

MARGARET RIVER WINE

The logo for Margaret River Wine features a stylized, circular emblem composed of numerous small dots in shades of blue and green, arranged in a pattern that suggests a sun or a rising moon.

Media Kit
2026 Edition

Introduction

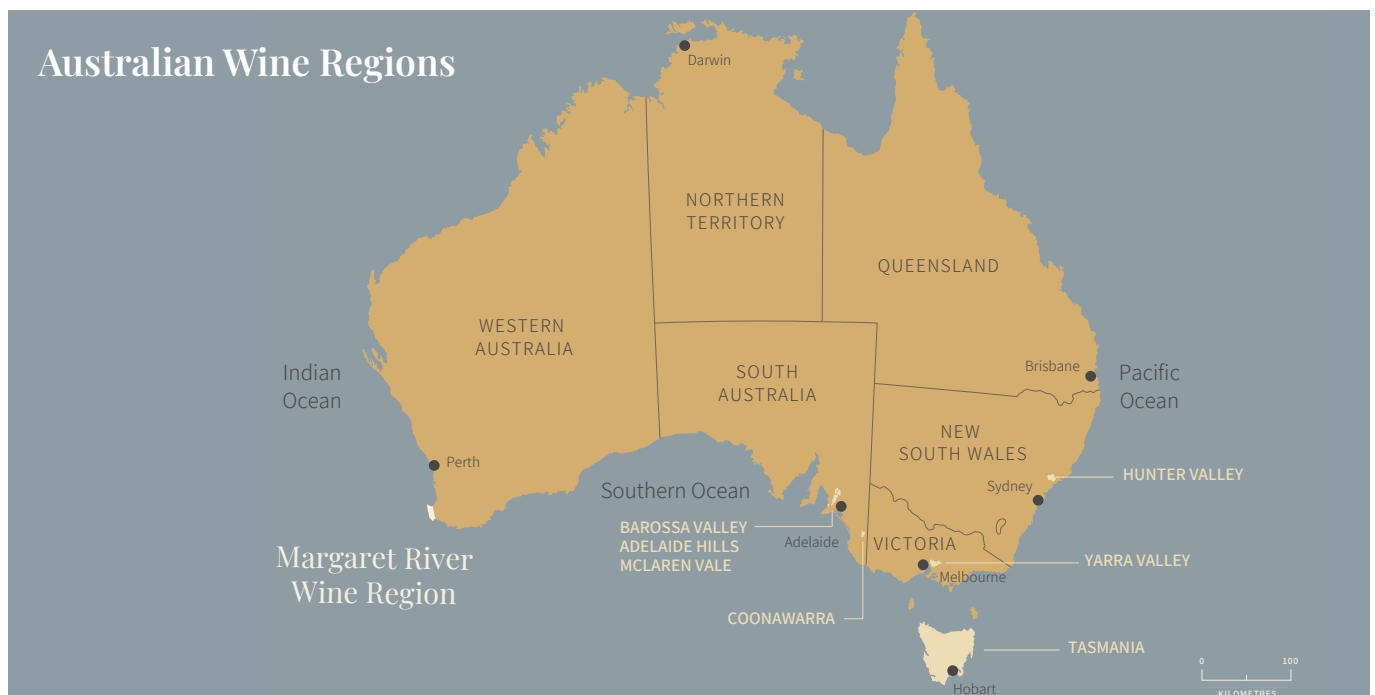
Acknowledgement Of Country

This is Wadandi Boodja – Saltwater People’s Country, where the Wadandi People have been custodians for the last 50,000 years

Margaret River is one of the Earth’s most pristine, geographically secluded, coastal wine regions. This breathtaking destination of ancient landforms, lush forests and distinct Ironstone gravel soils enjoys a ‘textbook perfect’ climate for fine wines, with its consistent Mediterranean climate and intense maritime influence – here, the Indian and Southern Oceans meet.

Scarce and sought-after worldwide, Margaret River wines represent only 2% of the Australian annual crush. The elegant and powerful Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay expressions are most noteworthy and can be grown with a ‘light touch’ approach, as the grapes typically ripen with superb balance, refinement and structure. Artisan and family-owned producers dominate, and their preference for handcrafted winemaking and respectful creativity shines through.

A world-renowned wine destination, the region’s 100 cellar doors, gourmet culinary experiences, stunning nature and spirited arts scene attracts over 1.5 million overnight visitors per year.



Cover Image: Walsh & Sons Burnside Vineyard

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ABOUT THE 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. MRWA has 200 industry members and 50 associated Grape Grower and Commercial members.

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

KEY CONTACTS

Margaret River Wine Association
20 Minchin Way, Margaret River, 6285
Western Australia
Tel: +61 8 9757 9330

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

PO Box 204, Margaret River, 6285
Western Australia
Tel: +61 8 9757 9330
Please contact info@margaretriver.wine

MARKETING & MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Amanda Whiteland, CEO
Email: amanda@margaretriver.wine

MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website www.margaretriver.wine

Join our Mailing List and keep up to date with news and upcoming events

Subscribe to our [YouTube Channel](#) and access videos

Listen to our Podcast [Wine Unearthed](#)

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A Snapshot of Margaret River Wine Facts & Stats

LOCATION

- On ancient lands of Wadandi Boodja (Saltwater People's Country)
- 300 kilometres (186 miles) SSW of Perth, Western Australia
- Surrounded by 200 kilometres of Indian Ocean & Southern Ocean coastline
- Latitude: 33°31'S (Cape Naturaliste) to 34°22'S (Cape Leeuwin), Longitude: 114°58' (Cape Clairault) to 115 18'E (Gladstones Line)
- Highest Elevation: 231 metres

CLIMATE

- Mediterranean with strong maritime influences
- Annual Rainfall: 1,000 millimetres
- January Mean Temperature: 20.6°C (69.1°F)

SOILS

Whilst the unique Forest Grove ironstone soils are some of the most acclaimed, the region's diversity of soil types offer optimal conditions for a myriad of grape varieties, styles and wine complexity.

