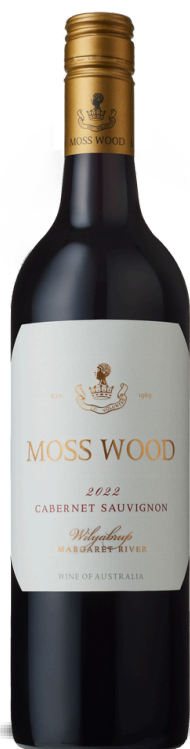




MOSS WOOD

Wilyabrup
MARGARET RIVER
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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1969



MOSS WOOD 2022 CABERNET SAUVIGNON

VINTAGE NOTES

As we muse over the conditions that prevailed during the 2021-22 growing season, it's fair to say that Mother Nature displayed her full range of talents.

The calendar year 2021 was extremely wet and Moss Wood recorded 1440mm of rain, which is 40% above average and for the statistically-minded, very interesting because it's outside 2 standard deviations from the mean. Something was certainly different in 2021.

It gave us one of our latest vintages, courtesy of mild summer temperatures and notable for the above average summer and autumn rainfall, when we received a succession of tropical depressions moving down the WA coast. The damp conditions, with solid rain, continued through the year. When we say solid, that's exactly what we mean. For example, in July 2021, it rained on 29 of the 31 days and delivered 370mm. Needless to say, the vines began the new season in September, with soil moisture in the vineyard at field capacity, always an important thing for our unirrigated vineyards.

Regular rainfall continued through to the end of October, after which things began to ease. The Cabernet varieties began flowering on 11th November and over the next 4 weeks it rained on only 5 days delivering a total of 15mm. At the same time, there were only 4 days when the temperature dropped below the critical 8°C, with a coldest day of 5.7°C on 15th December.

Taken at face value, these benign conditions suggested we should have had reasonable crops but this wasn't the case. Cabernet Sauvignon was down 20%, at 5.82t/ha and Cabernet Franc was down 22%, to 4.5t/ha. As usual, Petit Verdot was its usual petulant self and produced a generous 2.33t/ha, down a whopping 55%. Even slightly disruptive conditions send this variety into a temper tantrum and it pays us back with pitiful yields.

HARVEST DATE

Cabernet Sauvignon – 8th April, 2022
Cabernet Franc – 5th April, 2022
Petit Verdot – 5th April, 2022

HARVEST RIPENESS

Cabernet Sauvignon – 13.1° Be
Cabernet Franc – 13.4° Be
Petit Verdot – 13.5° Be

YIELD

Cabernet Sauvignon – 5.81 t/ha
Cabernet Franc – 4.50 t/ha
Petit Verdot – 2.33 t/ha

WEATHER DATA

Growing Season Ave Temperature – 20.8°C
Number of hours accrued between 18° and 28°C – 1119
Number of hours above 33°C – 120

DAYS ELAPSED BETWEEN FLOWERING AND HARVEST

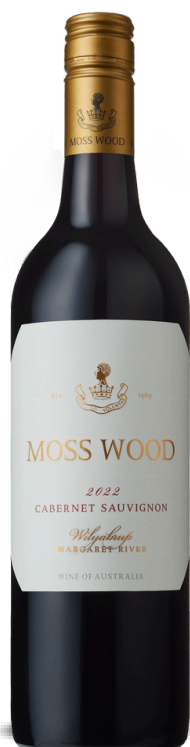
Cabernet Sauvignon – 127
Cabernet Franc – 127
Petit Verdot – 126



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An explanation for the above may lie with Mother Nature's change of heart. With the arrival of Christmas, she decided to flick the switch to hot. On Christmas Day, we enjoyed our turkey lunch with the air conditioner on and 37.6°C outside. A warm night followed, something we don't often get in Wilyabrup, with a minimum temperature of 20°C and that set the scene for a warm Boxing Day. While we again sat in the air conditioning, this time watching the Test Cricket from Melbourne, the temperature peaked at 2.45pm at 41.2°C, our warmest day since 25th February 1985. Overnight, things cooled to a balmy 24°C and we were starting to wonder when the heat would ease. This it fortunately did, with a maximum temperature that day of 38.6°C and from then on things began to return to normal. This continued until mid-January, when temperatures rose again, this time delivering a maximum of 40.1°C on the 19th. By and large, the remainder of January and February were warm but not too hot. The arrival of March brought autumnal temperatures and ripening began to slow.

