



**MOSS WOOD**  
MARGARET RIVER  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

# LATE SPRING NEWS

ISSUE 80 NOVEMBER 2012

## Moss Wood 2009 Pinot Noir

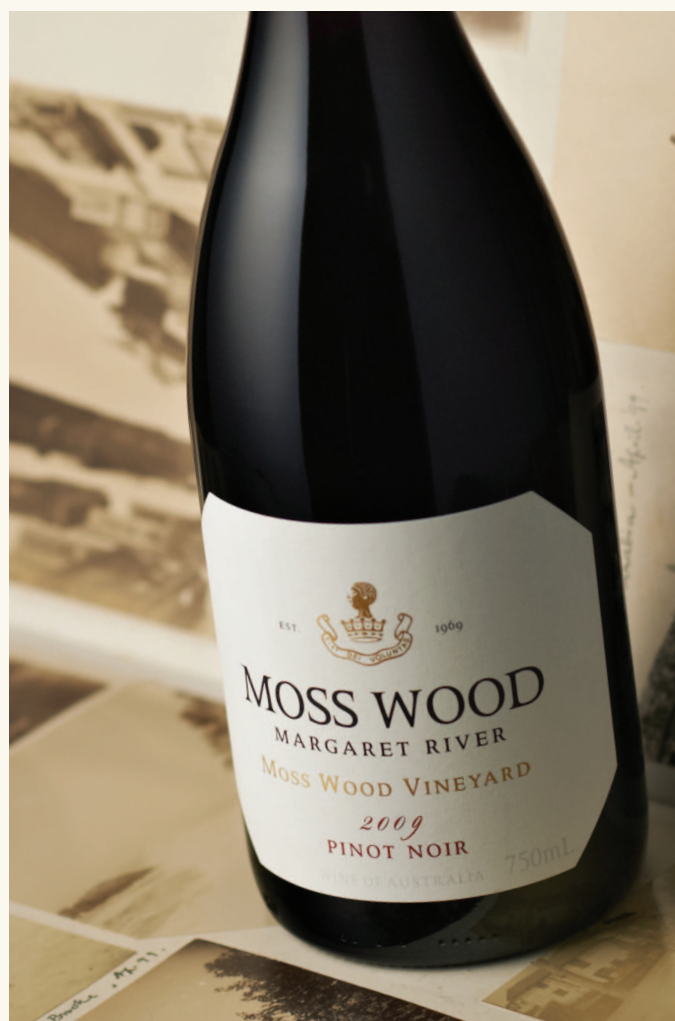
### Vintage Notes

The weather was a somewhat inconsistent during the Spring of 2008 and the period during the Pinot Noir flowering was particularly difficult. The median flowering date was 11th November, 2008, which is very slightly later than the average of 8th November. During the preceding two weeks, significant rain fell and then in the last week, temperatures dropped, with the overnight minimum twice falling to 4°C.

Conditions were not ideal and not surprisingly, the yields were down and this can be traced back to the bunch weight, which at 108 grams was 8 grams (7%) below the long-term average. The overall yield of 4.03 tonnes per hectare was 38% down on the long term average of 6.49 and is the third lowest on record. Only the 1980, was reduced to 2.95 tonnes per hectare by bird damage, and the 1981, reduced to 3.48 tonnes per hectare by wind and hail damage, were lower.

This was not all bad news because with Pinot Noir, our experience suggests high yield can have a negative effect on quality. In general, much is made of this in critical discussion of the variety. The greatest Moss Wood is still considered to be the 1981 but there are other wines of almost the same quality that came from higher cropping years. The 1985 at 5.75 tonnes per hectare, the 1990 at 6.99 tonnes per hectare, the 1995 at 7.04 tonnes per hectare and the 2005 at 6.13 tonnes per hectare are obvious candidates and prove that it's not as simple as we might think.

The traditional view in Burgundy is to produce high quality Pinot Noir, the yield should not exceed 40 hectolitres of wine per hectare. The long term Moss Wood average of 6.49 tonnes per hectare converts to 44 hectolitres per hectare. This shows that at least part of the answer may lie in the fact that Moss Wood, as an unirrigated vineyard, has relatively low production levels, so even



our big years are not high by wider industry standards.