REGION SIZE

- 213,000 hectares
- North to South: 110 kilometres (68 miles)
- West to East: 27 kilometres (17 miles)
- Remnant Vegetation: 98,750 hectares (46.4%)
- Population: 45,003 (City of Busselton) and 19,410 (Shire of Augusta-Margaret River)

AREA UNDER VINE

- 5,840 hectares (2.7%)
- 2,787 hectares Certified Sustainable Winegrowing Australia (48% of total area under vine)
- 738 hectares Certified Organic or Biodynamic (12.6% of total area under vine)

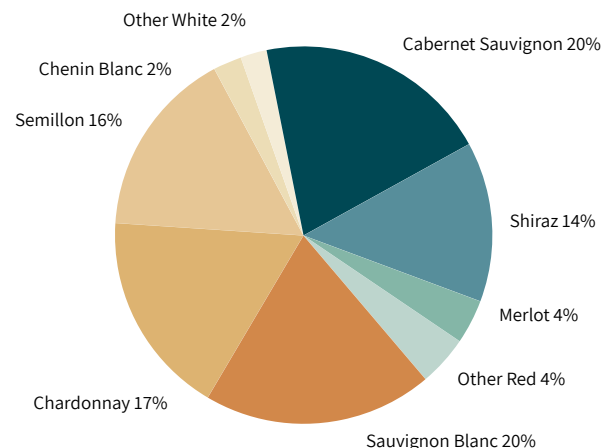


WINE PRODUCERS

- 175 wine producers declared Margaret River Crush (Vintage 2024)
- Average Size Crush: 219 Tonnes
- Over 50% of producers crush less than 50 tonnes (approximately 4,000 9LE cases)

KEY VARIETIES

- 58% white grapes, 42% red grapes
- Over 40 varieties, the region's top five varieties account for 87% of the tonnes crushed.

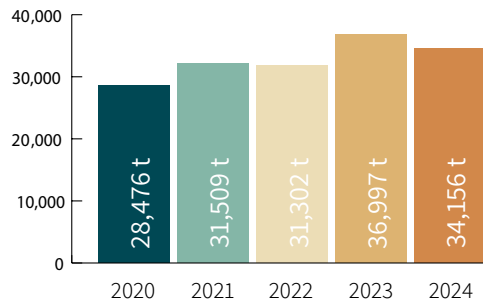


A Snapshot of Margaret River Wine Facts & Stats

HARVEST TIMING

Early February – Mid to Late April

HARVEST VOLUMES



- 5 Year Average 34,344 Tonnes
- Less than 2% of total Australian Wine Grape Crush

TOURISM

- 100 Cellar Doors
- 1.5 million+ visitors per year
- #2 most visited wine region in Australia by international visitors who visited a winery
- #1 most visited wine region for domestic travellers who visited a winery
- Augusta-Margaret River is one of 7 [Eco Certified Destinations](#) in Australia
- 130+ kilometres (80 miles) of coastline and beaches
- 75 Surf Breaks

AWARDS

- Halliday Wine Companion 2023 Awarded Margaret River Wineries more 5-Star Ratings than any other region in Australia
- Margaret River has received Australia's most Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon Trophies at Australian Capital City and National Wine Shows

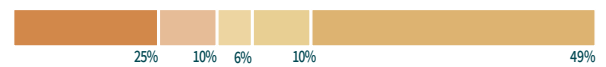
MARGARET RIVER WINE EXPORTS

- 52 export markets
- Volume: 1.9 million litres p/annum (211k cases)
- Value: \$24.5 million AUD
- 10% of Margaret River wines are exported
- Margaret River wine exports command a premium at \$13.04/litre vs Australian average of \$3.93/litre
- 94% Margaret River export value is by glass bottle and only 6% bulk wine

MARGARET RIVER AVERAGE PRICE / LITRE



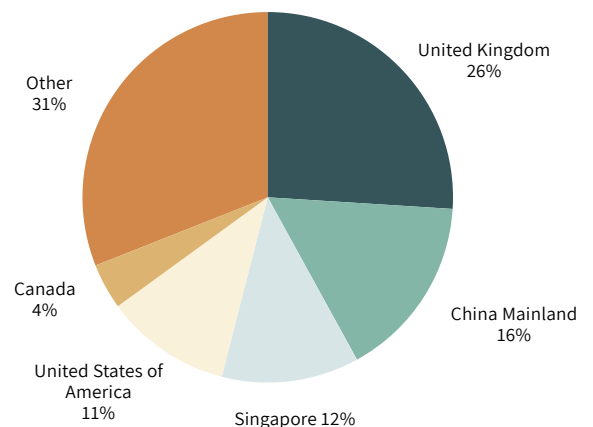
AUSTRALIA AVERAGE PRICE / LITRE



FOB \$/LITRE

< \$4.99 \$5.00 - \$7.49 \$7.50 - \$9.99 \$10.00 - \$19.99 > \$20

TOP 5 EXPORT MARKETS



Sources:

www.economy.id.com.au/augusta-margaret-river - ABS Estimated Residential Population 2020

www.marketexplorer.wineaustralia.com/export-dashboard (December 2024)

Agriculture Producers Commission WA Wine Committee Vintage 2017-2023

Tourism Research Australia National Visitor Survey National and International Visitor Surveys (YE Sep 20) Varietal Trends: APC, 5 Year Average (Vintage 2019-2023)

MARGARET RIVER WINE





Ancient & Pristine Coastal Lands

A spectacular pocket in the secluded south-west of Australia, Margaret River is a coastal wine region with capes at its north and south, and the Margaret River waterway transecting the central landscape. Its ancient granite landforms are amongst the oldest on the planet and ironstone gravels abound. Here, the powerful Indian and Southern Oceans meet, engulfing this land with the energy of fresh, salt-kissed air that has flown clean and untouched for thousands of kilometres. The pristine country, with its abundant forest, caves and endemic flora and fauna has been cared for by traditional owners, the Wadandi People for over 50,000 years to become one of the most important biodiversity hotspots on Earth. Margaret River is also a vigneron and winemaker's paradise, gifted with the natural potential to grow some of the new world's finest, revered wines.

