

## MOSS WOOD 2020 Chardonnay

### VINTAGE NOTES



**Harvest Date**

18/02/2020

**Harvest Ripeness**

13.3°Be

**Yields**

4.59 t/ha

**Growing Season Ave  
Temperature**

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Temperature – 19.9°C

Number of hours accrued  
between 18 and 28°C – 1210

Number of hours above 33°C  
– 68

Keith was lucky enough to travel to Germany at the beginning of October 2019, to join a cycling tour with several other powerhouse riders from the Cowaramup Turtle Brigade. After 2 weeks of climbing steep hills in the Black Forest, mostly in the rain and with the mercury rarely rising above 12°C, Keith concluded the “Golden October” the Germans speak of must be some sort of cruel joke. He was looking forward to getting home to some warmer weather. And flatter roads.

People may wonder what this has to do with Moss Wood 2020 Chardonnay? Upon returning on 23rd October, it was clear the spring had been quite warm and the vines commenced flowering a few days early, on 14th October.

Nice to be back, he thought, although the weather on the drive home from Perth was threatening. Later that night, lying in bed at 12.15am listening to the rain, things became serious as the drumming on the tile roof got really loud. It was hailing! He thought all that had been left behind in Germany! Although we have a fairly benign maritime climate, there’s always a risk of strong winds and hail. The weather systems crossing the southern Indian Ocean have nothing between South Africa and Western Australia to slow them down, so they can hit our coastline with some ferocity. Our mild climate means all varieties, but especially Chardonnay, have an early budburst, leaving it exposed to inclement conditions. In 2019 we experience the roughly one in five year event when we get serious damage.

A hailstorm is common enough that we’ve learned to remain rational about the whole thing. Not all hail is damaging but the longer it lasts the greater the risk of harm. We can also treat the damaged tissue with targeted fungicides to ensure losses are not exacerbated by secondary infections. We’re not completely defenceless.



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**RIPENING TIME  
FROM FLOWERING  
TO HARVEST**

Chardonnay – 111 days

**ALCOHOL**  
14%

**BOTTLING DATE**

09/08/2021

**RELEASE DATE**

09/09/2021

It pays to wait a few days before assessing the extent of the damage since it takes some time for the bruising to become obvious. It helps ensure we don't underestimate the harm. In this case, scouting the vineyard a week later confirmed moderate losses, which became obvious at harvest time. The hail had taken out a reasonable number of bunches, down by about 16% but the weight of those bunches was down 39%. It meant overall the Chardonnay yield of 4.89 t/ha was down by a frustrating 28%. Having devoted such a long commentary to another reminder from Mother Nature that we make wine at her pleasure, readers will probably be amused to learn the rest of the season was excellent. Temperatures were warm, with an average across the period of 19.9°C and the vines experienced 1210 hours in their preferred range of 18-28°C. With the small crop and such good conditions, harvest got under way 2 weeks early on 18th February, at a slightly higher than average ripeness of 13.3° Baume.

**PRODUCTION NOTES**

All the fruit was hand-picked and delivered to the winery where it was sorted for any damage and then whole bunch pressed. The must was settled in stainless steel tanks for 48 hours before the clear juice was racked and seeded with multiple yeast strains for primary fermentation. Once under way, the fermenting juice was transferred to 228 litre French oak barrels, half of which were new, on 27th February. In barrel, the wine completed a full malolactic fermentation. After almost exactly 17 months on 28th July 2021 all the barrels were racked and blended in stainless steel and fining trials were carried out to assess tannin balance. In the end, the wine needed no further adjustment but was treated with a light dose of bentonite for protein stability. On 9th August 2021 it was sterile filtered and bottled.



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#### TASTING NOTES

##### Colour and condition:

Medium to deep straw hue; bright condition.

##### Nose:

Fruit aromas are typical Moss Wood ripe peach, combined with a zesty note similar to cumquat marmalade. These combine with lots of roast almonds and cashews, shortbread biscuits, malt and toasty oak for added complexity.

##### Palate:

The palate is lively, with fresh acidity giving lift to peaches, limes, grapefruit and caramel; there is full body and firm tannin underneath, so the wine displays good length and there is just a touch of malt and toasty oak on the finish.

#### CELLARING NOTES

We confront the usual dilemma with cellaring Moss Wood Chardonnay. On the one hand, its generous fruit notes and complexity provide very enjoyable early drinking and so we encourage customers who enjoy these youthful characteristics to drink the wine now. However, for those who prefer the mature notes in Chardonnay we recommend cellaring for at least 10 years to allow the wine to develop some bottle bouquet. Full maturity will be reached around 20 years of age.