Mother Nature had one more card to play, introducing rain into the equation just as the Cabernet varieties were nearing full maturity. This caused a few heart flutters but nothing serious and we got under way on 5th April, picking Moss Wood Cabernet Franc. The impact of the cooler autumn can be seen in the length of the season. Despite the generally warm to hot conditions, Cabernet Sauvignon still took 127 days to go from flowering to harvest, 7 days longer than average, making it a similar season to 2008, although 4 days longer.

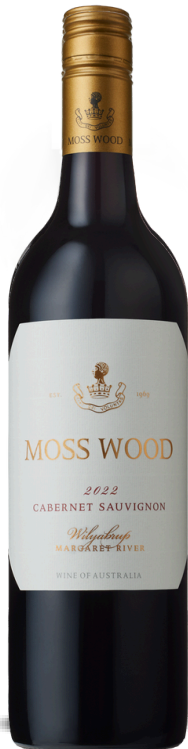
All the fruit was hand harvested and delivered to the winery, where it was carefully hand-sorted and destemmed. Each variety was then placed into small, open fermenters and seeded for primary fermentation with multiple yeast strains and hand plunged 3 times per day, for extraction of colour and flavour. Time on skins varied from 13 to 16 days, depending on tannin balance and after pressing, each batch underwent malolactic fermentation in stainless steel before being adjusted and racked to oak in May 2022. All barrels were 228 litre French oak and 16% were new.



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In December 2022 all batches were racked and returned to wood for the second year and then in November 2023 all batches were racked again to stainless steel and the wine was blended for the first time. The makeup is 94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot.

The finished blend was returned to wood, where it stayed until October 2024, when all barrels were racked and blended for the final time in stainless steel. Fining trials were carried out but none improved the tannin balance and so the wine remained unfined. It was then sterile filtered and bottled on 25th October, 2024.

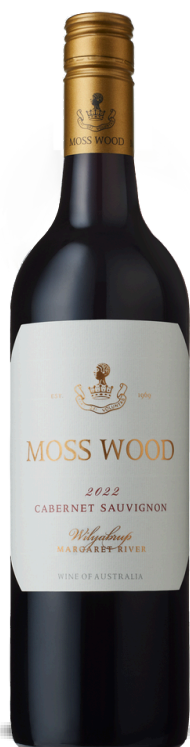
In summary, what do we make of the 2022 Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon, the 50th vintage of this wine? Given the milestone, we're happy and just a bit relieved we've been able to deliver a year with all the classic features of the style. The warm season ensured consistent ripeness, so the wine displays the vineyard's typically dark fruit aromas and the palate certainly has the expected key feature of concentrated but balanced tannin, all enhanced by the prettier fragrances which we attribute to the cooler final weeks in March. Very few have been better.



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TASTING NOTES

Colour and condition:

Bright condition, deep ruby with purple hues.

Nose:

Bright and lifted aromatics with intense dark fruits of mulberry, blackberry, blueberry and plum. These fruit notes then give way to tobacco leave, cigar box, sage and bay leaf. The oak is subtle and integrated with notes of vanilla bean, cinnamon and cedar.

Palate:

The palate is dense and rich in all of the Cabernet fruit spectrum—blackberry, blueberry, red currants and black cherry. Fresh acidity and violets sit in behind this as well as background notes of nutmeg, clove and earth. Tannins are dense, mouth coating and velvet-like with subtle, dusty oak notes on the finish.

CELLARING

There is no doubt the 2022 vintage takes its place among the finest Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignons, and we have high expectations for its cellaring potential. Thanks to the season's balance of power and elegance, along with moderate yields, this wine possesses the structure and depth to age gracefully.

We anticipate that a minimum of 10 years will be required to see the first signs of bottle development, with further complexity—cedar, earth, and classic aged Cabernet characters—emerging between 15 and 20 years. However, for those with patience, full maturity will take at least 25 years, and we expect this wine to evolve beautifully for 40 years or more.