



MOSS WOOD



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Moss Wood 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon

The growing season in 2003 was one of our best for Cabernet Sauvignon. Conditions were consistently warm right the way through and ensured the fruit ripened nearly two weeks ahead of normal. February in particular provided a succession of warm, indeed hot, days and the fruit charged through to full ripeness. The rate of ripening was further assisted by slightly lower yields, which at 7.47 tonnes per hectare, was down by 3% on the long term average for Cabernet Sauvignon. The number of bunches carried by each vine was average but the weight of these were down because inclement weather during Spring interfered with flowering.

The warm season also ensured that disease pressure was minimal, although Margaret River's maritime climate means that our temperatures are always very conducive to Powdery Mildew. The 2003 season was no exception but the vineyard crew ensured the disease was kept under control by an effective spray program. Damage caused by birds was minimised using nets.

Amusingly, after a warm and dry summer, the only threat to quality was two rain events. The first occurred when 8mm on the 2nd February and then on the 16th February, a further 18mm fell during thunderstorms. Despite the lateness of this, the Cabernet varieties showed no ill-effects. March remained dry and the Cabernet Sauvignon



harvest was finished by 31st March. The Petit Verdot pushed the limits however because it was harvested on 10th April. From the 11th to the 18th, 31mm of rain fell - it just snuck in!

Given that so many things were in our favour for this vintage, it is not surprising that as the samples came and we approached the harvest, the team was enthusiastic about what was in store. And the fruit did not disappoint. The median harvest date for the Cabernet Sauvignon was 26th March and it was picked at an average of 13.7° Baume, contributing 92% of the blend. The Petit Verdot ripeness was 13° Baume and contributed 6%, while the Cabernet Franc was 13.5° Baume and contributed 2%.

In the winery, the technique of production was "Moss Wood traditional". The fruit was destemmed and conveyed into open fermenters and seeded for fermentation with selected yeast strains. Temperatures were maintained at around 30°C and the tanks were plunged 4 times per day for colour and tannin extraction. The wine was left on skins for 10 to 14 days and tasted daily to monitor the progress of the extraction. Each batch was pressed when the best tannin and fruit balance had been achieved.

The wine was then transferred in its various different batches to barrels where it completed malolactic fermentation, after

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which it was racked, analysed, adjusted and then returned to barrel for the aging process to do its work. All the barriques used to store the wine are French, 55% of them new and predominately from Tonnellerie Remond in Burgundy. There were also components from Taransaud, Rousseau and Bossuet.

At the end of the first year in barrel, the various batches were tasted, the impact of the different oak treatments analysed and noted and then all the different components were blended and the finished wine returned to barrel for the second year of aging.

Towards the end of the second year in wood, various fining trials were carried out to assess the final balance. In particular, the team was conscious of the fact that in lower yielding years, Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon can be uncharacteristically tannic and wanted to ensure that this was not the case for the 2003. Interestingly enough, after exhaustive tastings, we concluded that the wine was perfectly fine and didn't need any adjustment. To finish the process the wine was filtered and bottled in July 2005.

The **Moss Wood 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon** has a deep, youthful brick red colour and is in bright condition. On the nose the primary fruit aromas are typical of Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon, showing mulberries, red currants and lifted violets. In the background there are complexities of dark chocolate, coffee bean, earth and cedar.

The palate has generous dark fruit flavours of great length and breadth, combined with the classic Moss Wood balance - richness underpinned by rounded tannins. The finish is a combination of cedar and chocolate notes, combined with charr, spicy oak flavours and more ripe tannins.

Looking back over the history of the vineyard, the team sees a commonality with the 1983 vintage in this wine. The similarities are the warm year and early vintage. Not surprisingly, the young wines were very similar, with ripe, concentrated fruit flavours and tannins. Perhaps the only notable difference between them is the additional complexity resulting from the use of Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc in the 2003. Those varieties add lively fragrances to the nose and additional length and structure to the palate.

Accordingly, we have very high expectations for this vintage and believe it will give the great 2001 a run for its money in the quality stakes. The generosity of its youthful flavours makes it very enjoyable now but, using the development of 1983 as our guide, we recommend the wine be cellared for a minimum of 10 years and it will continue to age well for at least another 10 years beyond that.

