



# MOSS WOOD

## Newsletter

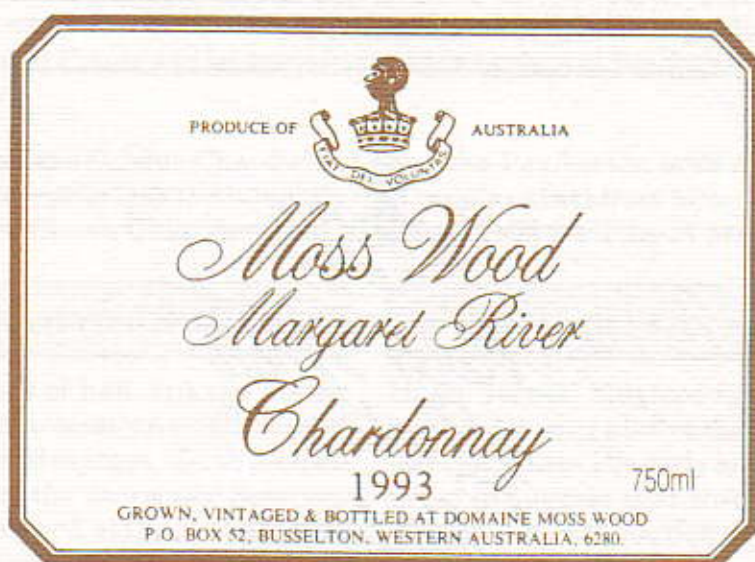
Nº 22

Autumn, 1994

### The 1993 Moss Wood Chardonnay

A mild and dry growing season meant that the vines were not subjected to heat stress and carried a good sized crop easily. Moss Wood was, indeed, fortunate to miss a big hail storm in spring which devastated the crop of some of our neighbours. It is not surprising that fruit was good and ripe and the fruit potential became wine quality.

The wine was made according to standard practice at the winery since 1990: it is crushed and drained, then settled for 48 hours after which time the clear juice is racked off and fermented to half way mark in stainless steel and then racked to new oak. The development of secondary characters in the wine, and hence complexity, is encouraged by allowing the wine to undergo a malolactic fermentation and by aging all of it on its lees in new French oak for nine months. The primary characters, especially the natural fruitiness of the Moss Wood Chardonnay, are preserved by only allowing half to go through the malo.



The 1993 Moss Wood Chardonnay has a medium straw colour, peach, pineapple and quince aromas with hints of smokey oak while the palate shows rich, ripe peach, marmalade and butterscotch flavours with overtones of bready barrel-ferment characters. It is lifted by its freshness, is supple, round and full, has an attractive texture and mouthfeel, a tight structure to ensure aging and a firm, clean tannin grip on the long, dry finish.

This attractive Margaret River white is drinking well now, especially if it is allowed to breathe for up to an hour. The wine will also open up if it is swirled in the glass. Like other Moss Wood Chardonnays, it can be cellared for up to ten years with confidence. This will enable it to develop greater complexity and concentration of flavour.

