



MOSS WOOD

MARGARET RIVER

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Moss Wood 2005 Pinot Noir

The 2005 growing season in Margaret River was great and so we have high hopes for the pinot noir.

The vineyard management program applied the usual rigour so necessary with this variety. Yields were very good and so aggressive that bunch thinning was

necessary to get the crop down to the required level of between 2 and 3 tonnes per acre and hand leaf removal maximised fruit exposure. The winemaking approach followed traditional practice at Moss Wood. The grapes were destemmed into open tanks, with 5% of bunches being included uncrushed. Long-term readers of the newsletter would know that 15 years ago 50% of bunches were uncrushed. The consequent characters derived from stalks are no longer considered a desirable character either in Burgundy or Margaret River central – except to provide some subliminal background complexity. The wine was aged for 20 months in new (33%) and used oak before being racked into tank where it was sterile filtered (but not fined) before bottling on 3rd November 2006.

Keith sees the Moss Wood 2005 Pinot Noir as having a deep ruby colour, a complex nose of bright strawberries and dark cherry flavours across the mid and back palate. It has fresh acidity and firm tannins though these are well-balanced by fruit and spicy, charry oak flavours and its weight.



Peter Forrestal's tasting notes describe the wine as having pretty, lifted aromatics and rich, concentrated and complex, mulberry, black cherry flavours with some gamey, stinky notes; powerful, long and balanced.

Given the quality of the vintage, we see this as being an excellent wine and using the historical tasting of November 2006 as our guide, we recommend a minimum cellaring time of 10 years.

During this time it will gradually soften and become more complex, showing Pinot Noir's earthy, mushroom and meaty notes. Given the staying power exhibited by the 1985, we think the 2005 will age quite comfortably to 20 years of age for those who are really keen on cellaring. ■

Ratings: Moss Wood Pinot Noir

VINTAGE	HARVEST DATE	° BEAUME	YIELD (TONNES /HA)	VINTAGE RATING (OUT OF 10)
2007	04 Feb	13.1	5.35	9
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 2007 Semillon

There's been a great deal of musing at Moss Wood since the major vertical tasting last November at which we tasted all the vintages of Moss Wood Semillon from 1985 to 2006. The general feeling has been that over the past ten years the style of the wine has become deliberately riper and this has limited its green characters.



This has raised something of a dilemma because these are vital if the Moss Wood Semillon is to continue to be a cellaring proposition. The historical view suggested the best of the estate's semillons are those where the wine has retained the last of the green fruit notes rather than those where we waited a few extra days, so they disappear. This change in approach has the potential to introduce a paradox. In slow-ripening, cooler years (like 2006 or 2002), the grapes will be picked riper and the final alcohol content of the wine will be higher because the greener flavours are retained for longer. In contrast, the green notes are likely to disappear faster in warm years (like 2003), leading to an earlier and potentially lower ripeness at harvest, with a commensurate reduction in final alcohol. It is therefore likely that the ripeness of the grapes and the final alcohol will continue to vary from year to year.

All this musing led the Moss Wood team to conclude that, in order to encourage the ageing ability of the Semillon, they needed to review picking criteria, harvest beaume and flavour ripeness.

The 2007 vintage (with 15th February as the mean harvest date) was the earliest on record (with 1988 in second spot on the 22nd). It was the product of early flowering - the 98 days from flowering to harvest is normal. The season was superb although yields were well down - as the bunch weight reflected. Average bunch weight for the semillon was 170 grams against the long term average of 200 grams. Quality was excellent with the only disappointment being the small volumes.

The Moss Wood team approached the harvest with a new mind-set and the semillon blocks were picked according to revised criteria: catching the grapes just before

Ratings: Moss Wood Semillon				
VINTAGE	HARVEST DATE	° BEAUME	YIELD (TONNES /HA)	VINTAGE RATING (OUT OF 10)
2007	15 Feb	12.5	7.68	9
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

the green characters are lost. There were also some changes to the production techniques with no whole bunch pressing as the team returned to the more traditional technique of destemming before pressing. This gives a small amount of skin contact as the fruit goes through the press and has the added advantage of speeding up the process.

Fermentation took place as normal in stainless steel tanks held at 18°C, with

weekly lees stirring. After the fermentation had been completed, there was a reduction in the amount of lees stirring to emphasise the wine's primary fruit notes. Before bottling it was fined for protein stabilisation (using bentonite) and tannin (using isinglass). It was sterile filtered and bottled on 9th June 2007.