RATINGS: 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon

Vintage	Harvest Date	° Baume	Yield (tonnes/ha)	Vintage Rating (out of 10)
2006	12 Apr	13.0	6.82	9+
2005	19 Mar	13.5	7.82	10
2004	25 Mar	13.6	9.11	8-9
2003	20 Mar	13.6	7.47	9
2002	20 Mar	13.3	10.1	8.5
2001	19 Mar	13.4	9.5	10
2000	28 Mar	14.0	10.3	9
1999	31 Mar	13.8	9.22	9
1998	30 Mar	13.5	10.0	8
1997	19 Mar	13.6	7.0	8
1996	14 Mar	13.7	10.0	10
1995	14 Mar	13.6	9.75	10
1994	25 Mar	12.8	8.89	8
1993	22 Mar	13.2	8.5	7
1992	26 Mar	12.8	10.0	7
1991	3 April	13.3	9.8	9
1990	2 April	12.8	8.5	9
1989	30 Mar	13.2	7.9	5
1988	10 Mar	13.0	7.1	6
1987	26 Mar	12.7	8.5	8
1986	14 Mar	12.8	5.8	6
1985	13 Mar	12.5	7.5	9
1984	12 Mar	12.3	9.0	6
1983	07 Mar	13.0	9.0	8





2006 Vintage Update

After what seemed an interminably long season, the 2006 harvest is in and we can take stock. Never before has there been such gnashing of teeth and frowning of brows! While the fruit was on the vines, all we could think about was when will the warm weather come and will the rain hold off? If it does, will the flavours ripen and if they do will the acid and tannin be in balance? Every approaching cold front was watched with trepidation - how intense is it? How cold will it be after it passes?

One can only wonder about the confusing forces of the power of prayer in this situation. Without wanting to sound flippant, the Almighty must receive mixed signals. The Margaret River grape growers were praying for dry warm conditions while the pastoralists were demanding rain!

The upshot was that we got a bit of everything - some rain and just enough warmth. Whether this was enough for the cockies is hard to say but the grape growers were generally happy.

This, of course, meant that the character of the grumbling began to change. Originally, grape quality was a concern but when that slipped into the background the grape growers began to grizzle about quantity. Yields were down and varied between varieties but overall by around 20%.

The wash up is that 2006 looks very promising. In the whites, Semillon and Chardonnay both look excellent, with lively fruit aromas and flavours.

