

MARGARET RIVER WINE

MEDIA RELEASE

13 MAY 2023

Vintage 2023 Wrap: An excellent vintage in Margaret River, Western Australia

2023 proved an extended yet very rewarding vintage in the Margaret River Wine Region. Optimal, dry weather conditions paired with the absence of any significant climatic challenges or disease pressure set the scene for a moderate season, ideal for gentle, consistent ripening across all varieties.

A slightly cool, delayed start

Winter temperatures were lower than average, which made for a quick senescence and sound dormancy for the vines. There was markedly less-than-average rain; however, the vineyards received sufficient supply to recharge soil moisture levels, paving the way for a promising growing season ahead.

The growing season began with a late budburst after a relatively cold winter that pushed vine development back by about 2-3 weeks. Spring saw less rain and cooler conditions than usual, resulting in a slow start to canopy growth and an extended flowering period for early bloomers like Chardonnay. Good fruit-set across most varieties resulted in generally higher yields than average.

Consistently warm, dry summer

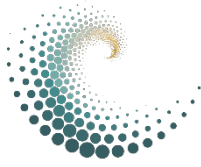
Low November rain slowed into an even drier December, January and February, with less than 2 mL of rain falling collectively across the summer season. January brought consistently warm, sunny days, which saw vines start to catch up nicely on their development. Veraison was delayed by 2-3 weeks for whites and one week for reds. February, dry with plenty of sunshine and no extreme heat, provided perfect ripening conditions and harvest starting around the middle of the month.

Cold southerly breezes blowing off the ocean and cool mornings, evenings and nights helped retain natural acid in the fruit. At the same time, short periods of peak heat during the day were ideal for slow, even ripening across all varieties.

Disease pressure was minimal in the region due to seasonal consistency and dry conditions stretching from January until the middle of April. The Marri tree blossom was scarce this year, which made grapes an easy target for the native birds, and as a result, bird netting and monitoring were vital.

Reds roll off gracefully

The warm, dry conditions that kicked off the season continued for most of the reds, with Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon rolling off the vine gracefully. Temperatures were a bit cooler in April,



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meaning it took longer for tannins to soften and for flavour to develop fully. However, the sunny, dry weather that held out until mid-April meant the fruit could remain on the vine until it was ready. Some heavy rains in mid-late April pushed out the red harvest slightly for some later ripening vineyards.

Alex Miller, Technical Viticulturist at Voyager Estate, explained, “What started as a slow burn in spring for the viticulturists resulted in a glorious summer of optimal temperatures, rewarding us with classy fruit befitting our regional reputation. April evolved into a typical patchy weather pattern as producers raced against the season’s end. Fortunately, Cabernet Sauvignon berry skins are sturdy and can withstand the dip in temperature and the odd shower. All round, another epic vintage in the bank.”

2023: An Excellent Vintage

Despite minor weather events towards the end, 2023 proved a fantastic vintage. As winemakers taste the wines as they finish fermentation, they can already see the incredible quality of what has come off the vineyards. The region’s hero varieties, Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon, stand out for vintage 2023. The Chardonnays are elegant and fresh with lovely natural acidity. The Cabernet Sauvignons are inky and dense, showing great intensity and a very fine tannin structure.

The region’s volume is estimated to be approximately 34,000 tonnes this year, and 6% higher than the 5-year average. The increased yields and superb quality across the region bode well for the 2023 vintage wines.

“In summary, 2023 will be remembered as an excellent vintage in Margaret River.” writes Glenn Goodall.

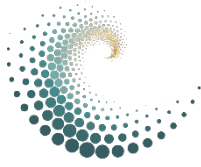
Sustainability Surged Across Margaret River in 2023

For Vintage 2023, Margaret River vineyards and wineries participating in Sustainable Winegrowing Australia grew significantly to 96 members.

The 47 Certified Vineyards Members account for 1,876 hectares or 32% of Margaret River’s vineyards. An additional 22 vineyards are working towards certification. Margaret River also boasts 13 Certified Wineries that crushed 14,641 tonnes last year.

Margaret River Wine Association CEO Amanda Whiteland said, “Our Association’s Sustainability Plan was established out of a conviction to fulfil our custodial responsibilities. It recognises the importance of protecting our region’s rare biodiversity, exceptional environment value and capacity to produce some of the world’s best wines.”

“A major focus of the plan is onboarding our members to the national Sustainable Winegrowing Australia program, which aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and focuses on soil, water, people, biodiversity, energy and waste. Kate Morgan, MRWA’s Sustainability Officer is working with members to achieve certification and build additional value for their wines.”



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All media enquiries:

Amanda Whiteland

E: amanda@margaretriver.wine

T: +61 417 948 736

Additional Notes

- Vintage 2023 images [here](#)
- The Margaret River Wine Association Media Kit can be download it from <https://margaretriver.wine/media/>
- Search Sustainable Winegrowing Australia members and certified members [here](#).

About Margaret River Wine Association

The Margaret River Wine Association (MRWA) is the peak body for Margaret River grape growers and winemakers and represents their interests to promote, protect and enhance Margaret River fine wine.

The Association is an independent, non-profit organisation, financed by its members with additional funding sourced through sponsorship and grants. 200 wine producers and over 50 Grape Grower and Commercial organisations are members of MRWA.

MRWA was established in the late 1970s as the Margaret River Grape Growers & Winemakers Association and in 2022 it celebrated its 40th Anniversary since incorporation in 1982.