**MARGARET RIVER WINE REGION
MEDIA KIT**

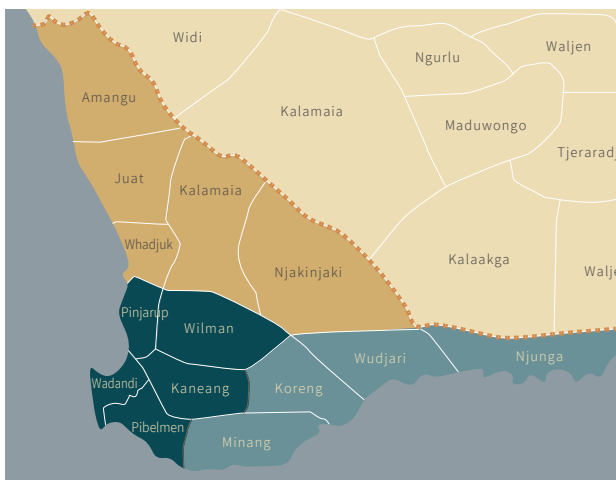
Land of the Saltwater People

The Wadandi People (Saltwater People) are the traditional owners of this area of the south-west of Western Australia and have a connection to the land of over 50,000 years. Looking after country, especially the abundant natural resources and biodiversity, is an age-old lore of Wadandi culture. The Wadandi people live by the Six Seasons, which are guided by the weather conditions and the activities of flora and fauna over an annual period. Within the underground caves of Wadandi country are many sites of cultural significance, including one of the oldest archaeological recordings of human occupation in Australia.

Wadandi Boodja

The Margaret River Wine Region is located upon the ancient lands of the Wadandi People, the traditional owners, who have lived in harmony with the environment of Wadandi Boodja (Saltwater People's Country) for over 50,000 years. The Wadandi people are deeply connected to the natural resources of the land and sea and utilise these according to a cultural lore (learning and knowledge of tradition) to look after country. The maintenance of biodiversity has always been linked to the health of Wadandi people, both spiritually and physically.

The Wadandi people are one of fourteen different language groups that are a part of the Noongar Nation, which covers the entire south-west of Australia.



Spiritual Country

There is a significant spiritual connection to the spectacular cave systems that lay beneath the surface along the length of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge, where ceremonial sites, rock art, paintings and artefacts are preserved. Cultural sites of significance also include the Nannup Caves, Jewel Cave, Devil's Lair and a Birthing Lake. The Wadandi songline says that upon a person's death, their spirit travels into the Caves. Ngilgi, the land spirit, then carries the soul spirit to Walga, the ocean spirit, then across the waves to Kwarana, the resting place between the sky and the horizon.

Here, the spirits meet their ancestors before returning to country to be reborn in another form. The Devil's Lair Cave in Margaret River has provided evidence of presence of ancestors dating back at least 50,000 years, one of the oldest records of human occupation in Australia. Archaeological excavations have uncovered stone artefacts, animal bones, hearths and bone artefacts, including some of the first discovered fossils of megafauna in Australia.

The Six Seasons and The Harvest Calendar

The Wadandi seasonal calendar includes six different seasons in a yearly cycle. Each represents the seasonal changes of prevailing weather and with associated growth and activities of flora and fauna. The six seasons are Birak, Bunuru, Djeran, Makuru, Djilba and Kambarang.

Kambarang Season of Birth

The wildflower season with many yellow flowers, orchids, kangaroo paws and banksias in bloom. One of the most striking displays of flowers at this time of year is the Mooja or Australian Christmas Tree, whose bright orange/yellow flowers signal that heat is on its way.

Vineyard Calendar: Vine canopies begin to grow and signs of flowering and early fruitset begin to appear on the earliest ripening grape varieties. Composting vines for summer and cutting cover crops to provide a protective mulch for the soil.

Birak Season of the Young

As the rains begin to ease, the warm weather of Birak starts to take hold, with the afternoon sea breeze cooling from the south-west. Consistent easterly winds in the morning, followed by the afternoon sea breeze meant that traditionally this was the time of year Wadandi people burnt country. They would burn the country in mosaic patterns to increase grazing pastures for some animals, to aid in seed germination, ease mobility across the country and for fuel reduction.

Vineyard Calendar: Flowering finishes for the late varieties (Cabernet Sauvignon) and berries expand in size. Veraison and early ripening of white varieties, canopy management to ensure optimum sun exposure for grapes.

Bunuru Season of Adolescence

The hottest time of the year, Bunuru is a season of little to no rain and hot easterly winds with a cooling sea breeze in the afternoon if you are along the coast. Bunuru is also a time of the white flowers with lots of white flowering gums in full bloom, including Jarrah and Marri.

Vineyard Calendar: Vines are netted as required to protect the ripening grapes from birds. Vintage begins with the harvest of the earliest white grapes, often Chardonnay. Veraison and ripening for red grape varieties begins, and the first of these may be harvested towards the end of this period.

Djilba Season of Conception

A transitional time of the year, Djilba has days that are very cold, some that are rainy and windy and others where the sun comes through. This is the start of the massive flowering explosion. It begins with yellow flowering plants such as the Acacias.

Vineyard Calendar: Pruning of vines is completed, as are any new planting or grafting requirements. The first signs of budburst may start to be seen in September.

