



MOSS WOOD
Wilyabrup
MARGARET RIVER
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

*Est'd
1969*



MOSS WOOD 2023 CHARDONNAY

VINTAGE NOTES

Looking back on the 2022/23 growing season brings to mind memories of relatively stress-free conditions, with Mother Nature in a benign mood.

For the calendar year 2022, we recorded a solid 1114mm of rain - 9% above average - which provided the vines with ample soil moisture throughout the growing season.

Flowering began on the 22nd October and ran until 23rd November. During this critical period for bunch establishment, again conditions were favorable. We received 38.6mm of rain, with the largest single-day amount being 8.8mm. Rainfall during flowering is crucial as it influences how well the vine sets its berries. Excessive rain and cool conditions can lead to fewer and lighter bunches. Fortunately, temperatures dropped below 8°C only on 8 days, totaling 27 hours, with a coldest temperature of 4.6°C. At the conclusion of flowering, we were confident the vines were well set for a productive season.

The remainder of the 22/23 season was remarkably comfortable for both grapevines and human beings. We experienced a mild to warm summer, with an average temperature of 19.39°C - 0.54°C below the long-term average. The vines enjoyed 1048 hours within the ideal photosynthesis temperature range of 18°C to 28°C, with only 49 hours exceeding 33°C. Under these benign conditions, the fruit reached ripeness on 7th March, which was 6 days later than the long-term average, with a harvest ripeness of 12.8° Baume. Despite yields of 5.89 t/ha being 11% below average, the results were still satisfactory.

MEDIAN HARVEST DATE
7th March, 2023

HARVEST RIPENESS
12.8° Be

YIELD
5.89 t/ha

**RIPENING TIME FROM
FLOWERING TO HARVEST**
120 days

BOTTLING
4th July, 2024

RELEASED
29th August, 2024

ALCOHOL
14%



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Some readers may find that a curious statement and certainly the innate farmer instincts in us would love to have seen more fruit. However, noting the oldest chardonnay vines on the property are now 48 years old, this was a pretty good result. As a vine grows old, its trunk bears the scars of all the years of pruning cuts. These impacts yield in a negative way, because it diminishes the plant's ability to translocate nutrients for shoot and bunch growth. On the positive side, at the same time, the vine retains its old and expansive root system, meaning the plant retains full access to the nutrients in the soil, and especially to water, the most important nutrient of all in dry farmed vineyards like ours.

This highlights the dilemma we face with old vines, as Moss Wood vineyard ages. On the one hand, the productivity is gradually tailing off. Yet, on the other, the potential quality increases, because the lower crops are supported by a bigger root system, and less likely to be negatively affected by stress.

Other important positive outcomes from Mother Nature's good mood were no disease in the vineyards and plenty of Marri blossom to distract and feed the silver eyes, keeping them out of the vines. That said, just to be on the safe and ensure no damage, we did put nets on the vineyard.

For those interested in seasonal comparisons, the average temperature of 19.39°C in the 22/23 closely matches that of 2018 (19.44°C) and 2001 (19.40°C) - two of our most celebrated vintages in Margaret River. If the wines from 2023 turn out as exceptional as those, we'll be thrilled!



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PRODUCTION NOTES

The production technique followed our established method - all fruit was hand-picked and delivered to the winery, where it was hand-sorted on our vibrating sorting table. The whole bunches were then pressed using our pneumatic membrane press, and the juice was clarified by flotation in stainless steel tank. The clear juice was seeded for primary fermentation in tank, with multiple yeast strains, and co-inoculated bacteria for malolactic fermentation. Once the ferments reached their midpoint and beyond the risk of temperature spikes, the must was transferred to 228-litre French oak barriques.

After fermentation, all barrels were racked and blended in tank, with the finished wine returned to barrels in May 2023. Of the barrels, 49% were new, and the remaining 51% were second and third use.

After 18 months, in June 2024, the wine was racked and blended in tank and fining trials were carried out. No fining agents improved the balance and, in the end, it was fined only with bentonite, for protein stability. It was cold stabilised, sterile filtered, and bottled on the 4th July, 2024.



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TASTING NOTES

Colour and condition: Bright condition. Pale golden straw with golden hue.

Nose: Aromas of ripe white peach, nectarine, lemon cheesecake, fresh vanilla bean and fig. Very complex with subtle notes of nougat, toasted oats, cashew and shortbread in the background.

Palate: Intense but fresh, vibrant and balanced in all aspects; ripe fruit notes of nashi pear, lime, white peach and rock melon. Subtle secondary notes of shortbread biscuit, freshly baked pastry and oak derived vanilla bean, caramel and roasted nuts. Acidity and phenolics are firm without being aggressive, and interweave with the middle and back palate seamlessly.

CELLARING

We are confident that the Moss Wood 2023 Chardonnay will live for a long time in bottle and evolve gracefully. Over the first 5 years the wine will express its bright primary fruit flavours and the generosity of youth. After 10 years in bottle, the wine will begin to show some secondary characters which in Moss Wood Chardonnay are toast, biscuit and butterscotch. It is our expectation that after 20 years in bottle the wine will be reaching full maturity and the dominant characters on display will be the secondary notes. We are confident that the wine will maintain good balance after this and will be enjoyable to drink for at least another decade.