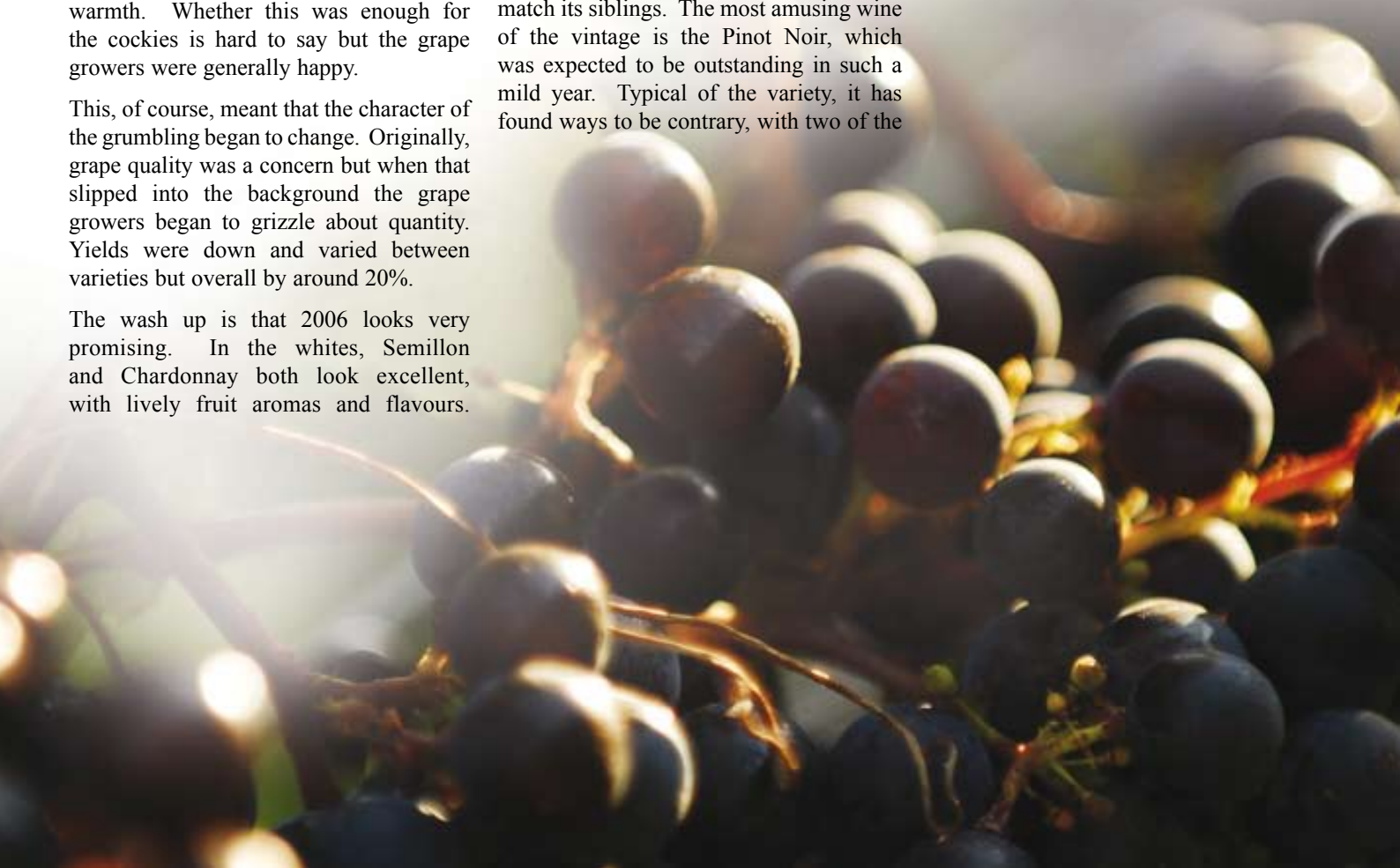
Sauvignon Blanc is also good but perhaps slightly behind these two although we are at a loss to explain why. Our feeling is that this variety does not like much rain and we had just enough to take the edge off it. The former two seem to have taken it well in their stride.

For the reds, Cabernet Sauvignon is the highlight, with some fantastic parcels from each of the vineyards. Glenmore and Montgomery Brothers produced excellent material for the "Amy's" while both Ribbon Vale blocks look good. At Moss Wood, the standouts, as usual, were the "Short Rows" and the "Old Block". The former is typically rich and concentrated while the latter displays its usual luxurious softness.

Ribbon Vale Merlot has really bright dark fruit aromas and offers much promise, as does the Petit Verdot. The Cabernet Franc has lovely cherry fruit aromas but is a bit like the Sauvignon Blanc and doesn't quite match its siblings. The most amusing wine of the vintage is the Pinot Noir, which was expected to be outstanding in such a mild year. Typical of the variety, it has found ways to be contrary, with two of the

batches being really exciting, the other two less so.

While it is still very early days, the 2006 vintage promises much. The most striking feature is the fruit ripeness of the reds. We always expect the whites to be good in the mild years and this year is no exception. However, the reds can be difficult, as 1981, 1987, 1993 and 2002 can attest. This year seems to be a twin vintage for the 1990, our previous "latest ever vintage" and one of our greats. Median harvest date on Cabernet Sauvignon in that year was 12th April compared with 19th April this year. Average ripeness for the variety was 12.8° Baume in 1990 compared with 13.0° Baume in 2006, so there are similarities. This year was slightly later but ever so slightly riper. The comparison holds well when tasting the 2006 and its ripe flavours and tannins, not normally associated with the cooler years, give us real reason for optimism.



Mailing List Review

Over the years we have built a large mailing list. We have encouraged people to join, whether they were keen to buy our wines or simply interested in following the vineyard's progress. Accordingly, the newsletter has always been a mix of wine information, as well as news of our "goings on" at Moss Wood.

We have also had many interested customers who have a favourite liquor store from where they prefer to purchase and we have encouraged them to maintain this. For these people, the newsletter has provided notification of release so they can contact their local supplier.