Djeran Season of Adulthood

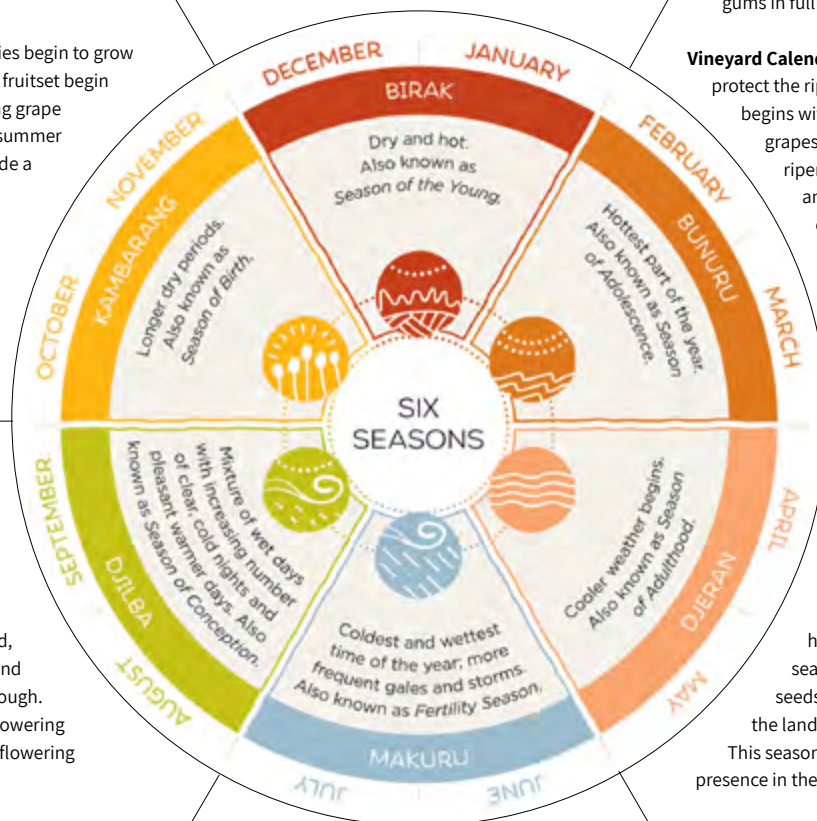
Djeran season sees a break in the hot weather, and the change in the season is evident in the wind with seeds, dust and leaves blown across the landscape in the light southerly winds. This season brings cooler nights with a dewy presence in the early mornings.

Vineyard Calendar: Harvest continues of latest ripening red varieties (Cabernet Sauvignon). The winemakers remain busy fermenting and maturing their wines.

Makuru Season of Fertility

The coldest and wettest time of the year, Makuru was traditionally the time people moved inland and away from the coast. Winds turn to the west and south bringing rain and occasional snow on the peaks of the Stirling and Porongurup Ranges. During this season, waterways and catchments begin to fill.

Vineyard Calendar: Soil rejuvenation period where cover crops are planted between vine rows and the vines move into dormancy.



Geology and Landforms

The geology of the Margaret River Wine Region is dated as perhaps the oldest of the Earth's viticultural regions, surpassing South Africa and Europe, with its granite and gneiss rocks aged between 1,130 and 1,600 million years old. The land is defined by two unique areas split by the Dunsborough Faultline, which runs the full length of the region, vertically. To its west, the Leeuwin Complex, with its laterite foundations, high elevations, streams and valleys, is the prized land for over two-thirds of the region's vineyards. To the east, are sandy soils formed by the decomposition of sedimentary rock. The diverse landforms across the region support an array of viticulture options and wine styles.

Ancient Lands

The Margaret River Wine region covers 213,000 hectares of land, running 110 kilometres north to south, and 27 kilometres west to east. Approximately 3 percent (6,000 hectares) is used for viticulture. 46 percent is cloaked in remnant vegetation, including Jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*), Marri (*Corymbia calophylla*) and Karri trees (*Eucalyptus diversicolor*).

The region is characterised by its distinct shape, which deviates out from the main coastal line with capes at its north (Cape Naturaliste) and south (Cape Leeuwin), as well as its diversity of landforms. The two dominant geological formations are the crystalline rocks of the Leeuwin Complex to the west and the sedimentary rocks of the Perth Basin to the east. These are separated by the Dunsborough Faultline, which runs from Dunsborough (north) to Augusta (south).

Samples of ancient gneiss and granite formations within the region have been dated by geologists to be as old as 1,130 and 1,600 million years. These rocks are thought by local geologists to exceed the oldest formations in the viticultural areas of South Africa by 380 million years, and are older still, compared to the earliest winegrowing areas of Europe.

The diversity of landforms and elevations across the Margaret River Wine Region reflects the influence of varying erosional and depositional processes that have occurred over many geological eras.

How was the Region Formed?

During the Early Cretaceous periods of 145-160 million years ago, the ancient supercontinent of Gondwanaland broke up into separate continents which then moved apart via continental drift. It is thought that during this period, a deep, linear trough of sedimentary rocks formed on the east of the Dunsborough Faultline and an iron-enriched lateritic plateau formed over the crystalline and sedimentary rocks of the west.



Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse



Geology

○ Town

— Major Road

— Rivers & Waterways

THE LEEUWIN COMPLEX

Leeuwin Block

Tamala limestone over Leeuwin Block

Quarternary sediments over Leeuwin Block

PERTH BASIN COMPLEX

Perth Basin

Tamala limestone over Perth Basin sediments

Quarternary sediments over Perth Basin

0 10
KILOMETRES



The rivermouth of the Margaret River

The Leeuwin Complex

To the west of the Dunsborough Faultline lies the Leeuwin Complex, a laterite (ironstone) ridge which has the highest elevations and is intersected by the many rivers, streams and valleys of the region. The Leeuwin Complex runs the full length of the region, north to south, covering a total area of approximately 83,000 hectares. It is made up of intensely deformed granite parent material and gneiss rocks, overlain with the characteristic laterite, sand and limestone composed soils, unique to the ridge. Almost two-thirds of Margaret River's vines are planted on the Leeuwin Complex.

The Perth Basin Complex

The east is a more low-lying, sandy area formed by sedimentary rock, known as the Perth Basin. Soils of the Perth Basin are primarily sedimentary and are typically made up of varying types of sand, silt and shale. Most of the vineyards in the Perth Basin area are located within the central eastern section, with smaller areas planted to the northeast and southeast.



