semillon is quite high in alcohol (at 13%) and about ten per cent higher in acid than normal. Although it is quite closed and has a firm structure, it also has a great deal of power, richness of fruit flavour and an impressive fineness on the palate.

While not as soft and appealing as the 1985 Semillon at the same age because the levels of tannin and acidity are higher, the 1993 will develop more slowly and have even greater cellaring potential.

The 1993 is a typical Moss Wood Semillon although it has more power and is a touch more herbaceous than most vintages. It has quite a pungent nose and shows grapefruit and apple characters with hints of figs, quince, gooseberries and some solids from lees aging. The palate is fresh, crisp and clean with a tannic grip and some zingy, lifted acid on a long finish. It has good balance, excellent weight and a pleasing mouthfeel.



Semillon Ratings

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
1993	5 March	12.7	9.0	7

Moss Wood Pinot Noir Vintage Chart

The vintage chart has been completely updated following a vertical tasting at the winery in June, 1993.

- 1977** Deep ruby colour with a touch of tawny. An interesting, mature wine with some spicy, gamey characters and a hint of camphor on the nose and palate. Quite developed but still some freshness and a touch of berry fruit which lingers. Past its best but still pleasant.
- 1979** Developed medium ruby colour. Simple, berry fruit, light oak perfumes but little evidence of secondary characters on nose or palate to give complexity and length. There may be better bottles but probably the wine is past its best.
- 1980** Deep ruby colour with distinct tawny. Very ripe feel to the nose with plummy, meaty, gamey, mushroomy characters and a warm, alcoholic background. The palate is rich, soft and round with dark, berry flavours and some camphor on the finish. Still drinking well.
- 1981** This outstanding Pinot Noir has a deep ruby colour, a superb nose which is full and multi-faceted with aromas of plums, leather, game and charry oak. The palate is similarly complex with a broad range of flavours: plums, game, mushrooms and spicy oak. It is supple, concentrated, rich with excellent weight and considerable length. Perhaps not as fresh as before but still in good condition.
- 1982** Soft, spicy nose with cherry fruit and charry oak in the background. The palate is classic 1982: supple and round with the acid and tannin fully softened, a touch of spicy, cherry fruit and charry oak on the finish. Still quite fresh and surprisingly attractive, it is aging well.
- 1983** Medium ruby colour with a distinct tawny edge. The wine is quite developed with hints of berries, camphor and leather on the nose while the palate has soft and round with developed berry characters and a touch of cedar. It appears to lack freshness and finishes a little short.
- 1984** The wine has a light ruby colour with some tawny edges and a developed nose with cherries, gaminess and spicy oak. The palate is lively with rich, ripe fruit showing attractive cherries and some gamey, earthy characters in the background. It has good weight, is full and round, still has fresh acid and firm tannins, is drinking well and shows no sign of tiredness.
- 1985** The 1985 Moss Wood Pinot has a deep ruby colour with some development at the edges. It has intense aromas of plums and strawberries with hints of leather and game, ripe, spicy fruit on the palate and coconut oak on the finish. The wine is supple with rich, concentrated flavours, great depth and length with attractive fine grain tannins. A delicious Pinot, drinking beautifully.
- 1986** The 1986 Pinot has a deep, ruby colour showing tawny development at the edges. This interesting and complex wine has ripe, plum and strawberry characters with hints of leather, game and forest floor earthiness. It is supple, has rich, round, generous flavours, good depth, excellent weight and great length and acid and tannins which are beginning to soften. As Keith said, 'It's looking absolutely delightful!'
- 1987** Deep, ruby colour with medium depth. The wine is quite closed at present, with restrained strawberry and gamey characters on the nose, elegant dark berry flavours and assertive acid and tannins on the palate. It is a well-structured, balanced wine with an appealing depth of flavour and good length. Although it is gaining complexity with aging, Keith describes it currently as 'a pimply teenager'.
- 1988** Deep, ruby colour with good depth. The wine is showing some development on the nose with strawberry and plum characters and hints of game and earthiness while the structure of the palate is firm with good acid and tannin and dark berries, earthiness and attractive charry oak. Slightly clumsy and disjointed at present but powerful and showing promise for the future.
- 1989** Deep ruby colour with medium depth. Scented and perfumed on the nose, this is a big, ripe, rich, alcoholic wine with spicy, earthy characters. The acid and tannins are still quite assertive and the wine still needs three to five years to settle down.
- 1990** Deep ruby colour with good depth. The wine shows intense, perfumed aromas of ripe berries with hints of game, mushrooms and leather while the palate has rich, concentrated dark cherries, a firm structure and good acid and powerful tannins. It has character and flavour at present but seems a little disjointed and so needs time to show its elegance and class. As Keith says, 'a slumbering giant'.