Readers may be interested to learn that roughly two thirds of recipients still receive the newsletters through the post. We are perfectly happy to continue this service and take pride in the quality of our hard copy publication. However, our policy has always been to only de-list people when they ask us to. So, from

its humble beginnings in 1975, the list has grown to the point where in the interest of saving the world's forests, we need to make sure that all those who receive our mailings, actually still want them. As a result, we will conduct a review of the responses to the Moss Wood 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon.

All customers who purchase wine will automatically be retained. Non-purchasing readers are very welcome to continue to receive the newsletter and we simply require your confirmation to maintain your listing. You can do this by return email or by completing and returning the reply-paid postcard received in this mailing. If we do not receive a response from you, it will be assumed you no longer wish to receive our release notifications. However, we encourage you to visit our website (www.mosswood.com.au) at your convenience to obtain current information on our wines and activities.

Ian Bell's Departure

Well, after many years of great service, Senior Winemaker Ian Bell has resigned from the Moss Wood team to concentrate on his own winemaking activities at Glenmore. Those with good memories will recall that Ian first joined Moss Wood as a casual grape picker for the 1985 vintage. Clare and Keith thought he looked a likely lad for that type of work, or indeed any kind of physical work really. For those who don't know him, he stands at 6 feet 5 inches in the old currency. Even with these attributes it was an inauspicious start, although not his fault. Ian will tell anyone who's prepared to listen about his first day on the job when it took all day to pick 2 tonnes of Chardonnay, something we should have accomplished in about an hour!

He stuck with the grape picking and then came back and helped with pruning and then came and helped with shoot positioning and so things developed. We managed to wean him off BIG tractors and broad acre farming for the subtleties of grape growing, so much so that he went off to Roseworthy College in 1987 to study viticulture. Over time, as Moss Wood grew little by little, Clare and Keith would offer Ian more responsibility and he was happy to keep taking it until he was managing all our production operations as Senior Winemaker.

Meanwhile, Ian had been a very busy bloke, working hard at home to develop his own vineyard. His first plantings were made in 1990 and he began selling his grapes to Moss Wood with the 1997. This vintage was released as the first "Glenmore Vineyard" Cabernet Sauvignon, the later vintages of which have become "Amy's" Cabernet Sauvignon. The reason for the name change was that since the 2000



vintage, Ian has been producing his own "Glenmore" Cabernet Sauvignon and Clare and Keith did not want any confusion between the wines. These Glenmore wines are now out in the market place and Ian is currently selling his 2001 vintage.

Just to add to his busy lifestyle, Ian built his own winery, making his first vintage at home in 2005. He also does contract winemaking for various Margaret River clients.

With all this going on, he finally reached the point where he realised there are only 24 hours in every day and it was time to resign and go back to the farm and concentrate his efforts. Clare and Keith accepted his resignation with sadness, although being the dedicated fellow he is, he gave 9 months notice to ensure we had a proper handover! What else can we say except everyone at Moss Wood thanks Ian for his hard work and friendship and wishes "the Big Fella" all the best.

Who will do what now?

With Ian's departure come some staff moves but it will be business as usual. Josh Bahen moves from the vineyard back to the winery in the Senior Winemaker role. Steve Clarke, currently in the grip of his viticulture studies at Charles Sturt University, steps up to the Vineyard Manager's role. Jarod Bawden, also with his head in the viticulture books at Charles Sturt, fills Steve's job as Assistant Vineyard Manager. Meanwhile in the winery, Amanda Shepherdson continues in her Winemaker role and Ed Bugden continues as Cellar Foreman. Everyone is looking forward to their new challenges and are keen to get on with the job.

Welcome to Lauren Pierson

Lauren Pierson has come on board mid April to assist in many different roles. She helps Angie Bussell in the warehouse at Ribbon Vale and hosts visitor tastings. She also works at the office with Mike, Aileen, Amy and Rebecca. She seems to take all these different roles in her stride with a "get stuck in" attitude. Oh, and no matter what the circumstances, her friendly disposition means she's always good for a chat!

Originally from Perth, Lauren joined us from Lotterywest and seems to enjoy her life in the country, not surprising really because she is a VERY keen horsewoman and rides whenever she can. She also treats with disdain the snide remarks from the winery crew about what they think of horses. However, the boys are impressed with her wicked V6 ute and want to pinch it for some "circle work". Don't lose those keys Lauren!