Elevation

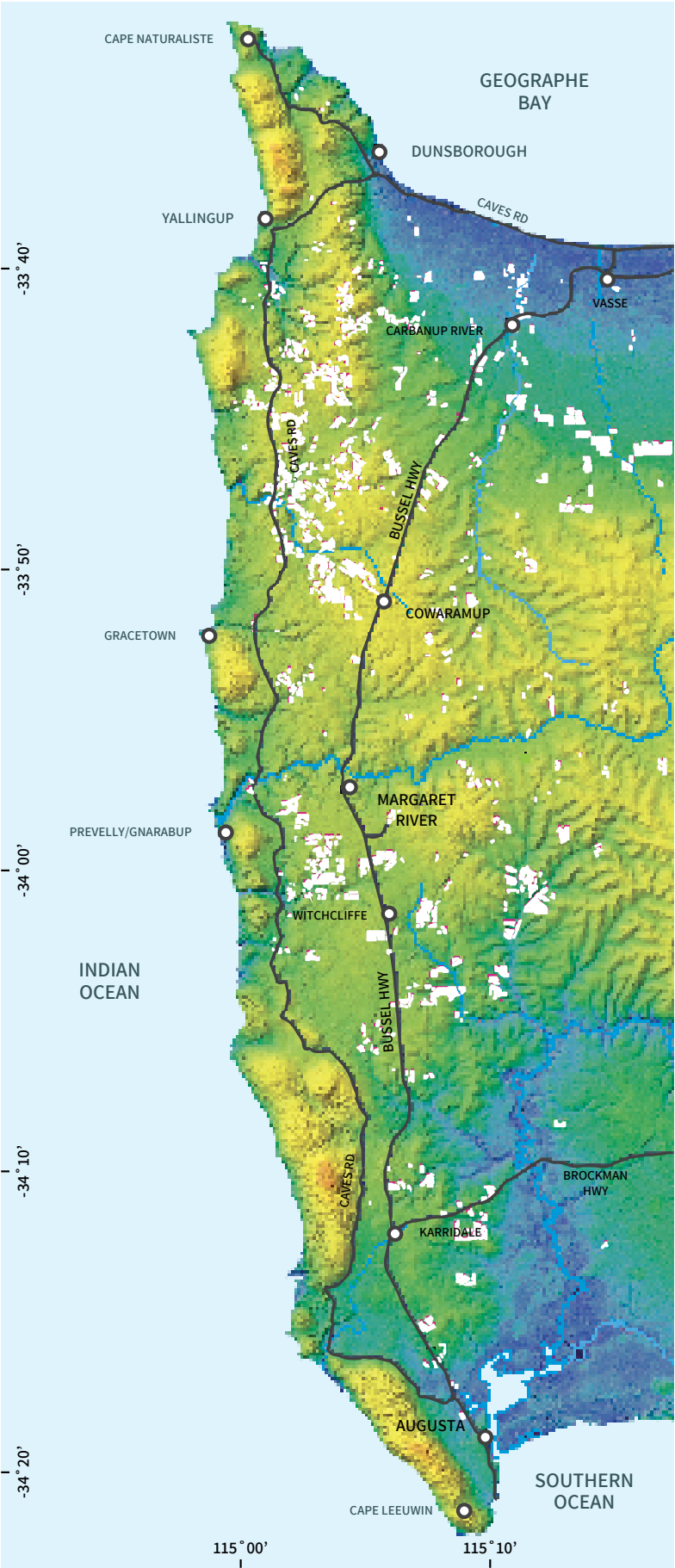
The elevation of the region ranges from 0 to 231 metres Australian Height Datum* (AHD), with vineyard plantings located between 3 and 140 metres AHD. On the Leeuwin Complex, vineyards are situated mostly at elevations between 40 and 100 metres AHD, while those in the central and southern part of the Perth Basin are usually at 40–80 metres AHD. Vineyards located in the north-east are in much lower lying areas, with vineyard elevations between 3–40 metres AHD.

For every elevation increase of 100 metres, there is a temperature decrease of 0.6°C and a corresponding increase of 1% ultraviolet radiation. This means that vineyards planted higher on slopes are more suitable to those varieties that require greater light intensity in order to ripen to an optimal level.

*Australian Height Datum is the official vertical datum for Australia.

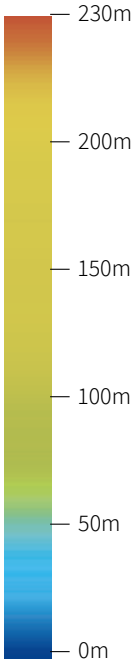
Sources

Tille, P, Stuart-Street, A & Gardiner, P 2020, Geology, Soils and Climate of the Margaret River Wine Region, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Perth. <https://researchlibrary.agric.wa.gov.au/pubns/150/>



Elevation (AHD)

- Town
- Major Road
- Rivers & Waterways
- Vineyard Planting Area



The Soils of Margaret River

The Margaret River Wine Region is renowned for the deep and ancient gravel-loam duplex soils of the Leeuwin Complex ridge, which are crucial to producing wines of distinction, consistently. These free-draining soils have low water and nutrient holding capacities, providing the optimum growing conditions to achieve balance between foliage and fruit, and thus superb aroma and flavour intensity. Typically, these soils sit upon a clay base which supports the vines during the dry summer growing season. The predominance of ironstone gravel soil types in the south-west of Western Australia is not seen anywhere else in the world.

Selecting Viticulture Land

One of the most distinguishing features of the soils of Margaret River is the extent of change that occurs across the region and how frequently they can transition, even across a single block of vines. In many vineyards, the soil profile can alter significantly within a matter of metres. This landscape allows vigneron to match grape varieties by row and produce an array of wine styles over small land areas.