Perhaps it's best to conclude that yield is just one of a range of contributors to quality. The reality is that not all the low yielding years are great, 2002, at 4.29 tonnes per hectare being a good case in point. That growing season was very mild and we had high expectations, anticipating

a rival for the '81 but things didn't turn out quite as we'd hoped. Although crops were small and the season cool, the wine, which is of perfectly good quality, never quite reached our lofty expectations. It would seem that sufficient warmth, at the correct time, is probably of greater importance than yield.

One of the curious things about low crop wines, of any variety, from our vineyard, is they frequently have restrained aromas on the nose and concentrated, “grippy” tannins on the palate. The 1981 is the only real exception to this.

The relatively mild nature of the season continued on from the Spring, because the ripening time from flowering to harvest was 107 days, one week longer than the average of 100. It meant the fruit ripened in relatively mild conditions, without being too cool, so picking ripeness was exactly the same as average 13.3° Baume, enough to give good weight but without exceeding 13.5% alcohol.

All the fruit was hand harvested. Processing at the winery was typical for Moss Wood Pinot Noir, with destemming into small fermenters, where the must was chilled down to 8°C and allowed to cold soak for 48 hours before being seeded with a pure yeast culture. Fermentation then proceeded at temperatures up to 30°C and were hand plunged up to 4 times per day for extraction. After 14 days on skins each batch was pressed, racked to barrel and underwent malolactic fermentation. After this was completed the wine was racked, adjusted and returned to barrel, where it stayed until December 2010.

In preparation for bottling fining trials were carried out but the wine was well balanced and fining was not required. It was then sterile



filtered and bottled on 14th January, 2011.

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### Production Notes

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**Median Harvest Date:**  
25th February, 2009

**Harvest Ripeness:**  
13.3° Baume

All the fruit was hand harvested. Processing at the winery was typical for Moss Wood Pinot Noir, with destemming into small, open, stainless steel fermenters, where the must was chilled down to 8°C and allowed to cold soak for 48 hours before being seeded with a pure yeast culture. Fermentation then proceeded at temperatures up to 30°C and were hand plunged up to 4 times per day for extraction. After 14 days on skins each batch was pressed, racked to barrel and underwent malolactic fermentation.

After this was completed the wine was racked, adjusted and returned to barrel, where it stayed until December 2010.

In preparation for bottling fining trials were carried out but the wine was well balanced and fining was not required. It was then sterile filtered and bottled on 14th January, 2011.

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### Tasting Notes

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**Colour and condition:**

Deep ruby hue; bright condition.

**Nose:** Bright, rich nose of cherry, plum, roses and spices, showing great lift but complex notes provide depth underneath, with touches of earth and spicy oak. A terrific combination of concentrated fruit and complexity.

**Palate:** This same impact of depth and concentration appears on the palate, with bright cherry and plum

flavours lighting up the front and mid-palate. The wine has full body, and great texture with balanced tannins that add length but leave the finish long and smooth. The soft oak adds a nice note at the end.

**Cellaring:** Delicious wine, with great early appeal, this is also a tremendous cellaring prospect. It will need at least 10 years to produce a reasonable level of bottle bouquet, by which time it will have built more earthy complexity. However, looking at the development of older Moss Wood Pinot Noirs, its very best will take more like 15 to 20 years, by which time it will be at its most complete. Beyond this it will continue to age well and should last at least 25 years, in a good cellar, before the fruit notes begin to diminish.





## Moss Wood 2010 Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir

### Vintage Notes

As we prepared for our third vintage in Mornington Peninsula, we were hopeful that after all the difficulties associated with the extreme heat of 2009, we might return to some semblance of normality in 2010. Luckily, Mother Nature decided she was on our side.

Conditions were ideal in Spring, with regular rainfall but no disruption to flowering, the mid-point of which was spot on average on 18th November, 2009. The steady conditions continued right through to harvest with consistent warmth and no extreme heat. Originally we had anticipated a slightly later than average start but beautiful days in February brought things to a head in

the last week. All 3 clones, 114, 115 and MV6 ripened together and came off on 28th which gave a period of 101 days to harvest, slightly ahead of the average of 106 days. In the Mornington region, with its tendency to ripen Pinot Noir quite slowly, often leaving it with some greener, herbal fruit notes, the consistent warmth is always welcome.

