



MOSS WOOD

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Moss Wood 2006 Semillon

The very cool conditions that prevailed during the 2005/2006 growing season meant that our quality expectations for the Semillon were high. From the past we knew that wines like the excellent 2002 was a product of a long cool season, as were the 1993, 1990, 1985 and 1982.

Our chief concern was the interference of the other weather component usually associated with mild temperatures – rain. While Semillon is a generally robust variety, it can split if it receives too much rain which can then lead to lower quality when fungi like Botrytis take hold. During the growing season we maintain a prophylactic spray program to keep the disease pressure to a minimum. However, even the best management programs will turn to mush if Mother Nature decides to give us a good bath! As things turned out, the rain came in small enough doses that the fruit did not split and the overall effect was to give us a very slow but even ripening. This meant the winery crew had what seemed an interminable wait but in the end, the quality made it all worthwhile.

When they did finally swing into action, the production was typical of our current Semillon technique. The fruit was whole-bunch pressed and the juice was pumped to a stainless steel tank, where it was chilled, enzyme was added and allowed to settle for 48 hours. After settling, the clear

juice, plus 2% of the solids were racked to a stainless steel tank for fermentation at 18C. The juice was stirred once per day during fermentation and then once per week for 6 weeks once it was finished.

In preparation for bottling, the wine was fined with bentonite for protein stability then cold stabilised and sterile filtered. Bottling was carried out on 26th June 2006.

The wine has light to medium straw colour and is in bright condition. On the



nose, there is the full array of Semillon fruit aromas, including Granny Smith apple, fig leaf and lemon sherbet, with additional complexity of honey notes and doughy characters from lees stirring. It also displays the unusual Semillon mushroom and earthy notes. Amusingly, these suggest the wine has been fermented and aged in barrels when in fact it hasn't. We are at a loss to explain where they come from but have been part of Moss Wood Semillon since the first vintage. Keith is quite happy to acknowledge that as a know-it-all Roseworthy College graduate, he fell for the same trick.

As expected in a cool vintage like 2006, the palate is very fresh, combining crisp acidity, vibrant leaf and fig fruit flavours. The wine is medium to full bodied, so the flavours are quite generous and long and there is some tannin to provide structure on the finish.

In comparing this wine with a vintage like the 1982, we have the same high expectations for cellaring. So while the young fruit characters make the wine very drinkable now, the depth and structure suggest it will cellar for at least 20 years. The proviso for those who do choose to age the wine is to be cautious during its middle years, usually between 5 and 10 years old. During this adolescent period it may be a little subdued on the nose and will benefit from decanting.

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Moss Wood 2006 “Ribbon Vale Vineyard” Semillon Sauvignon Blanc

Our high expectations for wine quality extended to the Semillon Sauvignon Blanc blend from Ribbon Vale. For a wine that relies on lifted and zesty fruit notes as this one does, the 2006 season was close to perfect, although the rain threatened to take the shine off things. The main concern is that rain will dilute the flavours, rather than the threat of disease, although this can be a problem too.

Frequent sampling is crucial so the harvest can be timed to catch the lifted fruit characters we are looking. These are generally available at around 11.5 Baume and not much more. With the 2006 we kept one eye on the weather forecast and one on the sample results and when rain threatened the Sauvignon Blanc was picked. The result was very pleasing ripeness of 11.4 Baume and we beat a “moderate rain event”.

If the Sauvignon Blanc provides the aromatics, the Semillon component of the blend provides the flavour. Ribbon Vale



Semillon produces a different style to that grown at the Moss Wood vineyard, even though they are separated by only about 1.5 kilometres. The southwesterly aspect means that it is cooler and slower to ripen and needs careful attention, including bunch thinning, to make sure it is not over-cropped. Excess crop would mean poor ripeness and thin, uninteresting wine from a variety that we need to give the wine mouth feel, length and complexity. To illustrate the difference between the two vineyards, Moss Wood was picked at 12.6 Baume on April 1st, while Ribbon Vale was picked nearly two weeks later at 12.8 Baume on April 13th. This was good ripeness, especially in the context of the

year, and fruit flavours were excellent.