Since the earliest days of viticulture in the Margaret River Wine Region, the specific preference towards land cloaked in the Jarrah, Marri and Karri trees (*Eucalyptus marginata*, *Corymbia calophylla* and *Eucalyptus diversicolor*) has guided vigneron as to what lies under the surface of adjacent paddocks, many of which were cleared by farmers before the wine industry. Given the complex nature of the landscape, many modern vigneron have utilised comprehensive soil surveys for pairing varieties to vineyard blocks and rows. Surveys may use soil classification maps, precision viticulture technologies such as infrared mapping, soil sampling and/or excavated soil test pits to identify the best land for planting.

At one stage in the industry there was a distinct focus on using precision viticulture technologies to increase uniformity in the vineyard, particularly regarding soil management and subsequent water management strategies. Due to the complex distribution of soil types within the region, this was not an easy task. In recent times, viticulture programs are adapting to the variability of soil type at a row and block level, and embracing the benefits of this approach.



“As far as we have been able to ascertain, there are no other wine growing areas around the globe that have soils so broadly dominated by lateritic ironstone gravels. The gravels have definitely been sought out by vigneron, as by our estimates, they account for over 40 percent of all plantings in the state (Western Australia).”

Peter Tille & Angela Stuart-Street
Soil Scientists



A Diversity of Soil Types

Ten main soil type groupings have been identified in the Margaret River Wine Region. Forest Grove (ironstone gravels) make up the highest percentage of vineyard area at 45 percent, and Mungite (sandy duplex) soils are next, at 29 percent. A number of the other soils present are not suitable for viticulture and are not planted to grapevines.

Many of the region's vineyards are established on a patchwork of different soil types and this feature can be managed towards an advantage, as well as celebrated. In fact, a significant degree of the complexity found in Margaret River wines can be attributed to the influence of soil diversity within a single variety block.

The difficulty with mapping the main soil types of Margaret River is that they do not form discrete units of land area. Rather, soil profiles merge across the landscape creating a mix of soil types as they transition. The Margaret River 'Main Soil Types' map illustrates the dominance of particular soil types and combinations thereof. The legend, which references local soil names, describes how the soils blend across the topography of the region.

Main Soil Types

FOREST GROVE SOILS DOMINANT (with Minor Keenan Soils)

Ironstone gravelly soils occur across more than half of these areas and about a quarter of the soils are red-brown loams.

FOREST GROVE SOILS (with Mungite Soils Common)

Ironstone gravelly soils occur across more than half of these areas and about a quarter of the soils are red-brown loams.

MUNGITE AND FOREST GROVE SOILS CO-DOMINANT

Sandy duplex and Ironstone gravel soils are equally common.

BUSSELTON, ABBA AND WATERLOGGED SOILS

Sandy duplex and seasonally wet soils are equally common.

MARYBROOK SOILS (with Busselton Soils)

Mainly alluvial sands and loams with some Sandy duplex soils.

SPEARWOOD & OTHER YELLOW SANDS DOMINANT

Coloured sands are dominant.

BLEACHED SANDS DOMINANT

Pale deep sands make up most of the soils.

CALCAREOUS SANDS DOMINANT

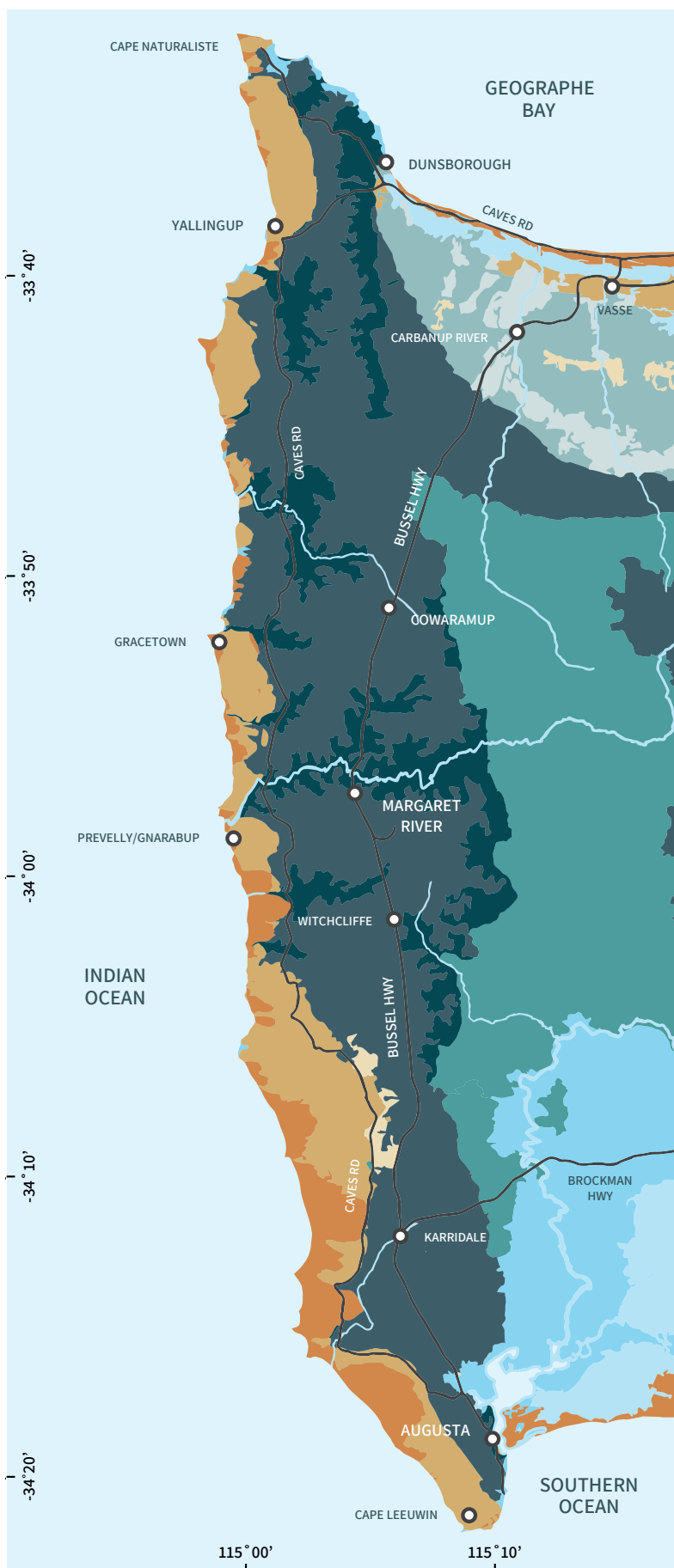
Calcareous (alkaline) sands make up most of the soils.

