



MOSS WOOD

Newsletter

Nº 45

July, 2001

The 1998 Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon

After the difficult harvest in 1997, the team at Moss Wood found the 1998 growing season more favourable. There were some small problems with hail, but the winds were less troublesome than they had been the previous year and spring rains were plentiful. The summer temperatures were mild while the small amount of summer rain in mid-January gave the vines a pre-harvest boost and caused no disease problems in the vineyard. Vintage started on time in near-perfect conditions. Most of the early ripening varieties (semillon, chardonnay, and pinot noir) were picked in warm, dry conditions. Then came the complication of rain. The vineyard was soaked twice: 50 mm fell on the weekend of March 7th and 8th and 78 mm two weekends later. Cabernet Sauvignon is robust and while rain slows the ripening process down it doesn't cause the grapes to become diluted. Moreover, its thick skins mean that it is not prone to splitting.

The worry at Moss Wood was that the cabernet might fail to ripen if there was more rain. A decision was made to pick in two stages. All the cabernet that couldn't be fitted under nets was picked at 13.5° beaume. The rest was left to achieve maximum ripeness so that the wine would show the richness which is expected of Moss Wood Cabernet. Fortunately, the region experienced fine, mild weather with no further rain during the two weeks it took the cabernet to ripen to 14.5° beaume.



The 1998 Cabernet Sauvignon was made in the traditional Moss Wood style, being fermented in open tanks, hand plunged four times a day with one pump over towards the end of fermentation.

The winemaking team have continued to work on a new approach to assessing the amount of skin contact time allowed post fermentation. All tanks are tasted daily after 0° beaume is reached to monitor the evolution of the tannin structure. Initially tannins are aggressive and furry but gradually soften and evolve better definition. When the wines get to the stage where they are soft and have good

The 1998 Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon [cont.]

definition and show no further improvement, the grapes are pressed. With the Cabernet being picked in two halves in 1998, there was less pressure on fermentation space than usual and so the wine was left in contact with skins for 16 days instead of the more normal 10 to 12 days.

The 1998 Moss Wood Cabernet was aged for two years in medium toast 225 litre French oak barriques from Tonnellerie Remond – 50% of which was new. Before bottling, the wine was lightly filtered but not fined.

The vintage conditions have resulted in the 1998 Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon being reasonably typical. The colour is medium-to-deep brick red and condition is bright. The nose has lively fruit aromatics of redcurrant, mulberries and raspberries with hints of stewed apple and rhubarb, all neatly integrated with chocolaty, smoky oak aromatics. The palate is ripe and supple, with good weight and flesh. The myriad of red fruits apparent on the nose show through again, and so there are lively concentrated fruit flavours that give richness and length. There is power, a characteristically tight structure, and well-balanced acid and fine ripe tannins that give definition and length on the finish. Finally, the wine is rounded out by smoky/spicy oak flavours.

Although the amount of rain that fell during harvest period made this the wettest year since 1989, it is better compared to the 1985 vintage which was also picked in two parts because of rain after the semillon harvest. Interestingly, Keith regards the 1985 alongside the 1980 as the best Moss Wood Cabernets of the decade.

In comparing the 1985 and the 1998, Keith believes that they both show lovely sweet fruit, ripe tannins, a soft, supple texture and impressive depth of flavour. Because of the introduction of cabernet franc and petit verdot to the blend, he feels that the 1998 is showing slightly fresher fruit aromatics compared to the 1985 at a similar stage of its development. Although the 1998 lacks the complexity and concentration of the 1996 and 1995, it has lovely flavour and typical Moss Wood richness.

