



MOSS WOOD

Newsletter

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Moss Wood Margaret River 2002 Semillon

A warm spell in June took the vines out of winter dormancy and encouraged early bud burst. This led to irregular flowering (hence fewer shoots per vine) and indifferent shoot growth because it took place in wintry weather. The net result was the vines set a below average crop. Apart from this, the growing season was mild with little early summer rain. Some made-to-order rain in January did stimulate vine growth and this was followed by mild weather in a long, cool period leading up to harvest. As the entire crop was netted there were no problems with marauding birds. The semillon was picked over three rain-free weeks in three batches (at 13.1°, 13.8° and 14.1° beaume) in fantastic condition but sadly 40% down in quantity. The early season difficulties really came back to haunt us.

The volume may be small but the Moss Wood team are delighted with the quality. In previous vintages which experienced a lighter crop (1981 and 1997 - but not 1986), the wines tended to be more tannic and more aggressive than usual. To everybody's relief, that is not the case in 2002, and the wine is beautifully balanced.

After the brief flirtation with wild yeast fermentations in 1999 and 2000, Moss Wood is firmly determined to follow its traditional practices of making semillon. As Keith says

It's all pretty standard. The grapes are destemmed, pumped through the must chiller where they are cooled to 8°C, before being pressed. After that, they are cold settled for 48 hours at 12°C, then the clear juice is run off into the fermentation tank which is inoculated with a pure yeast culture. All pressings and 2% of solids are added before fermentation, which is controlled at 18°C, and results in the wine achieving dryness in about 14 days. During fermentation the lees are stirred daily and this is continued once a week for six weeks to improve the texture and mouth feel of the Semillon.



There's always some experimentation going on at Moss Wood and this year the team tried a new yeast species looking to achieve the best possible texture - with pleasing results. The 2002 Semillon was left in tank for just short of six months, then fined, cold stabilised and filtered before being bottled.

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STELVINS

In another change for this year, Moss Wood has bottled 200 cases of Semillon with Stelvin screw caps because of our concerns about the levels of taint which we (and the Australian wine industry) are frustrated to find with cork. We would prefer to package the whole batch this way and will do so if the response from our customers is supportive. Our mail order customers will be offered bottles with Stelvin closure, although, depending on demand, we may not be able to supply all requests this year. We d love your feedback:
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The 2002 Moss Wood Semillon is more full bodied, more powerful and more deeply flavoured than in most years. It has intriguing granny smith apple, fig and lemon citrus aromas; dried herb, new-mown hay, lemon citrus and apple flavours; incredible richness and concentration with crisp tangy acidity. This is a complex, harmonious and mouth-filling white with a lively, creamy texture and a zingy dry finish of good length.

While most will enjoy it in its first flush of youth as an exuberant, vibrant accompaniment to food, Moss Wood Semillons from the best years have shown that they can be transformed by careful cellaring for ten years or more into a complex, mellow and satisfying drink.

MOSS WOOD SEMILLON

VINTAGE	HARVEST DATE	BEAUME (°)	YIELD	VINTAGE RATING	OPTIMUM DRINKING
2002	15 Mar	13.7	8.3	10	<p>In general the Semillon shows fresh, fruity and lively characters up to 3 years of age. It tends to go into a sleepy dull stage between the age 3-5 years. Between 5-6 years it should start to pick up rich, honey, toasty characters. These characters are usually at their peak between 10-15 years and will remain enjoyable until at least 20 years old.</p> <p><i>Please note:</i> These comments are only accurate when the wine has been well cellared. In the interests of accuracy, only where we have reviewed a wine during the year, will we provide optimum drinking years.</p>
2001	03 Mar	12.9	12.8	9	
2000	06 Mar	13.5	10.3	9	
1999	16 Mar	13.1	11.2	9	
1998	08 Mar	13.7	12.7	9	
1997	12 Mar	13.9	9.6	9	
1996	07 Mar	12.9	14.9	9	
1995	23 Feb	13.2	10.8	8+	
1994	10 Mar	12.9	11.0	9	
1993	05 Mar	12.7	9.0	10	
1992	03 Mar	12.5	13.9	8	
1991	26 Mar	11.9	19.0	6	
1990	21 Mar	12.4	13.0	8	
1989	15 Mar	12.3	12.5	7	
1988	18 Feb	12.1	9.6	7	
1987	09 Mar	12.0	13.5	8	
1986	28 Feb	12.4	9.1	7	
1985	28 Feb	12.0	10.0	9	
1984	05 Mar	12.2	12.4	7	
1983	05 Mar	12.3	13.6	9	