MOSTLY WATERLOGGED SOILS

Most of the soils are affected by seasonally high watertables and other wet areas.

WATERLOGGED SOILS, MUNGITE SOILS & YELLOW SANDS

Waterlogged soils mixed with areas of sandy duplex and Yellow deep sands.



Main Soil Types

○ Town

— Major Road

— Rivers & Waterways

● Forest Grove soils dominant
(with minor Keenan soils)

● Forest Grove soils (with
Mungite soils common)

● Mungite & Forest Grove
soils co dominant

● Busselton, Abba and
waterlogged soils

● Marybrook soils (with
Busselton soils)

● Calcareous sands
dominant

● Spearwood & other
yellow sands dominant

● Bleached sands
dominant

● Mostly waterlogged
soils

● Waterlogged soils, Mungite
soils and yellow sands

0 10
KILOMETRES



“Today, Margaret River has more than 160 producers, on wildly varying soils, of which free-draining ironstone gravels are most prize for the region’s exceptionally fine reds”

Hugh Johnson & Jancis Robinson MW

Forest Grove Soils

Ironstone Gravels

Many of the region’s earliest grape-growing sites were planted on the hills and valleys which transect the region, where Forest Grove soils are the most commonly occurring classification. Gladstones (1966) noted that these soils supported, “a predominance and good growth of Marri,” and recommended them as most suitable for wine production. These soils represent only a quarter of the region’s cleared land; however, a notable 45 percent of the Margaret River Wine Region’s vineyards sit upon them.

Forest Grove soils encourage well-balanced vine growth due to lower inherent fertility, and low-to-moderate available water. They are the shallowest soils of the region, with clay and rock bases generally restricting root growth and moderating vine vigour. Iconic quality Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay fruit is grown on these soil types.

The soils in this group consist of lateritic colluvium derived from a deeply weathered mantle, overlying clay or ironstone parent material. They are gravelly soil profiles ranging from yellow-brown, sandy loam duplexes through to red-brown gradational loams with up to 60 percent ironstone gravel content. The underlying clay can be highly variable, from deep, white sandy clay, to mottled yellow clay, and in the shallowest soils, red gravelly clay. The topsoil is composed of a varying mix of sand and loam, usually with some degree of surface gravel. This exposed ironstone component retains heat, which is radiated into the fruit zone, enhancing the vine’s ripening potential. Waterlogging is generally not a problem with this soil type due to the soils’ prevalence on slopes.



“These ironstone gravels are of pedogenic origin, that is, they have formed within the soil. This is a strong point of difference with other regions, particularly those in Europe, where gravelly soils comprise fragments of quartz, quartzite, limestone, basalt, flint and other rocks.”

Peter Tille & Angela Stuart-Street
Soil Scientists

Mungite Soils

Sandy Duplexes

Mungite soils are the second most widely planted classification in the Margaret River Wine Region and are often mixed with Forest Grove soils. Well-drained Mungite soils with gravel in the profile are suitable for most grape varieties.

Reasonable yields can be supported on the better Mungite soils due to good water and nutrient holding capacities. Good irrigation and nutrition management is commonly used to keep vines in balance. Often vineyards with these soil types require surface and subsurface drainage prior to planting.

Mungite soils are sandy earth soils with varying compositions of loam and gravel. The depth to clay can be highly divergent, ranging from shallow soils with clay at 60 centimetres, to deep sands with clay at 1.5 metres or more. The topsoil is generally a grey-brown colour composed of fluctuating ratios of sand and loam, and often containing a small percentage of gravel.



“Margaret River’s reputation has been built on Cabernet Sauvignon with usefully ripe tannins, and often, a hint of something marine – oyster shells? It joins such other west coast wine regions as Bordeaux, Bolgheri, Napa/Sonoma, and the Limestone Coast in its propensity to turn the rays of the setting sun into some of the most satisfying, and ageworthy, red wines in the world. There is both finesse and ripeness in Margaret River’s best Cabernets”

Hugh Johnson & Jancis Robinson MW



Other Soil Types

More recently, vines have been planted in the north-east of the region on Marybrook (alluvial) soils. These soils are mainly located in warmer, northern areas of the region and are adaptable to many varieties. The Marybrook soils have excellent water and nutrient holding capacities, and vines grow strongly due to the large potential rooting volume and available water. Vines can produce large canopies and high yields with the correct trellis system. These soils are comprised of red, sandy earth and friable red-brown loamy earth. They have formed relatively young, well-drained alluvium and have a fine, red sand to loamy topsoil, sometimes grading to clay with depth. Some of the region’s deeper, well-drained sandy soils are also suitable for wine grape production, namely the Keenan, Busselton and Spearwood sands.

Sources

Tille P & Stuart-Street A, (2020), Wine Industry Newsletter, DPIRD Bunbury

<https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/newsletters/win/win-vol-134>

Tille, P, Stuart-Street, A & Gardiner, P 2020, Geology, Soils and Climate of the Margaret River Wine Region, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Perth. <https://researchlibrary.agric.wa.gov.au/pubns/150/>

Johnson H & Robinson J (2019) The World Atlas of Wine, 8th Edition

Mediterranean Climate with a Maritime Influence

One of the Earth's most pristine, geographically secluded, coastal wine regions, Margaret River enjoys a 'textbook perfect' climate for fine wine viticulture. In fact, the local wine industry was established upon scientific research that likened Margaret River's climate to that of the world's greatest wine regions, given its Mediterranean climate of wet winters and long dry summers. The region's coastal location provides a distinct advantage. The maritime influence of the Indian and Southern Oceans tempers the diurnal temperature range, protecting from winter frosts, and producing sea breezes that act as an 'air conditioner' for the ripening grapes in summer. These factors contribute to the distinct elegance, structure and intense varietal character of Margaret River wines.

