



# MOSS WOOD

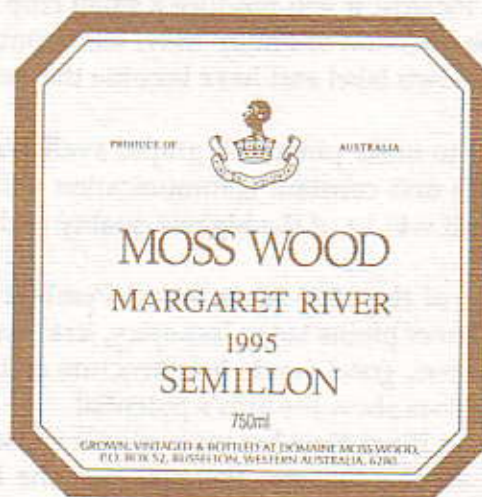
## Newsletter

№ 28

Spring, 1995

### The 1995 Moss Wood Semillon

The 1995 vintage was about two weeks earlier than usual with warm weather at the end of February sending the ripeness through the roof. Although the grapes were picked as quickly as possible, the alcoholic levels were higher than expected. The wine has showed good ripeness with generous yet restrained fruit, perhaps closer in style to the delicacy of 1993 than to the blockbuster qualities of 1994. In fact, Keith believes that it is quite like the 1985 but without the contribution made by the searing heat of that vintage. The season was very dry and so there were no problems with disease. There were, however, problems with birds for the first time in several years. Following the impressive results achieved in averting a serious bird problem by netting Ian 'Tinker' Bell's own Yallingup vineyard, we are considering some state-of-the-art netting at Moss Wood. The crop level for semillon was down by about 1 tonne or about 5% on the previous vintage but the gentle extraction of the new press meant, that in spite of this hiccup, Moss Wood production was slightly higher than usual. The other advantage of the new press was that solid contents in the semillon was reduced and losses at settling were cut in half. All this was achieved along with an improvement in juice quality. The wine spent some time, post-fermentation, on its lees in tank and part of it underwent a malolactic fermentation: all of which has given it greater complexity.



The 1995 Moss Wood Semillon has aromas of figs, apples and hints of grassiness and passionfruit while its palate shows similar flavours complexed by yeasty, bready, almost earthy characters and hints of butterscotch. It is a big wine with a generous palate structure, good balance and fresh, crisp acidity. Keith loves its depth of fruit and lovely mouthfilling qualities and believes it is similar to the previous vintage but with more class, greater freshness and livelier acidity. He sees it as more rounded and sophisticated than the outstanding 1985 and believes that it is more attractive now and will age better than any young semillon he has made. His advice is enjoy it now and for the next twelve months, then put some aside to drink in five to six years but save a little because it should be great at ten years of age.

## Moss Wood Semillon Vintage Chart

Vintage	Harvest Date	Beaume	Yield (tonnes/ha)	Vintage Rating (out of 10)
1983	5 March	12.3°	13.6	9
1984	5 March	12.2°	12.4	7
1985	28 February	12.0°	10.0	9
1986	28 February	12.4°	9.1	7
1987	9 March	12.0°	13.5	8
1988	18 February	12.1°	9.6	7
1989	15 March	12.3°	12.5	7
1990	21 March	12.4°	13.0	8
1991	26 March	11.9°	19.0	6
1992	3 March	12.5°	13.9	8
1993	5 March	12.7°	9.0	10
1994	10 March	12.9°	11.0	9
1995	23 February	13.2°	10.8	8+

## The Moss Wood Pemberton Pinots

The first three vintages of Moss Wood Pemberton Pinot Noir (1990-2) came from the property of grape grower, Rob Dante on Glenoran Road, West Manjimup. From the 1993 vintage, Keith has chosen to buy grapes from the Smithbrook vineyard, on Middlesex Road, south east of Manjimup. This property was carefully selected and initially developed by Moss Wood founder, Bill Pannell. After a promising start, Bill has moved on and is now developing his own vineyard and winery on the Vasse Highway in the Eastbrook sub-region. Called Picardy, it will produce a small crop of its first vintage in 1996. In the meantime, Smithbrook (under the direction of Phillip May) have continued to make small amounts of chardonnay and pinot under their own label and have become the most important producer of grapes in the region.

