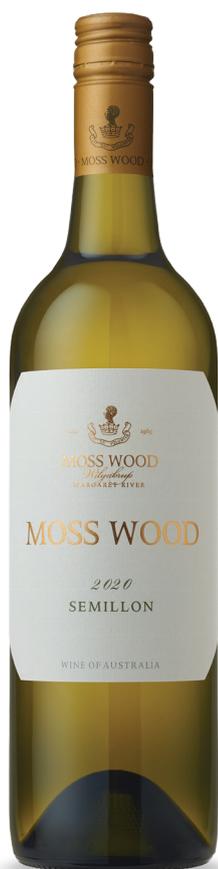




MOSS WOOD
Wilyabrup
MARGARET RIVER
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

*Est'd
1969*



MOSS WOOD 2020 SEMILLON

VINTAGE NOTES

The famous line, “We’ll all be “rooned”, said Hanrahan”, from “Said Hanrahan”, by John O’Brien, is much quoted by and about Australian farmers. Looking back on the 2020 vintage, it’s seasons like this that capture why O’Brien wrote the poem and highlight the pitfalls Mother Nature can bestow upon those of us on the land. We saw them up close and personal this year.

In southeastern Australia, the bushfires were yet another reminder we serve at Mother Nature’s pleasure. Every now and then she’ll show us that no matter how clever we think we are, she’s really in charge. The fire and smoke damage, with commensurate loss of crop and property was simply awful. In some respects, we were fortunate in Margaret River and were able to avoid fire, although that gives us no reason for complacency. In our heavily wooded region, dangerous bushfires are a genuine threat every summer. Our challenges were more traditional.

Truth be known, our growing season got off to a good start. Things had been dry, with rainfall down about 20% but by the end of October, we’d received 769mm of rain, so for viticulture at least, we were not in drought. We were proceeding quite comfortably until 12.15am on Thursday 24th October, when we received a very solid hailstorm which lasted for nearly a minute. For those who are interested in context, if hail lasts for longer than about 10 seconds, it will do significant harm to the vines. When we investigated afterwards, we found major wounds on shoots, leaves and bunches, right across both Moss Wood and Ribbon Vale.

It’s difficult to estimate exactly what was lost but the 2020 Semillon yield was down 40% at 5.87 tonnes/hectare. Once we harvested the crop, we could see the hail had impacted both the number and size of the bunches, down 6% and 34%, respectively.

To limit the damage, immediately after the event we sprayed to prevent fungal disease becoming established on all the wounds. The treatment worked and prevented things getting worse but it didn’t replace what was physically bashed and destroyed by the hail.

After this amusing interlude, things returned to normal. Semillon flowered during November, enjoying very little rain and only 4 days when the temperature dropped below 8°C. What remained of the bunches had a chance to set a reasonable crop.

We also enjoyed a warm summer, the first one since 2013. In the end, Semillon accumulated 1105 hours in the temperature range of 18-28°C, comfortably above the preferred minimum of 1000 hours. There were some nice hot days along the way and the vines accrued 65 hours above 33°C. The hottest day of the summer was 4th February, when the mercury topped out at 38°C.

Most importantly, with a small crop and such excellent ripening conditions, the remaining fruit sprinted through to full maturity. We harvested the Semillon on 20th February, 18 days earlier than average. The days elapsed from flowering to harvest were 96, some 12 days faster than usual and the sugar level reached 14.0° Baume, roughly 10% riper than average. Needless to say, the 2020 is one of the richest Semillons we’ve made.

MEDIAN HARVEST DATES

20th February, 2020

MEDIAN HARVEST RIPENESS

14.0°Be

YIELD 5.87 t/ha

DAYS ELAPSED BETWEEN FLOWERING AND HARVEST

96 days

BOTTLED

13th July, 2020

RELEASED

10th November, 2020

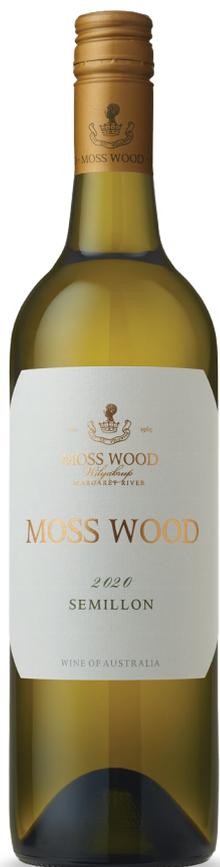
ALCOHOL 14.5%



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PRODUCTION NOTES

As usual, all the fruit was hand-picked and delivered to the winery where the bunches were sorted and then transferred to the presses. The pressed juice was racked to stainless steel and settled for 48 hours and then the clear juice was racked to a second stainless steel tank. It was seeded with multiple yeast cultures for primary fermentation, which was controlled to 18°C. Once completed, the finished wine was racked off gross lees and fining trials were carried out. In the end, we found the wine had excellent natural balance, so it was only fined with bentonite for protein stability. It was then sterile filtered and bottled on 13th July, 2020.

Hanrahan was wrong. We weren't rooned, not even close. We may have made a bit less but what we did get tastes fabulous. We'd just prefer a few less challenges.

TASTING NOTES

Colour and condition: Medium straw hue, with green tints; bright condition.

Nose: Classic fully-ripened Semillon fruit aromas, with lots of fig, rock melon, pear and quince notes. The background is ripe Gala apple and lemon sherbet, sitting over what are the beginnings of butterscotch, lanolin and mushrooms.

Palate: Generous ripe fig and apple notes fill a round, full bodied palate, capturing the essence of the vintage. Acidity and tannins are firm but are currently sitting under rich fruit note and will only become evident as the wine ages. One of the most drinkable Semillons we've made.

CELLARING NOTES

Despite the obvious early-drinking appeal, this is definitely a wine for the cellar. It has the generosity of the famous Moss Wood 1980 Semillon and will certainly repay, in the same way, those who have the time and patience to cellar it. To develop some bottle bouquet, the 2020 vintage will need to be cellared for at least 10 years but will need at least a further decade after that to reach full maturity.