The intention once again was to make sure the flavours had ripened to the point where the red and dark fruit characters were dominant. The effect of the great weather of the last week can be seen in the final sugar level of 13.6° Baume, slightly higher than the 13.2° we expected and resulted in a final alcohol of 13.8%, below the 14%, which is where Pinot Noir wines start to appear

“hot”. Importantly, all the herbal notes were gone.

It is also interesting to compare the 2010 growing season for Pinot Noir in Margaret River and Mornington Peninsula because they were nearly identical. At our Wilyabrup vineyard, the variety was picked on 26th February, after 104 days had elapsed since flowering, for a ripeness of 13.6° Baume. It was slightly cooler than average, taking 4 days longer than the usual 100 days. Mornington was slightly the other way, being 5 days ahead of its usual 106 but the sugar level was the same. This serves to illustrate that while Margaret River is often criticised by many for being too warm for Pinot Noir, this comparison of the growing seasons suggest it may be more suitable than some critics give it credit for. Certainly the quality and style would support this.

### Production Notes

#### Median Harvest Date:

28th February, 2010

#### Harvest Ripeness:

13.6° Baume

The system of production for both our Margaret River and Mornington Peninsula wines are virtually identical. However, it is not our intention to make the wines in a similar style. Rather, our technique is designed to allow them make a clear statement about where they are from, with their regional and clonal differences to the fore.

After hand harvesting, the fruit was immediately processed at the winery with destemming into small, open, stainless steel fermenters. These small tanks were then transferred to a cool room and left there for 3 days to allow the must to chill down to 8°C and cold soak. It was then seeded with a pure yeast culture and fermentation was controlled to a maximum of 30°C by shifting the tanks in and out of the cool room. Extraction of colour and flavour was by hand plunging up to 4 times per day. After tasting for tannin balance, pressing was carried out on 14th March, giving 15 days on skins.

The wine was settled on gross lees and went through malolactic fermentation. It was then adjusted and racked into 228 litre French oak barrels, where it stayed until July 2011. It was racked from barrel and fining trials were carried out to confirm tannin balance. It was decided to



*Diesel - loyal Blue Heeler!*



*Keith, Mike Provis and Jarrod Bawden*



*Clare and Keith*



*Richard Vuleitch and Jules Fourneau*

characters and interesting Pinot Noir, non-fruit smells like mushroom and freshly turned earth.

**Palate:** The fruit lift gives an initial impression similar to the nose. There are lively red and dark fruits of strawberry, plum and cherry that fill the front and mid-palate, then the finish is round with oak flavours and soft tannins giving good balance and length.

**Cellaring:** As is typical with Pinot Noir, this wine has fruit depth and balance that make it very easy to drink as a youngster but this early appeal will not compromise its cellaring. With such good composition and fruit depth, it will definitely develop over the next 5 years, at least. Between 7 and 10 years of age it will repay those consumers who enjoy Pinot Noir's complex bouquet of mushroom and earth in combination with its bright fruits.

fine with egg whites. After this the wine was sterile filtered and bottled on 14th October, 2011.

### **Tasting Notes**

#### **Colour and condition:**

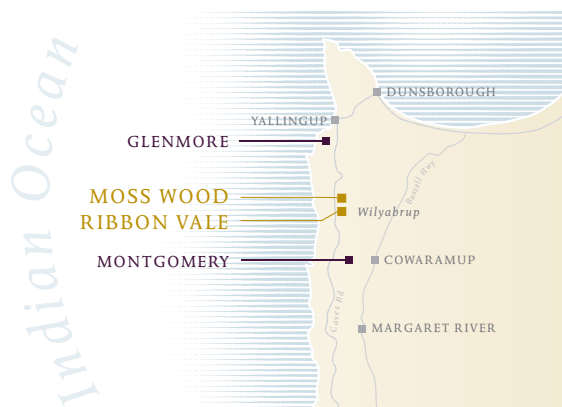
Very deep ruby hue; bright condition.

#### **Nose:**

The nose has immediate, bright red fruit aromas of strawberries and cooked strawberries, like strawberry jam and these combine with earthy notes like dried herbs and cumin. Additional complexity come from well integrated oak

*Kind regards,*

*Clare and Keith Mugford*



**MOSS WOOD**

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