Vintage Chart

Customers may be interested in the vintage chart and the predominance of 9 ratings. This does not represent any laziness on behalf of the Moss Wood team in evaluating the quality of the Semillon vintages but instead reflects the consistency of the variety in the Margaret River region. For this reason it has always been very dear to our hearts. Of all the wines we make, it gets least recognition and yet, pound-for-pound (if such a measurement exists for wine), it has an innate ability to produce wines of high quality, without the need for winemaker intervention to increase complexity. In this regard, it rivals the much vaunted Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay, which are more complex wines but need extensive barrel treatment to achieve their potential. Semillon delivers the goods using only stainless steel tanks! Add to this the fact that its yields are higher than Chardonnay and much more reliable and it can be seen why we re so proud of it. So, please be assured we treat the Semillon as seriously as any other wine we make.

Moss Wood Margaret River 2000 Pinot Noir

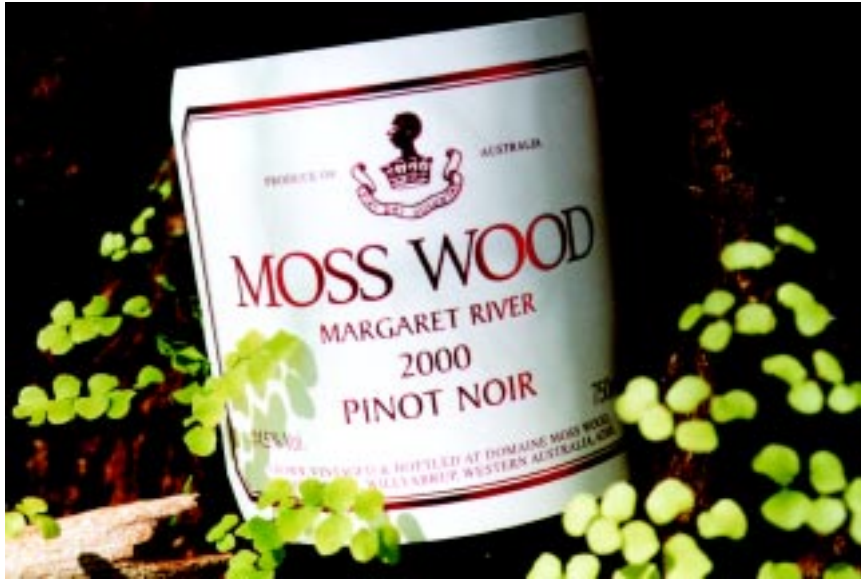
The initial signs were very good with excellent growing conditions until the end of 1999. At that time, the weather warmed up considerably and December 31st was the hottest day of the year. Temperatures did moderate in January and Moss Wood had some useful rain towards the end of that month. The vines loved the moisture and, as it was not accompanied by disease, everything was on target for a normal crop of 100 grams per bunch or 3.5 tonnes/acre (9 tonnes/hectare). Moderately warm conditions meant even ripeness and good flavour

development though, the Moss Wood team were surprised when the first of four batches picked (on 28th February) registered 14.2° of alcohol equivalent. However, this was not the only surprise in store. The size of the bunches also caught the vineyard team unawares with the bunch weight averaging 150 grams. The impact of these bigger berries shows up in the colour of the wine which is lighter than average.

Like all the wines made from the 1999 and 2000 vintages at Moss Wood, this pinot was made using wild rather than selected pure yeast strains to see if this approach would improve the complexity and texture of the wines. Keith's view is that it hasn't made a great deal of difference.