Ratings: Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon

Vintage	Harvest Date	° Beaume (tonnes/ha)	Yield	Rating (out of 10)
1983	7 March	13.0	9.0	8
1984	12 March	12.3	9.0	6
1985	13 March	12.5	7.5	9
1986	14 March	12.8	5.8	6
1987	26 March	12.7	8.5	8
1988	10 March	13.0	7.1	6
1989	30 March	13.2	7.9	5
1990	2 April	12.8	8.5	9
1991	3 April	13.3	9.8	9
1992	26 March	12.8	10.0	7
1993	22 March	13.2	8.5	7
1994	25 March	12.8	8.89	8
1995	14 March	13.6	9.75	10
1996	14 March	13.7	10.0	10
1997	19 March	13.6	7.0	8
1998	30 March	13.5	10.0	8
1999	31 March	13.8	9.22	(10)
2000	28 March	14.0	9.8	(9)

Quality Assurance

About a year ago, Moss Wood began the process of gaining accreditation under Safe Quality Food 2000 (SQF 2000). This quality assurance program was first developed by NASA to monitor the production process to ensure that astronauts' food met their rigorous standards. To become accredited it was necessary to adopt the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan. In plain English, this meant that those at Moss Wood needed to analyse every step of the viticultural and winemaking processes to ensure optimum quality in the finished wine.

Although Keith and Clare and the entire staff have been involved in the process of gaining quality assurance accreditation, the huge organisational task of documenting the HACCP plan has occupied Amy Sobol's work life for six months of the past year.

Firstly, a HACCP manual needed to be produced. This documents every step in the operation of the vineyard and the winery and the reporting procedures that are needed to ensure that the wine is auditably legal and conforms to the Australian Food Standards Acts. If there is ever a problem with a wine, this gives Moss Wood an audit trail to every stage in the production process. The manual also details the steps taken to train staff to deal with each stage of production so that quality is not adversely affected.

While all this may not be rocket science, it requires painstaking, methodical documentation both in preparing the HACCP manual and in maintaining records in the day-to-day running of the business. The benefit to the public is that this system provides a guarantee that the staff are adequately trained, that they will carry out procedures correctly and document those satisfactorily. In essence, it's a guarantee of quality.

The requirements of SQF 2000 are demanding of any business and its employees. The physical documentation, for example, details the provision of soap, towels and signage at particular times. The documentation of each person's training is similarly rigorous. Formal records need to be kept of each procedure in which a person has been trained.

To ensure Moss Wood's quality standards, similar stringent demands need to be made of anyone supplying the winery. One of Amy Sobol's jobs is to make sure that any inputs comply with quality assurance standards.

Although tremendous effort goes into developing the HACCP plan, once the procedures are clear much less effort is involved in maintaining quality assurance. If the culture of the organization supports such a program, there is little problem maintaining records and ensuring that all the necessary training is carried out.

Of course, developing and maintaining a program such as this is another significant expense. It does mean, however, that if someone gets a headache in London and blames Moss Wood, it is possible to track through all stages of production to show that the highest standards have been applied throughout. Clare calls it a 'self administered insurance policy'.

An interesting quality comparison

In their September / October 2000 edition, Winestate magazine did an interesting comparison of old world and new world Cabernet wines over a series of vintages – 1994, 1993, 1992, 1991 and 1990. The wines included Wynns John Riddoch, Chateau Mouton, Stonyridge Larose, Penfolds Bin 707, Chateau Latour, Mount Mary and Moss Wood. Under blind tasting conditions, the new world held their own in exalted company. The article showed lengthy tasting notes from all of the tasters and makes very good reading. In the end, each of the five tasters had to list their top four wines of the tasting. Martin Williams chose the Moss Wood 1991 as his fourth wine. Phil Reedman chose the Moss Wood 1992 as his best wine. Neil Hadley ranked the Moss Wood 1994 and the Moss Wood 1991 as his third and fourth wines respectively and Peter Simic ranked the Moss Wood 1993 as his fourth wine.

