



# MOSS WOOD

## MARGARET RIVER

### WESTERN AUSTRALIA



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### 2008 MORNINGTON PENINSULA

### PINOT NOIR

#### Tasting Notes

Medium to deep ruby hue, in bright condition. The nose shows a complex and vibrant display of scented, almost floral notes. The fruit aromas are of fresh strawberry and strawberry jam, with hints of cherry and plum and these combine with smells from the garden of herb, rhubarb and earth. The oak barrels have imparted a background of light toast and char which adds to the wines scented lift. On the palate there are initial flavours of strawberry and cherry that fill the front and middle palate. The impression is one of vibrancy as they sit over medium to full body and then merge with earthy notes on the finish. The tannins are firm but balanced giving a smooth texture and the finish is completed by some sweet, toasty oak notes. We hope we have been able to capture the classical and sought after Pinot Noir trait intensity without heaviness.

#### Vintage Notes

In the early stages, the Mornington Peninsula season was following a typically average timeline, if perhaps slightly early. Growing conditions were very favourable with no disease problems and although there were some cold nights in the late spring, the region did not suffer any frosts. Flowering went through in good conditions and reached its mid-point on 21st November. Margaret River Pinot Noir went through the same stage 10 days earlier. Bunch sizes were good and yields were expected to be at least average. Late spring rains also meant the vines had plenty of soil moisture. Through the summer, typically mild to warm conditions prevailed and by early February the vines were making slow but steady progress and expectations continued for a mid-March harvest. Once the fruit began to change colour the birds became a threat but damage was limited by the application of nets. By this stage we had noticed a physical difference in the Mornington fruit because its seeds were ripening more slowly than in Margaret River. At Moss Wood the seeds progress quite quickly from soft and green to crunchy and brown but in Mornington they go through an intermediate stage of being soft and white. This leads to a distinct difference in the impact of the tannins because during this stage the seeds taste distinctly of coconut and display quite assertive and drying phenolics. These gradually changed to brown and crunchy as the season progressed but left us with the impression that seed ripeness is a slow process and we kept a close eye on it. At the beginning of March, the temperatures began to rise, at the southern end of Port Phillip Bay the Mornington



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Peninsula was enjoying the heat and the vineyards picked up their ripening rates, bringing picking dates forward by a week or more. In the end, when picked on 8th March the fruit had taken 108 days from flowering to ripen. By comparison, the Margaret River Pinot Noir took 94 days and was picked on 13th February.

### Production Notes

Given our many years of experience in producing Pinot Noir, we were reasonably confident about the technique we should employ in Mornington. We discussed possible variations but in the end used the same specifications we use to make the Margaret River wine. That said, there are some significant differences and they, in turn, are driven by the differences in climate and vineyard site. So our biggest focus was in the vineyard. At Mornington, the evolution of the fruit flavours proceeds relatively slowly and so patience was required as we waited for the greener fruit notes to be lost. This also meant that we had to be flexible about the harvest ripeness and while we set a preferred Baume for picking, we were mindful of the need to change. Our first concern was slower rate of seed maturity mentioned earlier and we watched with interest as they gradually became crunchy at around 12 Baume. Interestingly, their flavour was still more like coconut than coffee bean. We also monitored the profile of fruit aromas. In the early stages there is a distinctly fresh herb character resembling coriander and bay leaves and which is not particularly attractive. This progresses into more dried herbs, similar to cumin and sits quite nicely with the cinnamon-like spices that appear later. The berry-like aromas commence as a delicate red fruit like strawberry and progress through quince jelly into cherries, plums and wild berry jubes. Our plan required us to pick after the green herbs have been lost but before the berry fruits become confectionery, with the associated loss of acidity and freshness. In 2008, these various pieces of the jigsaw puzzle began to fall into place once ripeness passed 12 Baume and eventually we settled for a pick at approximately 13. The fruit was then hand harvested and then destemmed into both open and closed fermenters. The must was chilled and held for cold soaking for 72 hours then they were allowed to warm up and seeded with pure yeast culture. Fermentations were carried out at higher temperatures, with a maximum set at 30C and open tanks were hand plunged up to four times per day and closed tanks gently pumped over twice per day. Once ferment was completed, the different batches were tasted each day to monitor tannin balance and once this was achieved the wines were pressed and racked to stainless steel. After settling they were then racked off gross lees and into barrel. All the barrels were French oak barriques and 40% were new. We used the opportunity to trial a range of coopers, based on our experience at Moss Wood, with the intention of fine tuning our choices for future Mornington wines as the impact of



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each one became clear. The wine was then sterile filtered and bottled on 16th June 2009.

### Cellaring Notes

In the short term, this wine is all about its fruit depth and drinkability and is very attractive now. However, we are excited about its ageing prospects and encourage anyone with the opportunity to cellar the wine, to do so. The composition and flavour complexity suggest to us the wine will develop further complex bottle bouquet for at least the next five years and our expectation is that it should cellar for at least a further five years after that. Please be assured that since this is our first vintage with this wine, we are being very conservative about these recommendations.

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