As usual, the grapes were chilled and given a blanket of sulphur dioxide and allowed to cold soak for 48 hours - to enhance extraction of colour and fruit flavour. The grapes were then left at ambient temperature to start fermenting by themselves. This occurred without fuss. After fermentation, the wine was left on its skins to allow the tannin structure to soften. This was monitored and the wine was taken off skins when

there was a balance between the fruit and the tannins and there was no longer any perceptible softening of the tannins. With the 2000 Pinot this took 14 days. The wine was then transferred into stainless steel and racked off its gross lees into barrels where it was allowed to go through malolactic fermentation. After this process was complete, the wine was racked into stainless steel once more. Analyses were checked and it was returned to barrel as one homogenous blend where it remained for 18 months. As usual 33% of the 228 litre French barriques used for oak



maturation were new. Finally, the Pinot was lightly fined, filtered and bottled.

The 2000 Moss Wood Margaret River Pinot Noir is medium ruby red in colour. On the nose, it has some red berry fragrances of strawberry and plum as well as notes of quince jelly, marshmallows and charry oak. The palate has medium weight, with attractive dark cherry and red plum flavours and is soft and generous. This last feature may well be a product of the wild yeast species - they are renowned for improving the texture and mouth-feel of a wine. It may seem a bit contradictory that we no longer use the technique, however, the effect may be more pronounced in a more delicate vintage like 2000. In a normal year, the Moss Wood Pinot Noir may be naturally more concentrated and would not need these extra adjustments. There are also nice toasty oak flavours and balanced tannins on the finish.

The issue of cellaring potential is an interesting one since the wine is from a higher yielding year. To get a better perspective on this, the Moss Wood team conducted a tasting using comparable vintages from the past, those being

1982 and 1991, as well as a 1983 premier cru red Burgundy, aux Combottes from Domaine Dujac (just for a bit of fun!). This was a slightly unfair comparison for the 1982 because it came from a less mature vineyard and with an inferior technique. It was not until 1984 that we introduced the Burgundian techniques of inclusion of whole bunches in the fermenter (to provide spicy complexity on the nose and additional tannin on the palate) and cold soaking before the onset of fermentation. Similarly, it was not until 1989 that we updated the vineyard to the Scott Henry trellis system to improve leaf and bunch exposure. Nevertheless, it was a very interesting comparison and here is the summary of our tasting notes:

1982 Moss Wood Pinot Noir

The colour is medium ruby, with some browning at the edges and the condition is bright. On the nose the wine shows strong primary fruit aromas of cherries and plums, with complexity of rose, earth, truffle, chocolate, rosemary and charry oak. The palate is medium weight with cherry fruit flavours, good length, fresh acid and soft oak on the finish. The tannins are firm and slightly drying adding sappiness to the finish, most likely a product of the very cool 1982 growing season. The wine is fully mature and drinking well although it is unlikely to improve with further cellaring.

1991 Moss Wood Pinot Noir

The colour is deep ruby red and the condition is bright. The nose is initially restrained but then reveals primary fruit aromas of rhubarb, plum and sap with very soft oak characters and earthy notes too. The palate is medium weight and well rounded, with plum fruit flavours, fresh acidity and well balanced tannins. The wine drinks well but is not yet fully mature and still displays youthful fruit characters and freshness.

1983 Domaine Dujac aux Combottes

The colour is deep ruby, with some browning at the edges and condition is bright. The nose is complex with fruit aromas of cherry, strawberry and prunes as well as complex notes of cedar and maritime notes like seaweed (and freshly caught herring according to Ian Bell). The palate has fine texture and fresh cherry fruit flavours with prunes, firm acid and tannin. It is also fully mature and drinks well although it shows no evidence of drying out.

What was the verdict? The generous fruit flavours and soft structure will make the 2000 delicious early drinking over the next few years. However, customers who cellar Moss Wood Pinot Noir can take heart from the tasting. The 1982 vintage clearly showed that the higher yielding years will keep for at least 20 years and the 2000 should be no exception.

