

MARGARET RIVER WINE

MEDIA RELEASE

9 APRIL 2024

Margaret River Vintage 2024: There is exciting potential from the earliest vintage on record.

The 2024 vintage in Margaret River was early, fast-paced and bodes well for some superb-quality wines. The vintage was also blessed with one of the most spectacular and abundant marri (*Corymbia calophylla*) flowering seasons, keeping the birds away from the vineyards.

A Dry, Warm Growing Season

Howard Park Group Viticulturalist Stephen Kirby explained that the cool, wet 2023 winter weather disappeared quickly and was replaced by a dry, warm spring.

“Above-average temperatures and almost no rainfall led to an early budburst and perfect growing conditions for vines. Canopy growth was good, and flowering occurred early and went through quickly. This led to good berry set in most varieties. The spring weather meant disease pressure was low, and very few reports of issues were seen in the vineyard.”

“Consistent above-average temperatures led to early veraison in all varieties. In late December, colour could be seen in Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz, which pointed to a very early vintage. January saw a continuation of the dry conditions, leading to moderate bunch size and lower-than-expected yield potential,” he said.

An Early, Fast-Paced Harvest

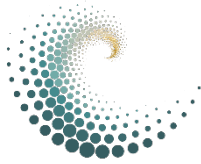
A positive of the warm, dry conditions was no disease pressure across the region.

2024 was also a vintage with abundant and prolonged marri blossom, known as a “mast year”. This usually occurs every four years or so, as it takes the trees time to muster sufficient resources to produce another massive flowering. This also means there was little to no grape loss due to the native silvereys birds.

White grape harvest began in mid-January, four weeks earlier than usual and continued to ripen rapidly, making vintage compressed and fast-paced.

As with all seasons, early attention to detail in the vineyard paid dividends. For irrigated vineyards, the dry growing season required early and frequent irrigation, increasing pressure on water supplies; however, early picking somewhat alleviated this.

Precision in harvest timing was crucial in this hot, fast-ripening season, as the optimal ripeness came and went quickly. Whites were generally picked over two weeks instead of the typical four weeks. Red varieties required careful consideration to ensure physiological maturity with vibrancy of fruit expression.



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The narrow windows of opportunity to harvest meant skilful scheduling of vineyard and winery teams, supported by harvesters and transport contractors, and long days of handpicking for backpackers and seasonal workers.

Fruit Quality

All varieties reached full maturity earlier than we are used to, and lower yields in some varieties and locations led to a concentration of aromas and flavours. This bodes well for some superb quality wines from 2024.

Overall, early estimations of the region's yields are approximately eight percent down on last year and two percent down on the previous five-year average.

Andy Bretherton, Head Winemaker of Juniper and Higher Plane, says, *"From a wine quality perspective, I always struggle with the idea of making definitive calls on vintage this early in the season; it is just too early to truly know, but I can say the potential in many parcels is very exciting."*

"The whites have exceeded my expectations with their clarity, freshness, and surprisingly, their natural acidity - a true strength of 'Margs' even in warm years."

"Cabernet, I would say has been more challenging and required real rigour in vineyard and winery to get the best results, but the best sites show lovely perfume and varietal expression, and trademark fine tannin."

"There will be some special wines from this vintage."

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All media enquiries:

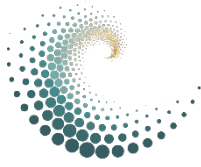
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Additional Notes

- Vintage 2024 images [here](#)
- Stephen Kirby, Howard Park Group Viticulturalist, was the Margaret River Viticulture and Sustainability Excellence Award winner in 2023
- The Margaret River Wine Association Media Kit and Sustainability Report can be download it from <https://margaretriver.wine/media/>
- Sustainable Winegrowing Australia members and certified members can be found [here](#).



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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.