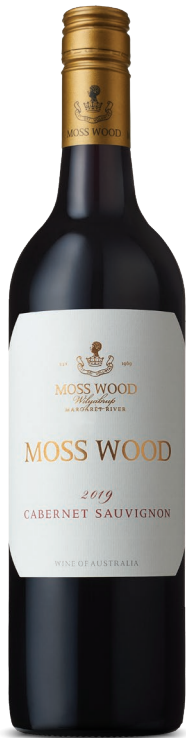




MOSS WOOD
Wilyabrup
MARGARET RIVER
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

*Est'd
1969*



MOSS WOOD
2019 CABERNET SAUVIGNON

VINTAGE NOTES

The theme of 2019 is one of below average temperatures and best illustrated by the frost of 16th September 2018, where Margaret River experienced its lowest spring temperature since October 1981. It laid waste to our Chardonnay but fortunately was early enough not to impact our Cabernet Sauvignon blocks. Amusingly, we had something of a close shave on 26th October when the temperature dropped to 4.0°C but more on that later.

Cool, damp weather persisted throughout flowering with 11 days where the minimum temperature dropped below the crucial 8°C and the thermometer even got down to 5.6°C on the morning of 29th December. Clare and Keith had to keep lighting the fire to keep the house warm! To add insult to injury, rain accompanied the cold and more than 50mm fell during the November and December. As much as we love good rainfall for our dry-farmed vineyards, there are times and this was one, when we were prepared to say, enough!

As soon as we started picking Cabernet Sauvignon, it was clear yields would be low. In fact, it had coped relatively well because at 6.36 tonnes per hectare, it was only 13% below average. Compare this with Cabernet Franc, which was down 43% to 3.32 tonnes per hectare. However, Petit Verdot was the winner in the low crop stakes, with a mighty 1.47 tonnes per hectare, some 72% below average! This brings us back to the 26th October and a further explanation. Our Petit Verdot is situated at the bottom of a shallow valley, up against some trees and we suspect the cold air couldn't drain away and delivered temperatures even lower than the 4°C registered by the weather station. We didn't see any frost damage but the affects were clear. The bunch numbers on the Petit Verdot were down 62% to 20 bunches per vine and the bunch weights by 53% to a tiny 35 grams.

MEDIAN HARVEST DATE

Cabernet Sauvignon 15/04/2019
Cabernet Franc 10/04/2019
Petit Verdot 15/04/2019

MEAN HARVEST RIPENESS

Cabernet Sauvignon 13.4°Be
Cabernet Franc 13.7°Be
Petit Verdot 13.2°Be

YIELD

Cabernet Sauvignon 6.36 t/ha
Cabernet Franc 3.32 t/ha
Petit Verdot 1.47 t/ha

**GROWING SEASON AVE
TEMPERATURE**

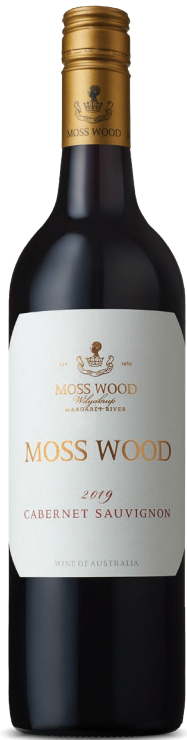
18.7°C





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**NUMBER OF HOURS ACCRUED
BETWEEN 18 AND 28°C**

1257

**NUMBER OF HOURS ABOVE
33°C**

6

**DAYS ELAPSED BETWEEN
FLOWERING AND HARVEST**

Cabernet Sauvignon 129 days
Cabernet Franc 134 days
Petit Verdot 127 days

BOTTLED

02/11/2021

ALCOHOL

14.0%

MOSS WOOD
2019 CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Now we can talk about the good things of the season.

Here is the roll call of our coolest seasons - 1982, 1987, 1990, 1999, 2002, 2006, 2017, 2019 and 2021. Afficionados of Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon will note there are some truly great vintages amongst these, with 1982, 1990, 1999 and 2017, of the wines released so far, big contributors. Yet, in 1987, 2002 and 2006 we made good wines but didn't challenge the benchmarks. This begs the question, what was it that made, say, 1990 the marvelous wine it was and yet 2006 was much finer and restrained? We think the answer lies in the final ripeness of each wine.