Meet the staff

Ian Bell — Our local boy-makes-good, Ian has been at Moss Wood for 14 years since he came to pick grapes as a callow 18 year old. He returned to pick grapes and stayed to prune the vines and help in the vineyard and winery before deciding to make viticulture his profession. After obtaining his degree at Roseworthy College, Ian came back to Moss Wood as vineyard manager. His family property at Yallingup (known as granny's farm) now includes the 11 years old Glenmore Vineyard, which is planted to cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc and malbec. Ian supplies grapes to Moss Wood for the "Glenmore Vineyard" Cabernet as well as producing small quantities of red wine under his own label. With Matt Bowden assuming greater responsibility in the vineyard, Ian has been able to take on the role of production manager as well as taking increased responsibility for day to day winemaking, making him a key player in the Moss Wood team.

Matt Bowden — Matt comes from a farming family which had a property at Lake King in the Great Southern. Hale School careers advisor David Bean asked the Mugfords if they would take Matt as a work experience student in 1992. The ties he formed in those two weeks of work experience led him to return to Moss Wood during every subsequent holiday. He completed a degree in horticulture at University of WA and then chose to work full time at Moss Wood. Matt has played an important part in implementing change in both the Moss Wood and Ribbon Vale vineyards, as the company Viticulturist.

Mike Rossi — Our senior cellar hand, he has been with us for over two years and is a most valued member of the team. Mike can always be relied on to consider what we mere mortals think of as heavy lifting tasks, as a good way of "buffing up" and keeping the "bod" in trim.

Anthony Sommers — Our vineyard leading hand, he is our newest employee and comes to us after a glowing career at the Ag Dept in Perth. He is a graduate in Environmental Science and is getting stuck into those few months of pruning at the moment.

Will Jecks — Has been helping us in the winery since vintage 2001. He is doing a great job as cellar hand but his aim is to join the Air Force, after hopefully experiencing a vintage in France.

Jane Beard — Finding the right title for someone with a multi-faceted job such as Jane's, has not been easy. Jane has been appointed Cellar Manager at Moss Wood and Ribbon Vale and takes on, as her major responsibility, looking after visitors to the winery. Jane has been at Moss Wood for over two years and during that time has filled just about every available role in the vineyards, winery, cellar and cellar door. She is very well informed about all the activities at Moss Wood and Ribbon Vale and is an ideal person to conduct visits to the winery. Jane is also in charge of all aspects of warehouse stock control: including the supremely important task of dispatching wines ordered through this newsletter.

Gayle Watson — Also one of our hosts to the winery and maintains our stock control, she works one or two days per week. She is married to David who makes wine at Amberley Estate and they have a lovely two year old daughter, Holly.

Wendy Lee-Steere — Joined us to work one or two days a week hosting visitors, maintaining stock control and comes in as needed to help Jane and provide holiday and sick day relief when required. Wendy also helps her partner Bruce Duke, consultant viticulturist, administer his business.

Aileen Dickhart — In the office, Aileen is our longest serving employee, she started working with Moss Wood in 1989. Amongst a myriad of other tasks she is primarily in charge of the day to day financial records of the company and carries out the export documentation. Aileen is married to Dave and they have two children Hayley and Blake. This year Blake started studying Engineering at the University of Western Australia, so now the Dickharts, like the Mugfords, have this physical and emotional dilemma of having their heart strings stretched across the state. Hayley is studying in Busselton and we have been lucky enough to have her valuable help in the office when we have needed some assistance, answering the phone and doing some all important filing.

Amy Sobol — Many who have visited Moss Wood over the past five years will have been given a tour of the winery and a tasting by Amy. She would also be familiar to those who visited the Moss Wood stand at Wine Australia 2000 in Melbourne. Amy co-ordinates all office activities and is the resident computer whiz. During the last year she has devoted her considerable energies to implementing the quality assurance program at Moss Wood.

Sue Henderson — A veteran of the Moss Wood office, having worked for us back in February 1993 until November 1995, Sue went to work for our Perth wholesale agent, Tucker Seabrook. She left Tuckers to have a gorgeous son, 15 month old Tarik. As she was ready to re-enter the workforce, the Mugfords snapped her up as their personal assistant.