Both components were made with a similar technique to Moss Wood Semillon. The fruit was whole-bunch pressed then the juice was cold settled for 48 hours. The Sauvignon Blanc does not require enzyme and after racking from the settling lees, no solids were added. The Semillon was settled with enzyme and then racked to the fermenter with 2% solids. Both were fermented at 18C but the lees stirring regimes were different. The Sauvignon Blanc was stirred only once per week and then not at all after fermentation. The Semillon was stirred daily and then once per week after fermentation. We use the different techniques because we want to preserve primary fruit freshness in the Sauvignon Blanc but look for a rich and complex palate from the Semillon.

After the Semillon has finished lees contact the two components are blended, fined with bentonite for protein stability, cold stabilised and then sterile filtered for bottling, which was done on 27th June.

The resulting wine continues the typical Moss Wood style for this blend. It has a light straw colour and is in bright condition. The nose is fresh and lifted, showing vibrant leafy and gooseberry fruit notes which stand up in the glass. The riper fig-like notes of the Semillon are also present. The palate combines fresh lemon, leaf and gooseberry fruit flavours with crisp acidity, medium body, good length and a clean finish. The wine's chemistry and Semillon component mean that it will cellar successfully but not surprisingly, this style is an attractive drinking prospect right now and can be enjoyed on its own as an aperitif or with more delicately flavoured foods.

RATINGS: Moss Wood Semillon

Vintage	Harvest Date	° Beaume	Yield (tonnes/ha)	Rating (out of 10)
2006	01 Apr	12.6	10.5	10
2005	03 Mar	13.1	9.36	9
2004	16 Mar	13.4	13.0	8+
2003	12 Mar	12.9	9.2	9
2002	15 Mar	13.7	8.3	10
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

Moss Wood 2004 Pinot Noir

Well, the 2004 vintage provided some interesting moments for the vineyard and winery crew. The growing season was largely unremarkable, with mild, even temperatures and moderate rainfall and no serious problems to speak of. A heat spike in mid-March caused some issues for the Cabernet Sauvignon but the Pinot Noir was well and truly harvested by then.

Our main concern with this variety is to ensure that it does not over-crop. When it does, colour in particular can be too light. To avoid this problem, crop estimates are done regularly during the season by determining the average number of bunches per vine and then applying an estimated average bunch weight to calculate the crop. All very simple really, although it is more art than science because the average bunch weight can only be an estimate. This is based on how good we assume the flowering conditions to have been. Fortunately in most years we are spot on, but in others, like 2004 or 2000, we prove we are only human.

In 2004, we estimated the bunch weight of the “Droopy” Pinot Noir to be close to the average of 100 grams. It actually came in at 144 grams or 44% more crop than we expected.

Once it's in the winery, a bigger crop requires a slight change to the technique. The best way to ensure good colour is to drain off a percentage of the juice. If wineries carry out this process, they will occasionally ferment the drained juice and sell the resulting wine as a lightly coloured rose. It can also be used for sparkling wine base. At Moss Wood our inexperience with both these wine styles didn't give us any confidence, so we removed 20% of the volume but the spare juice went down the drain.

After this the technique returned to normal and the fermenters were chilled down to 10C for 48 hours, the juice pumped over once per day. The juice was then warmed up to 18C, seeded with pure yeast culture, and fermented at 30C with hand plunging 4 times per day. Once fermentation passed 0 Baume each batch was tasted twice daily until the right tannin balance was perceived and then the wines were pressed and racked to stainless steel for settling on gross lees.

The wine was racked off gross lees into barrels where it stayed until it completed malolactic fermentation. It was then racked to stainless steel, analysed, adjusted for acidity and sulphur dioxide and returned to barrel.

Barrel aging continued until October 2004 after which the wine was racked to stainless steel and fining trials were carried out. No finings were considered necessary, so the wine was sterile filtered and bottled on 15th November 2005.