Keith noted the bright, medium-straw colour of the 2007 Semillon, its fresh aromas of citrus, fig leaf,

Moss Wood 2006 Amy's Cabernet Sauvignon

From early this year we have been subtly revamping and finessing our labels. However, with Amy's, you might see a more dramatic move to the contemporary which we think is in keeping with the style of Amy's and its role as a wine that introduces new customers to Moss Wood. We hope you like the new label and will let us know if we have been successful in hitting the mark or not.

We start the discussion about this new wine with some opinions about the 2006 vintage. There has been a deal of debate about the quality of the vintage for reds in Margaret River – not surprisingly, as this was the coolest vintage on record by some considerable margin.

Opinions amongst the regions winemakers are varied, to say the least and so readers can expect to see more of this in the future. The cool vintages have been the most challenging in the region with two notable exceptions – 1982 and 1990 – both of which have produced some of Moss Wood's and the region's greatest-ever wines.

The Moss Wood team are very pleased with the Amy's components and the Ribbon Vale reds from 2006 and rank it ahead of the cool vintage that precedes it, 2002. Lessons learnt from the latter were put to good use. Perhaps the most important of these was the value of good fruit exposure, something we always pursue but which really comes to the fore in very cool conditions. In order to maximise the quality, the cabernet sauvignon vines were leaf plucked by hand,

leaving all bunches fully exposed to the sun. With zero shading the fruit temperatures reach higher levels and this promotes the loss of "green" fruit aromas. It is also thought to enhance ripening of the seeds, giving tannins that are ripe and creamy – which gives lovely texture and greater length.

Although we have used this technique in Pinot Noir for a number of years, there are risks associated with it, particularly sunburn. However, after analysing the temperature data up to mid-January 2006, the Moss Wood team realising that the season was very cool – the maximum temperature was 4°C below average – decided that the season had been so cool it was worth the risk to give the vines the chance to produce the maximum amount of ripe fruit. Hence the decision to do full leaf removal and they encouraged the Amy's growers, Ian Bell and Max Montgomery, to do the same.

In order to add some better science to this method, a statistically sound trial has been conducted by new staff member, Rob Gherardi, as part of his BSc studies at the Margaret River campus of Curtin University, to see if different shading within a single block is perceptible in the finished cabernet. The three treatments were replicated in the Long Rows Block, where the vines were given the normal treatment of moderately exposed,



as well as 50% exposed and fully exposed to the sunlight. Interim results suggest the differences are perceivable although the final tastings will confirm if this is correct. In the end we hope this will make for more informed decisions about the appropriate level of fruit exposure in the cabernet.

In summary of all this, Keith is very pleased with the quality of the fruit notes and the ripeness of the tannins in the Amy's and that's the reason he's prepared to compare 2006 to 1982 and 1990. There is one important proviso. While the comparison is favourable, there is no doubt in his mind that the two earlier vintages are better. The final opinion on the Moss Wood 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon is still evolving.

Cepage is the French word for the components of a blend. So, the cepage of the 2006 Amy's is cabernet sauvignon (85%), petit verdot (8%), merlot (4%) and malbec (3%).

....cont from page 2 - Moss Wood Semillon 2007

tobacco, limes and lanolin; its medium to full body and great texture, fig and citrus flavours filling the mid-palate before a finish that featured fresh, linear acidity. He saw good phenolics on the finish that added length and texture and the wine leaves a finish which he described as searingly fruity. The youthful fruit flavours make it a very attractive short term prospect but its depth and structure certainly underpin good

cellaring potential. We would recommend a minimum of 10 years.

Peter Forrestal mentioned its restrained delicacy on the nose with gently fragrant cut grass and fresh garden herbs aromas flowing through onto the palate, complex primary flavours of lemon sherbet, gooseberry and fresh apples; tight, fine palate that appears lean at present, and a zesty finish that lingers. ■

Moss Wood 2007 Ribbon Vale Vineyard Semillon Sauvignon Blanc

This wine is very much a product of interesting winemaking and seasonal influences. The former relates to work done by the Australian Wine Research Institute to determine the best yeast strains which enhance primary characters (especially aromatics) of Sauvignon Blanc.