The 1991 Moss Wood Pinot Noir

The 1991 vintage was in keeping with long term weather patterns in the Margaret River although the summer was much drier than in many recent growing seasons. Temperatures were generally mild and although a few extreme days did some damage to the whites, the 1991 reds are very full-bodied as a result of the vintage conditions.

As usual Keith included a significant proportion of whole bunches (34% this time) during the crushing of the Pinot grapes. After fermentation, the wine was aged for twelve months in medium toasted, new Tronçais (50%) and Allier (50%) barrels.



This is one of the best Pinots produced at Moss Wood. It has a fragrant, lifted nose showing ripe strawberry and cherry characters with hints of leather, game and charry oak while the palate has attractive sweet berry fruit with a touch of sappiness. This is a clean, fresh, flavoursome wine which is supple, well-balanced and complex and has a pleasing texture, as well as good depth and length.

Keith believes that the 1991 Pinot Noir is finer in structure than the superb 1985 or 1986 Pinots and has a more perfumed nose than the 1990. It has excellent cellaring potential.

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	7
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	6
1993	3 March	13.3	8.2	6

The Moss Wood Semillons

The following comments from wine writers who attended the twentieth anniversary tasting at Moss Wood provide useful commentaries on the Semillons produced from the vineyard.

James Halliday in the *Australian*

Proceedings commenced with 17 semillons from 1977 to 1993, followed by 12 wood-matured semillons, the first vintage of which was 1983. These 29 wines demonstrated a number of things: that the Moss Wood style is distinctly less herbaceous and (in my view at least) distinctly better than the more usual Margaret River style; that the non-herbaceous wines age with great grace and elegance, albeit in a way quite different from those of the Hunter Valley; that next to the Cabernets, these are Moss Wood's finest wines - as well as being the least expensive.

The outstanding wines in an extremely strong range were the 87, 86, 83, 82, 81 and 80 unwooded versions, and the 92, 86, 84 and 83 wood-matured (the 83 unwooded showing much early promise). A feature of the wood-matured wines is the subtlety of the oak, both in terms of integration and amount, which stands the wines in good stead throughout their life, but particularly when young. The unwooded wines are intensely flavoured and wonderfully balanced at their best, elegant rather than overpowering. Wines such as the 86 and the 82 will clearly see out the century without fading; the 80 is at its peak, while only the 79 and 77 have started to decline.

Huon Hooke in the *Sydney Morning Herald*

The semillons were more impressive (than the chardonnay) and consistent, partly because of their longer history: 17 vintages and 27 wines, compared with 10 chardonnays. The unwooded semillons impressed greatly, seeming to need no more than a decade to peak. The '82 is sensational now, floral and almost Hunter-like with toast, nut and bread aromas over a stylish lemony palate. There's more than a suggestion of chardonnay about it. The '83, '84, '85, '86, '87 and '89 are all excellent although the last is very forward and will not be a long-liver. The delicious '87, from a top year shows youthful, grassy, tangy, citrusy intensity. Moss Wood is less herbaceous than most in the region and surprisingly shows more of this character not in the cooler years but the warmer ones, such as '81, '88 and '90. The '86 has pronounced lemon flavours and the current vintage, 1992, has a lifted, straw nose and a fresh, dry palate that just needs a year or two to build the customary Moss Wood intensity.

The 1993 vintage at Moss Wood

An unusual growing season preceded a very fine vintage at Moss Wood. The Margaret River was hit by late heavy storms during the last week in November which caused severe wind damage to the Semillon at a critical stage in its growing season. This reduced the amount of this variety by one-third and, as a consequence, no wood-matured Semillon will be produced from the 1993 vintage. The Chardonnay and Pinot were fully developed and sheltered on their trellises and the Cabernet was not well enough developed to be feel the impact of the storms. Accompanying hail caused widespread damage in the Willyabrup Valley but Moss Wood was only marginally affected by this.

After the storms, extremely mild but perfect ripening

conditions in December, January and February delayed vintage considerably. Keith Mugford was frustrated by this delay and was worried that rain, which threatened in March and April, might ruin the harvest. Although rain threatened, only a small amount eventuated during these months and did not affect the crop.

Eventually, all varieties achieved their desired ripeness which was balanced by high acidity, a result of the long, slow ripening. In spite of high alcohol, the wines are fresh and delicate. They have finesse inspite of the ripeness and may appear stern, closed and acidic when young but will be very good in the long term. Keith believes that the Cabernet may be similar to the 1981 but not as exaggerated.