



MOSS WOOD
Wilyabrup
MARGARET RIVER
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

*Est'd
1969*



MOSS WOOD 2022 CHARDONNAY

VINTAGE NOTES

As we look back on the 2021/22 growing season, we're reminded it was one of contrasts. In calendar year 2021, we recorded our highest rainfall since Keith started working at Moss Wood, all the way in 1979. The amount was 1440mm, some 40% above average. Boy, did we have some wet days!

Temperatures were accordingly mild and the vine growth during spring was relatively slow. Chardonnay didn't start flowering until late October and lasted for 5 weeks. However, the weather was beginning to change because during that time we experienced 11 days of rain and received the relatively low amount of 43mm. The accompanying temperatures were a little on the cold side, when there were 12 days where the thermometer recorded less than 8°C, for a total of 60 hours. Luckily, there was only one night where it got seriously cold and we recorded 3.8°C but the other 11 nights were all around 7°, so not too bad.

Once Mother Nature flicked the switch to "Dry", that's where it stayed for most of the season. We only received 15mm through the summer and most of which fell in the first week of February.

The vineyard looked in good shape as the season progressed and so we were a bit disappointed when we started picking, with yields lower than we hoped. Bunch numbers varied a bit but were 3% above average across the board. However, bunch weights were down by 14%, so the final crop came in at 5.96 tonnes per hectare, down 11%.

MEDIAN HARVEST DATE

10th March, 2022

HARVEST RIPENESS

13.2° Be

YIELD

5.96 t/ha

RIPENING TIME FROM FLOWERING TO HARVEST

121 days

BOTTLING

4th July, 2023

RELEASED

1st September, 2023

ALCOHOL

14%



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This seems to have been driven by two main things. It got a bit cold during flowering and that would have caused some poor fruit set. We also had some hot weather around Christmas, some of the hottest experienced by Keith since he's been here. On Boxing Day 2021, the mercury peaked at 41.2°C, the hottest day since 25th February 1985, when we reached 41.5°C and our overnight minimum on the 27th was a balmy 24°C. All this to say, the timing wasn't good for the vines and we suspect contributed to smaller berries. After that two day burst, things returned to normal until the 19th January 2022, when we recorded a maximum of 40°C, during a 3 day warm spell and after which we cruised into a relatively mild February and the beginning of autumn.

These sorts of conditions were reminiscent of both 2003 and 1983, although Keith's view is the 2022 is more like the latter. Having said that, the impact of the early arrival of autumn can be seen in the harvest dates. Despite the two heat spikes, the growing season was relatively long, with Chardonnay taking 121 days to go from flowering to harvest, 6 days longer than usual, with an average temperature of 20.3°C, so a warm year. For context, 2012, our warmest year since our weather station data began in 1999, was 20.5°C and 114 days from flowering to harvest, while in 2021, a cool year, it was 18.6° and 137 days.

Returning to the point, the final 6 weeks of ripening took place in very pleasant conditions and the fruit flavours evolved at a leisurely pace and full ripeness was evident by 9th March.



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PRODUCTION NOTES

All the fruit was hand picked and then delivered to the winery where bunches were sorted and transferred to the presses. The pressed juice was clarified in stainless steel then seeded with multiple yeast strains for primary fermentation. Once underway, temperatures were controlled to 18°C. At the halfway stage, once the aggressive yeast growth is completed and the heat production moderates, the juice was racked to wood. All the barrels were 228 litre French oak and 54% were new. After a full malolactic fermentation, all the barrels were blended, the finished wine was adjusted and returned to oak, where it stayed for 16 months, until June 2023. It was then racked to stainless steel, where fining trials were carried out but none improved the wine, so it is unfinned. It was then sterile filtered and bottled on 4th July, 2023.



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TASTING NOTES

Colour and condition: Medium straw hue with green tints. Bright condition.

Nose: Classic Moss Wood Chardonnay showing bright aromas of peach, white nectarine, rock melon, limes, malt biscuit and roast cashew. The background has multiple components with a touch of minerality as well as caramel, butter, cloves and soft, spicy oak.

Palate: The initial impression is one of freshness, with bright grapefruit, melon, peach and butterscotch flavours, some might say custard tart, sitting over fresh acid and full body, an unctuous combination. The tannin structure is firm but clean, with no bitterness and then there is a spicy, toasty oak note on the finish.

CELLARING

There is much to discuss here but in summary, the 2022 Moss Wood Chardonnay will evolve in the following way. Its youthful brightness means over the first 5 years it will be enjoyable for those who prefer lots of generous young fruit flavours. As it ages through 10 years, this will diminish a little and the bottle bouquet of butter and toast will begin to play a bigger role. Once it reaches 20 years of age, these will be the dominant characters and the wine will be fully mature. However, it should maintain good balance and be enjoyable drinking for at least another decade.