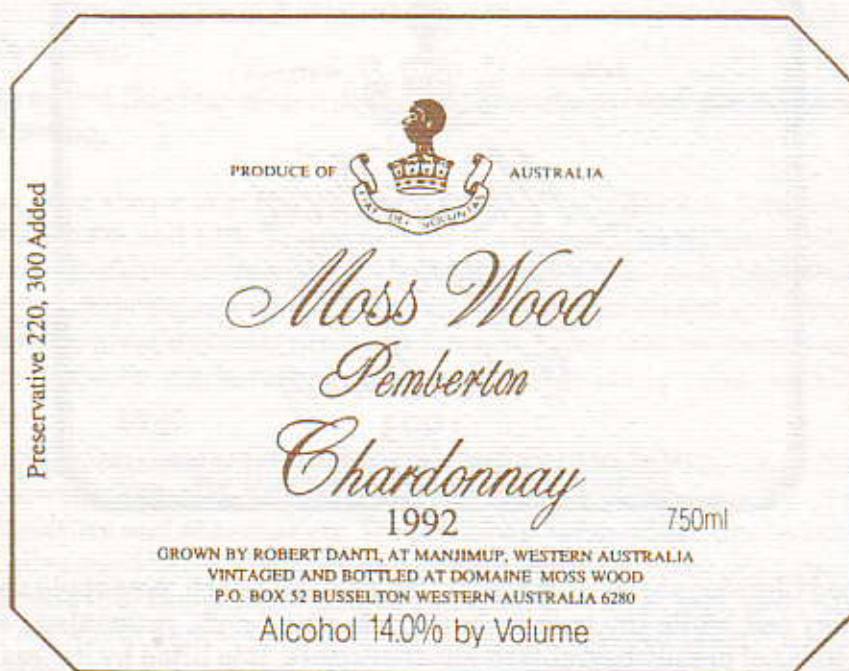


## Moss Wood Chardonnay Vintage Chart

Vintage	Harvest Date	° Beaume	pH	Yield (tonnes/ha)	Vintage Rating (out of 10)
1983	18 February	12.6	3.28	8.7	7
1984	29 February	13.1	3.41	7.73	8
1985	22 February	12.5	3.24	8.44	7
1986	26 February	12.9	3.34	9.1	7
1987	24 February	12.9	3.29	10.13	8
1988	12 February	12.5	3.35	11.2	7
1989	20 February	12.9	3.41	7.82	7+
1990	6 March	12.9	3.24	6.85	10
1991	25 March	12.8	3.48	6.36	8
1992	27 February	13.5	3.35	7.3	8+
1993	4 March	13.6	3.35	4.05 t/ac	9

## The Moss Wood 1992 Pemberton Chardonnay

Like the previous release the 1992 Moss Wood Pemberton Chardonnay is produced from grapes grown on Robert Danti's vineyard at Manjimup in the Pemberton Region. The wine is given identical treatment to the Moss Wood Chardonnay: fermentation is completed in barrel, the wine is aged in one hundred per cent new oak for nine months with fifty per cent undergoing a malolactic fermentation. One point of difference, however, is that the yeast lees are stirred fortnightly with the Pemberton wine.



The 1992 Pemberton Chardonnay has been aged for a year since bottling because Keith believed it suffered bottle shock and took a great deal of time before it looked at its best.

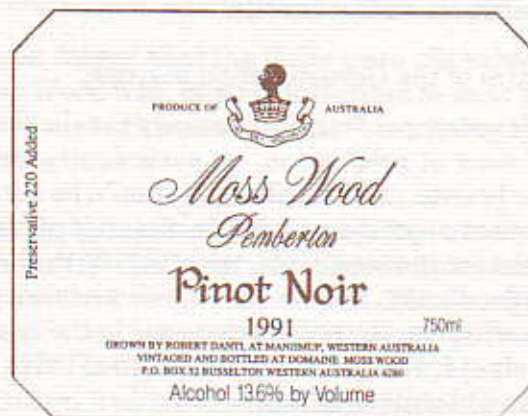
The 1992 Moss Wood Pemberton Chardonnay has a medium straw colour and delicate citrus aromas with hints of peach, butterscotch and bread. The palate is fresh with lime, melon and toasty oak characters. It is a soft, restrained white of medium weight that has a firm but balanced finish of moderate length.



## The 1991 Moss Wood Pemberton Pinot Noir

This attractive red is produced at Moss Wood from grapes grown on the Danti vineyard. It is made using similar techniques to those employed on the Moss Wood Pinot with thirty three per cent aged in new oak. It suffered terribly from bottle shock and Keith put off releasing the wine several times because he was not happy that it had recovered sufficiently to justify its release.

The 1992 Moss Wood Pemberton Pinot Noir has a deep red almost beetroot colour, dark cherry, even blackcurrant aromas with hints of beetroot, roses, violets and spice. On the palate, the wine shows lively dark cherry and blackcurrant flavours, some spiciness from the stalks and a charry oak background. It has quite a fine texture, good acid and assertive (but not bitter) tannins on a long, dry finish.



Keith is quite excited about the potential of Pinot Noir from the Pemberton region and looks forward to producing further examples of this variety. A 1992 wine has been produced from the Danti vineyard and subsequent Pinots will be made from grapes grown at the Smith Brook vineyard near Pemberton.

Keith is not as enthusiastic about Chardonnay from the Pemberton area and believes that the Chardonnays from the region lack the intensity that people expect from Moss Wood wines. He does not see a role for a Pemberton Chardonnay in the Moss Wood portfolio at present.