The wine has deep ruby colour and its condition is bright. The nose is a complex array of fruit aromas including cherry, plum and roses, with a background of mushroom, charry oak and cinnamon spice. The palate has bright red and dark fruit flavours that fill the mouth but the texture is quite delicate with medium



body. The result is a fine, lingering flavour with rounded tannins from both fruit and oak that give backbone and length.

In comparing the wine with recent vintages, it combines the finer fruit characters of the 2002 with the riper, slightly bigger palate of the 2001 and probably most resembles wines like the 1995 and 1986. That being the case, we are confident about its aging ability and recommend that those who have the opportunity to cellar the wine should do so for at least ten years. This will see the wine develop much of its complex bottle bouquet but we hastily reassure people that this is not the full lifespan of the wine.

We had a reminder of this at a dinner held in June as a send off for Ian Bell. Since Ian's first vintage with us was 1985, we tried each of the four wines we made in that year and all were looking good. However, the wine that really turned

heads was the Pinot Noir. Despite the fact that we have great enthusiasm for this variety, it would not be unfair to say its Moss Wood's least acclaimed wine and some may doubt its quality and keeping ability. Both bottles of the 1985 were sensational, drank beautifully and each one promised at least another 5 years of improvement. Keith for one was hopeful that they would, since it was a very good year and the second one where we used “Burgundian” technique. However, the enthusiasm around the table was great to see, as all the other diners lapped it up. For any customers still lucky enough to have this wine in the cellar, it should provide a great treat when opened.

RATINGS: Moss Wood Pinot Noir

Vintage	Harvest Date	° Beaume	Yield (tonnes/ha)	Rating (out of 10)
2006	04 Mar	13.0	3.52	9
2005	08 Feb	12.8	6.13	9+
2004	14 Feb	13.0	6.4	9
2003	11 Feb	12.7	4.8	10
2002	07 Feb	13.0	4.3	10
2001	16 Feb	13.7	10.0	9+
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	02 Mar	14.3	6.0	8+
1996	15 Feb	13.4	9.0	9
1995	14 Feb	13.6	9.2	9+
1994	01 Mar	13.5	11.0	9
1993	03 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



Moss Wood “Amy’s” 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon

This is the first of our 2005 Cabernet-based wines to be released and it carries the quality hallmark of the vintage. It was an excellent growing season for the variety although marred ever so slightly by some late rain. Fortunately, neither the Glenmore nor Montgomery Brothers vineyard was affected, and both produced fruit of excellent quality. Although they are relatively young, it would not be going too far to suggest that this is the best vintage either has produced.

When a vintage is this good, the responsibility of the winery is to get the wine safely through the production process without compromising the quality and the winemaking crew delivered. The production technique was varied slightly in that the fruit was destemmed into both open and closed fermenters. Each batch was seeded with pure yeast culture and fermentation proceeded, with plunging or gentle pumpover 3 times per day. Temperatures were set at a maximum of 30C. Pressing took place after 3 or 4 days, depending on the batch but it is important to note this wine spends less time on skins than either the Ribbon

Vale or Moss Wood wines. The reason is that we seek to preserve the freshest fruit characters and are not looking for bigger and complex tannins.

After pressing, the wine is racked to barrel, where it spent 14 months. Again,

there is a difference in style compared with its two siblings. We use only 25% new oak and less time in barrel to further retain fresh fruit notes.

From barrel, the wine was racked to stainless steel and fining trials were carried out, although in the end no fining was needed. The wine was then sterile filtered and bottled on 29th July 2006.

The wine has deep brick red colour and is in bright condition. On the nose, the Glenmore contributes its usual fruit aromas of blueberry and plum and Montgomery Brothers is all raspberries and violets. They combine to produce classic Cabernet Sauvignon aromas with a soft oak background. The theme of bright fruit characters continues on the palate, where the wine has vibrant blueberry and mulberry flavours, full body, good length and a firm tannin finish. It is quite drinkable now with its plump fruit flavours and we encourage people to enjoy it as a youngster. However, it has the chemistry and structure to repay time in the cellar and we suggest 5 to 7 years.