From their recommendations we chose to use 3 strains - X5, Wallaby and Vin 13 - with Amanda Shepherdson and Josh Bahen taking responsibility for the trials. Keith felt each batch had really distinct fruit aromas but as good as the individual components were, the final blend really shone. That leaves us with an interesting question – what of

the latter? What was the real key behind the result? Was it just the impact of the yeast selections or is it the sheer quality of the 2007 vintage? Given the vibrant aromatics displayed by all the varieties we can't underestimate the impact of the season.

Overall, our approach to this wine hasn't changed - the yeast trials were all about enhancing this. We want the Sauvignon Blanc to deliver a fresh, lifted and attractive nose, while the Semillon provides complexity of aroma but more importantly, weight and length on the palate.

The fruit was destemmed into the press, in a similar fashion to the Moss Wood Semillon, drained and pressed and then settled in stainless steel tanks. It was then racked and fermented in stainless steel

at 15°C. There was no lees stirring post-fermentation for the Sauvignon Blanc and only weekly stirring for the Semillon. Before bottling, it was fined for protein stability (bentonite) and tannin (isinglass) and then sterile filtered and bottled on 10th June 2007.

Keith sees the finished wine as having lifted primary fruit aromas, leafy, gooseberry, mango characters while the palate is fresh and lively with citrus, leaf and guava flavours, fine texture. For him, it's less complex with lighter weight than previously. He says it's probably his bias in favour of the style of the Semillon that shows through here. Keith's conservatism is swamped by Peter Forrestal's enthusiastic tasting notes – it's fragrant, bright, juicy and vibrant with



intense ripe tropical fruit (guava, mango, gooseberry) and passionfruit flavours, a brilliant cool fruitiness, before a finish that is crunchy, zesty and tangy. An irresistible youthful white. ■

....cont from page 3 - Moss Wood Amy's 2006

The 2006 Amy's was made according to the traditional method followed with the Moss Wood cabernets or as Keith says 'It is treated just like a Moss Wood wine.' It was destemmed into open tanks; seeded for fermentation with cultured yeast; hand-plunged four times a day for colour and tannin extraction during fermentation; each batch is left on skins for generally four days; tasted for tannin balance, pressed, and racked to barrel where

it went through malolactic fermentation. However, compared to the home vineyard cabernet, it does have less time on skins and less new oak (25% is new / one / two and three year-old oak) and only 12 months in oak. After 12 months, the wine was fined with skim milk, sterile filtered and bottled on July 27th, 2007.

Keith describes the Moss Wood 2006 Amy's as having bright fruit aromas with some

blueberries from Glenmore and raspberries from the Montgomery vineyard with charry oak and attractive floral fruit notes. The palate shows concentrated red and dark berry flavours across the mid and back palate, good length, and well balanced tannins and smoky, toasty oak on the finish. Most pleasingly, it has generosity of fruit.

Wine writer Peter Forrestal's notes describe the 2006 Amy's as having bright dried

herb aromas, rich, ripe, concentrated blackcurrant and mulberry flavours with some earthy, minty notes. It is well-balanced, has good depth and length, succulence in the mid-palate and pleasing approachability to finish. ■

Consultancy Work

Any of our readers who take more than a passing interest in wine will probably have noticed that there are several wines available in the marketplace that have, or have had, an association with Moss Wood. Clare and Keith are keen that there is no confusion of what Moss Wood does.

Over the years, Keith has conducted a consultancy business to provide viticulture and or winemaking services to Higher Plane, Fraser Gallop and Victory Point in Margaret River and to Lamonts in the Swan Valley. In addition, Moss Wood has done contract winemaking for Higher Plane, Green Valley, Max Montgomery and Victory Point. Over the last couple of years these activities have been wound down and there are now only two remaining

clients. We currently produce Victory Point Chardonnay and Montgomery Brothers Cabernet Sauvignon, although the latter finishes with the 2007 vintage.

For those with an interest in history, the consultancy work was originally set up when the Mugfords decided to delay the release of the Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon and make all of this wine in the "Special Reserve" style. The first of these was the 1996 vintage, the release of which

was delayed from July 1998 to July 1999. Naturally enough, this left a big hole in the company's sales for that year and Clare and Keith needed alternative strategies to keep the business going, one of which was consultancy. The other strategy continues to be a big part of our lives. That was the introduction of a new red wine to the range – the Glenmore Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon. It's still going strong under its new name – the Amy's.