MOSS WOOD PINOT NOIR

VINTAGE	HARVEST DATE	BEAUME (°)	YIELD	VINTAGE RATING	OPTIMUM DRINKING
2001	16 Feb	13.7	10.0	9+	Pinot Noir as a variety really rewards bottle age. In general we would expect our pinot noir wines to start to show their full potential at 7 years from their vintage and be giving their peak performances somewhere between 10 -15 years.
2000	28 Feb	14.0	11.4	8	
1999	22 Feb	13.6	8.0	9	
1998	13 Feb	13.6	8.1	9	
1997	2 Mar	14.3	6.0	8+	
1996	15 Feb	13.4	9.0	9	
1995	14 Feb	13.6	9.2	9+	
1994	1 Mar	13.5	11.0	9	
1993	3 Mar	13.3	8.2	8	
1992	28 Feb	13.5	8.8	8	
1991	10 Mar	13.3	10.0	9	
1990	16 Mar	13.4	8.5	9	
1989	15 Mar	12.9	6.5	6	
1988	10 Feb	13.1	6.0	8	
1987	24 Feb	12.9	5.8	8	
1986	24 Feb	13.3	5.8	10	
1985	25 Feb	13.3	6.4	10	
1984	16 Feb	12.9	5.7	6	
1983	19 Feb	12.85	6.0	6	

Please note:

These comments are only accurate when the wine has been well cellared. In the interests of accuracy, only where we have reviewed a wine during the year, will we provide optimum drinking years.

Vintage Chart

Moss Wood 2001 “Glenmore Vineyard” Cabernet Sauvignon

A great season and skilful and industrious viticulture (adds IB) has produced the best Cabernet yet from Ian Bell's Glenmore Vineyard at Yallingup, ten kilometres north of Moss Wood. The north-facing vineyard with gravelly, red brown loam over clay is on Bell's family farm, just off Caves Road on the corner of Injidup Road. The first hectare of cabernet sauvignon was planted in 1990 and maturation of the vines goes a long way to explaining the intensity this wine now develops.

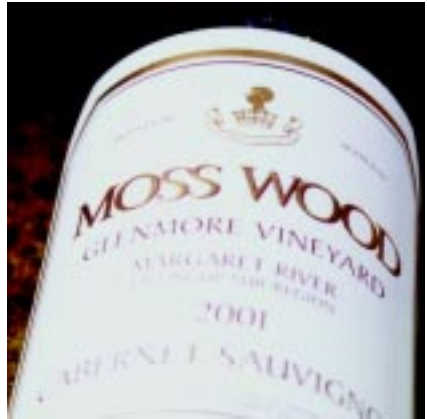
Conditions during the growing season were generally mild with just an occasional hot burst during the Christmas break and on the first weekend in March. Drought conditions didn't adversely affect the vines which ripened without difficulty.

Keith has often made comparisons between the 2001 and 1991 vintages. He continues to see similarities between the two wine styles which supports his observations about the similarities between the growing seasons. He does note, however, that 2001 didn't experience the same heat load in early February. The terrific fruit intensity of both years is a hallmark.

As always, the Glenmore was made using the same approach as the Moss Wood Cabernet. Once in the winery, the fruit was de-stemmed, put into open fermenters and seeded with a pure yeast culture. Fermentation took place at quite high temperatures (around 30°C) with the tanks

being plunged four times per day. Pressing took place after the wine had been left for 14 days on skins, post fermentation.

After it had been pressed, the wine stayed in stainless steel tanks for one week and was then racked off gross lees into 228 litre French barriques — 25% of which were new. It underwent malolactic fermentation and once that was completed, the wine was racked to a stainless steel tank, analysed, adjusted for acidity and SO₂ and then returned to barrels, where it stayed for twelve months before being bottled in July.



The fifth - and best - release of the Glenmore Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon has attractive blueberry and loganberry perfumes, is soft, round and silky, has mulberry, blueberry and redcurrant flavours and fine, ripe tannins. It is a generous red that is opulent and densely concentrated: muscular in structure yet well balanced and powerful yet elegant.

The earlier Glenmore Cabernets are aging well. Keith believes that the 2001, if well cellared, can be confidently put away for five to seven years, during which time it will mellow and gain greater complexity.