Smithbrook has been prepared to make pinot noir grapes available to Moss Wood from a carefully selected site on the vineyard. This and constant communication with Phillip May have given Keith confidence that the Pemberton fruit will be of the highest quality and will arrive at Moss Wood in the very best condition.

There is only a small amount of the 1992 Moss Wood Pemberton Pinot Noir left. It is quite a different style from the Margaret River pinots being less spicy, less round and less generous but having some complex, meaty, tarry characters, good depth, fine structure and good acidity. Keith believes that although it's not a perfect wine, it does show the area's potential.

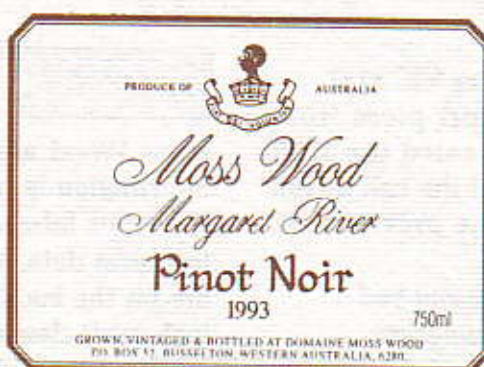
The 1993 Moss Wood Pemberton Pinot Noir has more classic strawberry and plum characters with overtones of dark cherries and some spiciness: flavours that the Burgundians call 'briary'. With unusual extravagance, Keith describes it as a cross between lapsang tea and spicy sausages that have just been cooked on a wood-fired barbecue. This wine has a much finer texture and higher, more obvious or more assertive acidity than the Margaret River pinots. Because it is early days, it is difficult to know how long this can be cellared. However, it should benefit from short term bottle aging and should still be drinking well at the turn of the century.

Although he's been very pleased with the quality of the wines, Keith still regards the Pemberton pinots as experimental. As such they are being marketed at a lower price, until he is convinced of their bona fides. As the vines age and the winemaking becomes more in tune with the expression of the variety in this locality, Keith believes they can achieve prices commensurate with the Margaret River pinots of Moss Wood.

## The Moss Wood 1993 Pinot Noir

The 1993 vintage was quite different from that of 1995 with the mild summer allowing the vines a slow ripening period so that it was possible to get good fruit ripeness without high levels of alcohol. For all that, the wine did achieve 14% alcohol but with plenty of fruit and lift to balance it.

The viticultural technique for Pinot Noir at Moss Wood has become pretty standard after several years spent refining the approach. The grapes were picked and then crushed with one-third retained as whole bunches. Fermentation on skins took twelve days. All pressings were included in the blend straight away and this was held in stainless steel until the wine had undergone its malolactic fermentation. It was then racked into barrels where it remained for 12 months. Although one-third of the wine was placed in new casks, oak does not play a major part in the style of the Moss Wood Pinot which is more influenced by fruit intensity. Before bottling, it was given a light filtration but no fining.



The 1993 Moss Wood Pinot Noir is a medium to deep ruby red hue with spicy red berry, perfumes, some strawberry, plummy flavours with hints of earthy, gamey characters giving it greater complexity. It is quite a fine red: medium-bodied but intense, with a generous structure, ripe, sweet fruit and soft, round tannins. This is a rich, round flavoursome wine which is well-balanced and lively with an attractive smokey finish that lingers. Keith believes that the 1993 Pinot is a good wine which has good aging potential, and can be cellared for at least ten years. In his view, the wine is lighter in frame than the two previous vintages but does not lack intensity of flavour. However, he prefers the 1992 and 1994 Pinots as riper, more complex wines.

