

the meandering négociant



2022 CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Cabernet Sauvignon has been referred to as the 'Holy Grail' of Margaret River wine. We're not sure it offers the eternal youth of a holy grail, but we are certain about the power of this wine in its ability to provide regular happiness. Cabernet Sauvignon is the aristocrat of the grape varieties and Margaret River produces some of the best examples – medium to full bodied savoury wines that are lavishly driven by oak, balanced by finely grained tannins and brisk, but bright, acidity.

We have been inspired by our wide-ranging appreciation of this noble grape, both at home and away: in the Cabernet dominant blends of the Left Bank of Bordeaux, and the single varieties produced in Napa Valley. Cabernet is not an annual feature in our line up of wines. We decided early on that we would only make a Cabernet Sauvignon when the vintage really allowed for the expression we were chasing and that we would only produce one in exceptional vintages. Fortunately, 2022 was one of those. Yes, Cabernet is Margaret River's cult red variety for good reason and we've been sure to harness the unique herbaceous hints that make this region especially famous for this variety. To truly represent the terroir of Margaret River we acquired fruit from a single vineyard in the Wilyabrup sub region.

VINTAGE & VITICULTURE

2022 in Margaret River was a great vintage and proved once again that even years are great vintages in Margaret River! 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 silvereyes

busy. The only challenge in the vineyard was the scorching Christmas heat wave resulting in some sunburn on some 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 Wilyabrup sub region in Margaret River. Wilyabrup is known for producing well ripened red varieties and this site only grows 2 ha of Cabernet Sauvignon to focus on the varietal expression. This vintage, a warm and rapid veraison for Cabernet Sauvignon's desirable ripe flavours pronounce 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, the delicacy and elegance wasn't compromised. A stunningly epic vintage.

WINEMAKING

The fruit was harvested on an evening in April 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 inoculated with a cultured yeast strain and fermented in a stainless steel tank with gentle pump overs for two weeks before being sent to French oak barriques for 14 months maturation. Only 10% new oak was included in this wine to make sure that oak didn't detract from the prettiness of this vintage fruit expression. The wine was bottled in July 2023 with a light fining and coarse filtering before a few months of bottle maturation prior to release.

APPEARANCE, NOSE & PALATE

Deep crimson colour in glass. The nose has hints of regional aromas. Ripe rich berries with some light, distinct leafy and brambly characteristics coming together. There is a pretty elegance to this full-bodied wine, displaying both soft and rich qualities. On the palate it has well rounded tannins with concentrated fruit flavours, supporting oak characteristics, and length on the finish.

Region Margaret River **Alcohol** 13.5% **Drinking Best** 2023 - 2033