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Order form

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1998 Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon

\$77 per bottle \$924 per dozen

Orders by six or twelve bottle cases only

1998 Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon Magnum

\$181.50 per each 1.5L bottle*

*Sorry, we must restrict Magnum orders to one per customer

ALL PRICES ARE INCLUSIVE OF GST

Please supply

Qty

\$

1998 Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon		@ \$77 per bottle/\$924 per dozen	
1998 Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon Magnum		@ \$181.50 each (one per customer)	
Please add freight as outlined overleaf:			
1st case		@ \$	rate per case
Additional case/s		@ \$	rate per case
Single Magnum		@ \$	Magnum rate
Insurance per consignment		@ \$ 2.50	2.50

If making payment by cheque/money order (payable to Moss Wood Pty Ltd), prior to posting, please phone to confirm availability of wine.

Total \$

Please charge my: (delete as necessary) Bankcard/Visa/Mastercard

Card Nº

Expiry date: _____ / _____

Name

Signature _____

Attended

Day contact phone nº () _____

Delivery

for order clarification

Address

Day contact phone nº () _____

(not PO Box)

for carrier delivery

Please Note: Wine will not be left at an unattended address as we are charged for unsuccessful deliveries, the cost of which we do not wish to pass on to our customers. Therefore, the address you provide above needs to be attended between 9am–5pm (this can be either a business or home address). If this is not possible and you wish to have the carrier phone you to arrange a delivery time, please provide a contact number and tick this box →

Phone, fax, or e-mail your order to:

Moss Wood Pty Ltd PO Box 225 COWARAMUP WA 6284

Phone: (08) 9755 6266 Fax: (08) 9755 6303

e-mail: mosswood@mosswood.com.au

www.mosswood.com.au

Please send future editions of the Moss Wood newsletter and order form by e-mail instead of by post Yes No

PLEASE ENSURE CORRECT UPPER AND LOWER CASE LETTERS ARE USED AS REQUIRED

Name: _____ e-mail address: _____

Please send Ribbon Vale information by e-mail Yes No or by post Yes No

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FREIGHT CHARGES

ALL PRICES ARE INCLUSIVE OF GST

Please note that the Magnum freight rate applies ONLY when a Magnum is shipped on its own – otherwise ‘additional case’ rates apply.

Please allow three weeks for processing and a further two weeks for the delivery of your order.

CAPITAL CITIES:

	Perth	Melbourne	Sydney	Adelaide	Canberra	Brisbane	Darwin
1st case	\$9.90	\$16.20	\$16.20	\$14.95	\$17.35	\$20.65	\$20.65
Additional case each	\$7.10	\$10.20	\$10.20	\$9.60	\$11.40	\$13.20	\$13.20
Single Magnum	\$9.90	\$12.40	\$12.40	\$12.40	\$12.40	\$12.40	\$12.40
Hobart and Launceston			\$32.95	1st case			
			\$23.35	each additional case			
			\$20.90	Single Magnum			

COUNTRY AREAS:

Margaret River, Busselton & Bunbury WA	\$5.90 \$5.90	each case Single Magnum
Other WA country areas	\$23.75 \$16.95 \$20.90	1st case each additional case Single Magnum
Victoria, South Australia and NSW country areas	\$25.75 \$21.55 \$20.90	1st case each additional case Single Magnum
ACT country areas	\$17.35 \$11.40 \$12.40	1st case each additional case Single Magnum
Northern Territory country areas	\$20.65 \$13.20 \$20.90	1st case each additional case Single Magnum
Queensland and Tasmania country areas	\$32.95 \$28.15 \$20.90	1st case each additional case Single Magnum

OVERSEAS: Please contact our office for specific freight rates.

Insurance \$2.50 per consignment