### No 1993 wood-matured Semillon

Unfortunately, because of hail damage during the previous year there was only a small harvest of semillon from the 1993 vintage. Keith decided that he would produce the unwooded Semillon but not the wood-matured style in that year. When crop levels return to normal and that's anticipated from the 1994 harvest then the wood-matured Semillon will once more be available.

### An American comment

A keen supporter of Moss Wood, Perth optometrist, Stephen Leslie, shared a bottle of Moss Wood Chardonnay with a colleague from Philadelphia who wrote to thank him commenting that it was the best Australian Chardonnay he'd had with its 'Australian body and fruit but also with the French nose and finish.' It's always great to get positive feedback.

### Hugh Vernon Mugford

Hugh Vernon Mugford (aged 0) of Willyabrup was born during a lull in the vineyard's operations last November. His early arrival at 6am prompted Clare to suggest that this augured well for his subsequent contribution at vintage time.

Apologies are offered for tardiness in replies to the previous newsletter but, where this occurred, it was due to the proprietors' preoccupation with the birth of their third child.

All is well and Hugh Vernon is making splendid progress, with only his father having trouble coping (or so I'm told). Eloise (5) is proving to be a caring and enthusiastic sister and Tristan (3) is learning to play nice games but still prefers to poke his finger in the baby's eye. He is, however, looking forward to Hugh being able to kick the footy.



## That sales tax increase

It has not been our practice to discuss things of a political nature in our newsletters. However, the decision by the Federal Government to increase the Wholesale Sales Tax on wine from 20% to 31% and the debate that followed cannot be allowed to pass without comment.

I am uncertain how or where politicians and their advisors collect their information about our industry but I am certain that, for all its relevance, that information may well have come from another planet. Somehow, it has allowed the Government to argue the following:

- A sales tax increase was necessary to ensure equity with the beer and spirits industries.
- A sales tax increase would have little or no effect on the volume of wine sales.
- If there was an unexpected downturn in domestic demand, then the wine industry should simply export more to overcome the shortfall.

Here's my point by point rebuttal of the Government's position.

Firstly, it is unclear why the Government feels it necessary to talk about equity between wine and beer when, from the point of view of production, no such equity exists. Without criticising the technology and efficiency of our brewers and distillers, it should be noted that the raw materials for these products can be purchased at any time and, in the majority of cases, production to marketing lead times are a matter of weeks (or in some cases, months). With the production of wine, it takes four to six years to achieve full production (if a company grows its own grapes). After that, a further year will elapse before a white wine can be sold or two years in the case of red wines. It should also be noted that, for a wine business, the short term is at least five years. Ad hoc decisions by governments make planning an absolute nightmare.

Given these differences in production lead times, you will understand why wine producers believe that any talk of equity between the different industries is nonsense. Furthermore, consumers of Moss Wood Chardonnay may be interested to know how equal they are. Every litre of that wine will raise \$4.14 for the Government as sales tax (that is, \$3.11 per bottle) compared with \$0.75 per litre raised on a bottle of beer.

We are obliged to collect this free of charge for the Government and pay a fine for our trouble if we are late or get it wrong.

Secondly, studies have shown that the long term effect of the Sales Tax Increase will be a reduction in demand of between 8% and 12%. This overlooks the dramatic short term reduction that followed the increase as a result of consumer uncertainty about price. (It was this drop off in sales which forced the wine industry to compromise with the Treasurer.) The Government and some commentators felt that the wine industry should quietly accept its fate but, given that we were about to see a 10% drop in demand in the domestic market which accounts for 80% of our sales, we felt we had a right to protest strongly.

Thirdly, there is the question of exports. The wine industry has been doing its bit, with exports now accounting for between 20% and 30% of production. As an industry, we are at the forefront of the technology of viticulture and winemaking. We produce a value-added product in rural Australia on an environmentally sound basis. Perhaps we could sell more overseas. However, for an Australian winemaker to expand into a new export market a time frame of, at best, two years would be needed to achieve this. This would be needed to find import agents and establish the brand on that market. Of course, there are significant costs involved and these must be carried while domestic demand, and therefore, business turnover is falling. It is not as simple as politicians would have us believe.

However, if the former Treasurer's logic is sound, let's apply it to all Australian industries. All industries that are not exporting at least 20% of their production should be hit with an 11% sales tax increase and, if they complain, just tell them to export more. Do you think they will call that fair?