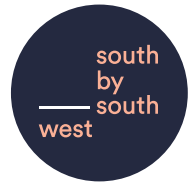


the meandering négociant



2022 VAGABONDO CABERNET SAUVIGNON MERLOT



In 2022 we were offered fruit during harvest that didn't have a home. The vineyard we source our Chardonnay fruit from, also features Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot which had recently come out of a ten-year contract. Having a great understanding of the vineyard itself after working it for three years, we decided to jump on the opportunity to give this red fruit a new home.

With a working appreciation of the vineyard, we wanted to express this fruit in a different style. As both reds have a very even ripening on this vineyard we decided to treat the fruit as a field blend (co-harvest and then co-ferment) to get a different expression as opposed to individual fermentation and then cuvée blending. Co-fermentation produces a handful of benefits – colour and preservation, complexity of texture and tannins, ripeness and aromatics. By blending the juice before fermentation, we have the opportunity to change the chemical makeup of the must and can produce something truly unique – avoiding having to manipulate wines to tweak colour, alcohol level or other attributes prior to bottling. This process fits with our philosophy of reducing intervention in the winery where possible.

The name 'Vagabondo' describes the fruit with no home and the different approach and style to fermenting these varieties to show a fun, brighter, vagabond expression.

VINTAGE & VITICULTURE

2022 in Margaret River was a great vintage and proved once again that even years are great vintages for the region! Things took a while to kick off with a cool, wintery spring and significant rainfall in October delaying the onset of budburst and flowering in the vineyards. Flowering and fruit sets were on the lighter side resulting in slightly lower yields due to the spring conditions over the growing season and the one prior.

Summer was influenced by another La Niña season – beautifully dry, warm, sunny days right through December, January and February which lessened the disease pressure that was experienced with the wet and humid conditions of the previous vintage. Veraison was delayed by around a month, but the consistent heat saw a rapid ripening period in the whites, and the dry weather allowed for predictable ripening patterns across most varieties which made for a very organised and well-planned vintage.

Bird pressure was also low this vintage with perfectly timed Marri blossom which provided enough of a distraction to keep the silveryeyes busy. The only challenge in the vineyard was the scorching Christmas heat wave resulting in some sunburn on exposed white bunches which lowered the crop when they were dropped off prior to harvest. Yields were also lower than expected, influenced by the very dry conditions – especially for the vineyards which are dry grown which took a hit with lower bunch weights and smaller berries.

This fruit comes from a single vineyard in the Yallingup sub region in Margaret River. Yallingup is known for producing well ripened red varieties and this block is on the northern fringes of the region allowing for earlier ripening. The site's positioning combined with the warmer vintage, made for a rapid veraison for both the Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlots desirable ripe flavours, pronouncing themselves quickly and beautifully with green characters falling away fast in these conditions.

On the whole, our general take on vintage 2022 is that wines are characterised by intense aromatics, plush concentrated fruit, great structure and depth of flavour driven by good natural acidity. Even with the warmer conditions, delicacy and elegance wasn't compromised. A stunningly epic vintage.

WINEMAKING

The Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot fruit was co-harvested as a field blend by a selective harvesting method which allows for whole berry harvesting, minimal maceration off the vine and a preliminary sort prior to going to picking bin. The fruit was naturally co-fermented in a stainless steel tank with gentle pump overs for two weeks before being sent to French oak barriques for 12 months maturation. No new oak was used, only neutral oak to ensure fruit expression was the focus.

APPEARANCE, NOSE & PALATE

Deep crimson colour in glass. The nose hits of Margaret River. Ripe rich berries with some light, distinct leafy and brambly characteristics come together. This wine has a full-bodied wine which is still both soft and rich. On the palate it has well rounded tannins with concentrated fruit flavours.

Region	Margaret River
Alcohol	13.5%
Drinking Best	2023 – 2030