Post Vintage Celebrations

Each year at Moss Wood we have a post vintage party. We thought some photos from this years dinner might help you put some faces to names!



Amanda Shepherdson & Jen Monteith.



Bottom row (L-R) Rob Gherardi, Jarod Bawden, Alice Duzevich, Tristan Mugford. Middle row (L-R) Jeanette Gee, Aileen Dickhart, Eloise Mugford, Keith Mugford, Angie Bussell, Hugh Mugford, Imogen Mugford, Clare Mugford. Back row (L-R) Josh Bahen, Alex Coultas, Steve Clarke, Ben Campbell, Mike Bowles, Amy Sobol & Kristiina Saar.



Left to right: Ben Campbell, Steve Clarke, Alex Coultas.



Left to right: Imogen, Tristan and Hugh Mugford.



Lauren Pierson & Angie Bussell

Bulletin Board

Label changes

You will notice that the 2007 Semillon, Moss Wood 2007 Ribbon Vale Vineyard Semillon Sauvignon Blanc and 2005 Pinot Noir all bear labels with some subtle remodelling designed by Peter & Felicity McDonald. Our aim is to slightly modernise the label of each, while still retaining the classic style that Moss Wood has and always will try to offer our customers both in packaging and in wine.

Rob Gherardi

In August we welcomed Rob Gherardi to the Moss Wood team. Rob is currently studying for his BSc (majoring in viticulture and oenology) at Curtin University in Margaret River and he will be helping us in both the vineyard and the winery. Like most penurious students, Rob has been working as much as possible and so he's not really a recent arrival at Moss Wood and has proven himself as a jack of all trades. Over the last two years he has worked the vintage, helped out in

the vineyard and shared his passion for wine as a congenial visitor host on weekends.

Rob is not one to let the grass grow under his feet and his interests are diverse. It is quite possible that if any readers are keen on diving and have visited Western Australia's north-west, they may already know him. Before his time with us, Rob completed a BSc at Murdoch University (majoring in Biotechnology and Marine Biology) which led him to Exmouth where, amongst other things, he worked as a Dive master, taking diving tours of the Ningaloo Reef.

Baby Pia Violet

For the many of you who have visited Moss Wood and have met Angie Bussell and continue to ask of her progress, we have very important news. Angie and Jarod welcomed Pia Violet into the world on 4th August, weighing in at 3.38kg. Mother, Father and baby are going fine!

Secure Internet Payment

Moss Wood continues to do its best to move with the times and now offers a secure payment option for credit card purchases through our web page. This currently also includes an introductory 5% discount on all orders.

New Email Newsletter

If you received this newsletter via email, we hope you like the new format! Please let us know how we can improve it in future.

Farewell and best wishes to Alice Duzevich

Alice, who is both a Wine and Cheese maker joined us for a vintage position in 2007. We were impressed by her intelligence and skills and asked her to stay on and help Lauren in Logistics and hosting, filling Angie's enormous shoes while she is away on maternity leave caring for new baby, Pia. Alice has a passion for food

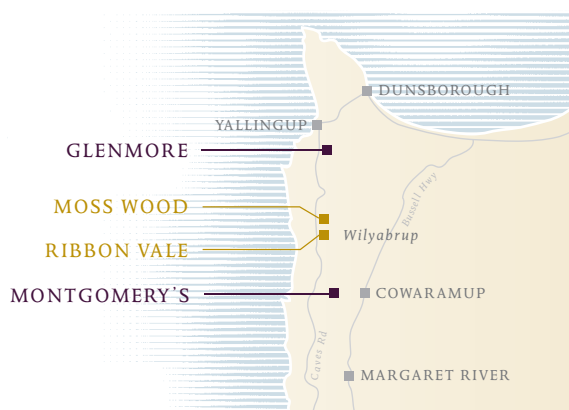


Rob Gherardi



Baby Pia Violet

as well as fine wine and has moved on to the Wine Deli at the Smith's Beach Resort to follow her dream of working with local produce. Don Hancey and Ian Parmenter would find her an enthusiastic disciple, we wish her well in her new pursuits. Lauren Pierson, who many of you will have met, will carry on in this role which carries immense responsibility and is of great importance to a small, quality wine producer such as ourselves.



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