GREEN BAGS

as far as the eye can see!

The past few months has seen the Moss Wood horticultural team putting in a huge effort to plant 5000 various native species, predominantly in the creek line and surrounding the entrance driveway.



Planting of the lower section of the Moss Wood creekline with indigenous species has been completed. This is aiding in providing habitats and ecological corridors for wildlife, control of weed species and erosion control, as well as providing an aesthetically pleasing nature strip through the vineyard.

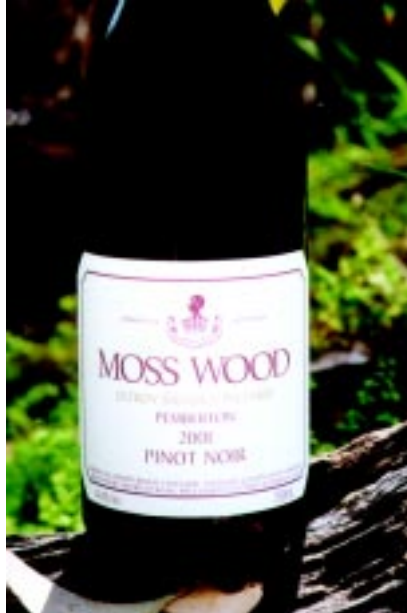
Moss Wood 2001 “Lefroy Brook Vineyard” Pinot Noir

Followers of Moss Wood will be only too aware of the vagaries of the seasons and vicissitudes of viticulture. As this is the first Lefroy Brook Pinot Noir since the 1998, it must be a great relief to the owners of the vineyard, Pat and Barbara Holt. The tiny two hectare plot, which is surrounded by national forest near the Cascades a few kilometres south-east of Pemberton, was the first vineyard in the Pemberton region (established 1982). It is close planted equally to pinot and chardonnay and is permanently netted because of its popularity with, and proximity to, the local birds.

Moss Wood produced its first Lefroy Brook Pinot Noir with the 1996 vintage. Difficulties with mites in the vineyard meant that Moss Wood chose not to buy the pinot grapes in 1999. There was a bigger crop than usual in 2000 and although the Lefroy Brook Pinot was quite fine, the team felt that it lacked concentration and was not of an appropriate standard for bottling so it went down the drain.

The 2001 vintage proved to be a good one for the Pemberton region. A cool growing season from October to December was followed by very hot days at Christmas and warm conditions during January and February. The warmth meant that the grapes ripened well and showed excellent fruit aromas and flavours. The impact of the cooler weather earlier on is also evident in the fine texture and firm tannin structure of the wines.

The vineyard was harvested at 12.7° beaume on 4th March and the grapes were transported to Margaret River where they were processed



along the lines of the Moss Wood vineyard pinot. All but 10% of the crop was de-stemmed, into an open fermenter. The remaining portion was added as whole bunches. The juice was chilled to 7°C and cold macerated for two days, during which time it was pumped over for an hour a day. It was then seeded with a pure yeast culture and fermentation took place over 13 days - with the tanks being plunged four times a day. After this, the wine was racked off gross lees into barrel where it went through malolactic fermentation. After 12 months aging in oak (33% new), the wine was racked into tank, filtered and then bottled.

Keith believes that the 2001 Moss Wood Lefroy Brook Vineyard Pinot Noir is the best red he s seen from there. It has less of the earthy, smokey notes that one expects from the region, and riper, sweeter, less savoury characters than in many vintages. There are attractive ripe spicy, red berry and redcurrant aromatics, lively redcurrant, black cherry flavours, a silky texture and a gentle, long finish. It s a classy, succulent wine that has richness, concentration and depth of flavour.

While excellent current drinking, it should improve over the next two to three years and is capable of gaining complexity and fascinating secondary characters if cellared for five years or so.



Visitors to Moss Wood will have noticed the driveway has a new entrance statement. This has been planted with an upper story of eucalypts that will eventually grow taller than the Peppermint trees. Below the Peppermint trees is an understory of various shrubs, kangaroo paws, ground covers and creepers which will provide a carpet of colour.