For comparison, let's use 2017 and 2006. The better wine, 2017, is slightly riper and was picked at 13.2° Baume compared with 13.0 in the latter. Although 0.2° is a tiny difference, it's enough to see a marked change in the aroma profile. At Moss Wood, as Cabernet Sauvignon passes through the 13.0° Baume mark, the red fruit and cedar notes are replaced by the blue and black fruits.

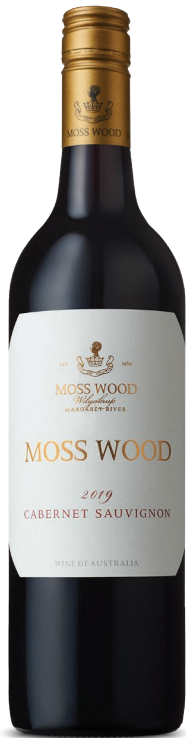
Wise folks might ask, why in 2006 did we not wait until ripeness had moved above the crucial 13° Baume mark? In 2017, we picked Cabernet Sauvignon on 10th April when Mother Nature blessed us with a classic West Coast Indian Summer. However, those with good memories will recall the cool and then very wet finish to April in 2006, when we wanted more ripeness but dared not wait. Mother Nature threatened to rain on our parade so we pushed ahead and picked on 20th April. In the end, that proved an inspired, or lucky, decision because when it started, rain came with a vengeance. Another week of fine weather and the 2006 might have been one of the best wines we've ever made but instead, having given us a glimpse of what might be, Mother Nature took it all away. It's the game we're in.





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MOSS WOOD
2019 CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Returning to 2019, where despite a cooler year than both of the above, we made an even better wine, right in the mould of 1990, because we were able to ripen Cabernet Sauvignon to 13.4° Baume. This time, Mother Nature smiled on us.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The rest of the production story is straightforward. As always at Moss Wood, the fruit was hand-picked and delivered to the winery where it was sorted and destemmed into small open tanks. Each was seeded for primary fermentation with multiple yeast strains and hand-plunged, 3 times per day. Temperatures were controlled to 32°C.

After 15 days on skins the wine was drained and pressed to stainless steel tank, where it completed malolactic fermentation.

In May 2019 the various batches were racked to French oak barriques, of which 15% were new.

In October 2021, all barrels racked and blended in stainless steel and fining trials were carried out to assess tannin balance. None of the treatments improved the wine, so it remained unfinned. It was then sterile filtered and bottled on 2nd November 2021.

TASTING NOTES

Colour and Condition: Deep brick red hue; bright condition.

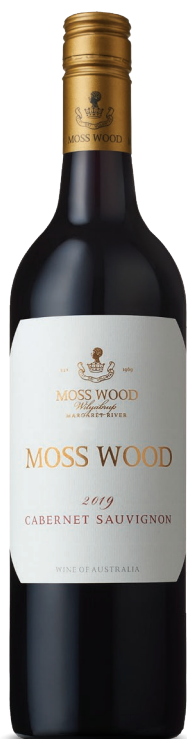
Nose: Immediate impression is of ripe blue and black fruits combining blueberry, black currant, liqueur cherries and red currant and just a touch of violet-like floral and musk notes. There are also complex, earthy notes of olive, licorice, leather, pencil shavings and nutmeg-like spice plus a soft oak background of light tarry, toastiness. The concentration is such it has a distinctive inky note, something that was a big part of the 1979 vintage.





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Palate: Dark fruits are also strong on the palate where there are concentrated black currant, blueberry, licorice flavours, or perhaps plum pudding and probably a result of the tiny morsel of Petit Verdot, combine with a full body to balance a firm acidity and tannin. The finish combines a both soft toasty oak and Cabernet's classic, tar and cedar notes.

Cellaring: There is no doubt the 2019 vintage sits right near the top of the Moss Wood quality tree and we have high expectations for its cellaring. Given its concentration and structure, courtesy of the long slow season and also the relatively small crop, we anticipate it will need at least a decade to show some bottle development. Somewhere between 10 and 15 years should see some softening of the tannins and the development of the tar and cedar characters. However, full maturity will require at least 25 years cellaring and after which it should live well beyond 40 years of age.