## Moss Wood Pinot Noir Vintage Chart

Vintage	Harvest Date	Beaume	Yield (tonnes/ha)	Vintage Rating (out of 10)
1979	17 February	12.3°	6.6	4
1980	29 February	14.2°	3.5	4
1981	4 March	13.1°	3.8	10
1982	13 March	12.95°	8.2	5
1983	19 February	12.85°	6.0	6
1984	16 February	12.9°	5.7	6
1985	25 February	13.3°	6.4	10
1986	24 February	13.3°	5.8	10
1987	24 February	12.9°	5.8	8
1988	10 February	13.1°	6.0	8
1989	15 March	12.9°	6.5	6
1990	16 March	13.4°	8.5	9
1991	10 March	13.3°	10.0	9
1992	28 February	13.5°	8.8	8
1993	3 March	13.3°	8.2	8
1994	1 March	13.5°	11.0	8+

## Media Comments

Australia's best auction house, Langton's, have added the *Langton's Wine Review* to the Wine Auction Catalogues which their subscribers receive. Approximately 16 Auction Catalogues from Melbourne and Sydney are distributed annually together with price realisations from all auctions. There will be four editions of the Wine Review each year, edited by one of the country's best wine writers, Sydney freelancer, Huon Hooke. These are available for a subscription of \$70 from:

Langton's

7 Claremont Street, South Yarra VIC 3141

The first edition contain a short piece from Petaluma's Brian Croser who rated the 1990 Moss Wood Pinot Noir as one of the half dozen wines he'd most enjoyed in the previous six months. He commented:

*'My most memorable recent wine and food circumstance was lunch on the bungalow verandah of Seven Spirits Bay resort, Northern Territory, on the edge of the Arafura Sea, becalmed with a 1990 Moss Wood Pinot Noir and a plate of crisp salad, cold sliced rare buffalo fillet and a dab of mild chilli jam.'*

Tim White, in the *Financial Review*, described the 1992 Moss Wood Pinot Noir as among the best he had experienced in recent tastings:

*'rhubarb, dried strawberry, autumn smoky/stalky, black cherries - a complex nose which is very Burgundian in style. Fine, succulent dark cherries and spiced fruit, tingly acidity and supple chewy tannins in the background. Should benefit from 4/5 years. 18.75 (19).'*

The 1993 Moss Wood Semillon was one of eight wines rated as 'Pick of the Bunch' in the best of their respective varieties for last year's the *Penguin Good Australian Wine Guide*. Huon Hooke and Mark Shield say:

*'Here's one to raise the eyebrows - a wonderful wine from the West that shows great varietal definition. Delicious lemony and faintly straw-grassy flavours in a fresh, fruity style that drinks well young and has less of the trademark Margaret River herbaceousness than most of its peers.'*

## Vintage Mugford

With the recent arrival of Imogen Margaux (at 1.30am on 22nd of July), the Mugford family is now complete. Clare claims that she always wanted only four children and is satisfied with the symmetry of two girls and two boys: Eloise (6), Tristan (4), Hugh (1) and Imogen (0). When Clare is not around, Keith is prepared to admit that the name 'Margaux' was inspired, not by the Bordeaux chateau, but by Margaux Hemingway as seen in *Lipstick* 1976.

## Back label

Moss Wood are using back labels as so much information is now required on each bottle that the front labels were becoming cluttered. All technical data, standard additions and bar code are on the back which allows the front label to look more classically simple.

## Visiting the Winery

Because of the relatively small volume of wine produced, there is no cellar door facility and visits to the winery have to be by appointment only. We are always pleased to welcome our loyal mail order customers to show them our new wines. Of course, we are also delighted to meet other wine enthusiasts who have an interest in Moss Wood.

There are only a few of us that can show you the winery, so we need as much advance notice as possible so that we can arrange an appointment at a time that suits you. Please contact us beforehand to make arrangements if you wish to visit.

## Mailing List

The Moss Wood Newsletter is produced three times each year to coincide with the release of the Chardonnay; the Cabernet Sauvignon; and the Pinot Noir and the Semillon. If you are not currently on our mailing list and wish to receive this newsletter detailing the releases of our wines please contact us.