The Margaret River Wine Region sits in the south-west corner of Australia, with its northern most point located 230 kilometres from Western Australia's capital city of Perth. A long, narrow region, it is hugged by the Indian Ocean on the north and west, and Southern Ocean to the south, creating a strong maritime influence over the climate, with comparatively low temperature variability. Off the coast to the west, there is 8,000 kilometres of uninterrupted ocean to South Africa, and to the south there are 3,500 kilometres of ocean to Antarctica. This stunning stretch of land is one of the Earth's most distinct, geographically secluded, coastal wine regions. The climate of the Margaret River Region is classically Mediterranean, with warm to hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters. Cooling afternoon sea breezes are common during the growing season.

Temperatures

Grape vines favour what can be described as 'temperate' climates, which mostly fall within distinct latitudes of 30° and 50° from the equator. The Margaret River Wine Region fits within this zone, at latitude 33°31'S (Cape Naturaliste) to 34°22'S (Cape Leeuwin) and longitude 114°58' (Cape Clairault) to 115°18'E (Gladstones Line).

There is a downward gradient of temperature and sunshine hours from the north to the south of the region, with temperatures marginally increasing again south of Karridale. An abrupt increase in cloudiness south of Witchcliffe is a common summer feature. The Indian and Southern Oceans moderate the effect of temperature in the region; its northwest areas are influenced greatly by the Indian Ocean while the Southern Ocean its south-east areas.



The moderating effect of ocean breezes extends to the level of humidity across the region. Relative humidity in vineyards is generally measured at 9am and 3pm and is used as an indicator of vine stress, as well as ripening potential. During dry (low humidity) periods, vines have a tendency to lose a greater amount of water through the leaves, triggering a temporary reduction in photosynthesis and sugar accumulation in the fruit. The region's average annual relative humidity is about 72% in the morning reading and 58% in the afternoon reading, which results in ideal growing conditions.

TEMPERATURE STATISTICS MARGARET RIVER REGION (1989-2019)

Mean January Temperature	20.6 °C (69.1 °F)
Growing Season (Oct-Apr) Min. Mean Temp	18.2 °C (64.8 °F)
Growing Season (Oct-Apr) Max. Mean Temp	19.5 °C (67.1 °F)
Mean Growing Degree Days (Oct-Apr)	1,939 days
Min Average Diurnal Temp	5.7 °C (42.3 °F)
Max Average Diurnal Temp	12.0 °C (53.6 °F)
Average Diurnal Temp	10.1 °C (50.2 °F)

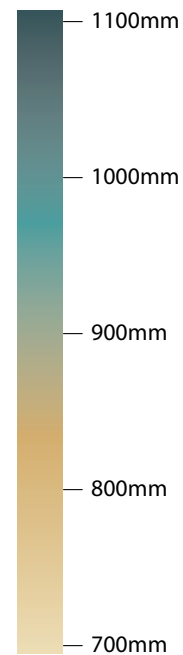


Average Annual Rainfall (mm) 1989 - 2016

○ Town

— Major Road

— Rivers & Waterways



0 10
KILOMETRES



Average Growing Season Temperature (°C) October-April, 1989-2019

○ Town

— Major Road

— Rivers & Waterways



0 10
KILOMETRES



Rainfall

The average annual rainfall in the region is between 850 and 1,200 millimetres and is generally higher and more reliable than surrounding areas. Margaret River has the most distinct rainfall patterns of any grape growing region in Australia. Most of the annual precipitation occurs between May and September, with heaviest falls during the winter months of June to August. Summers are generally dry, with December, January and February receiving a monthly average of less than 25 millimetres of rain. The growing season rainfall is calculated from October to April, receiving an average of 275 millimetres during the entire period and 100 millimetres during the harvest period. This is a good indication of how much water is available to the vine. Rainfall is typically lightest in the north-west and heaviest in the south-east. The Margaret River Wine Region can be known to experience spring storms, which can be detrimental to fruit development and thus yields if flowers and new shoots are exposed.

“In Margaret River, the “feels like” temperature can often be 3-6 degrees cooler than the “actual” temperature because of the sea breeze. If you taste Cabernet from a site that is protected from the sea breeze, that fruit often tastes as though as it has ripened in warmer conditions. The sea breeze almost refrigerates the fruit to preserve the fresh flavour in the long period of time it takes to ripen Cabernet tannins.”

Virginia Willcock, Chief Winemaker Vasse Felix

Maritime Influence

The tempering impact of the Indian and Southern Oceans is a major contributor to the region’s superb grape growing conditions. This maritime influence is responsible for the Margaret River Wine Region’s low diurnal temperature range, uniform heat accumulation, low seasonal variation and its overall milder climate compared to inland wine regions. The maritime influence is evident in the compelling elegance of the wines, brought about by cooling breezes which allow for the retention of fragile aromatics and flavour compounds. Throughout the long growing season, the vines typically experience very little heat stress, meaning that the preservation of natural acidity in the berries is achieved alongside optimal physiological and sugar ripeness.



The Maritime Currents Explained

THE LEEUWIN CURRENT SUPPORTS ABUNDANT WINTER RAINFALLS AND MITIGATES FROST

The Leeuwin Current is a warm ocean current which moves water of tropical origin down the Western Australian coastline, around the capes of the Margaret River Wine Region and eastward, as far as Tasmania. The greatest flow of this current is in the autumn and winter, when the opposing winds are weakest. Evaporation from the Leeuwin Current during this period contributes greatly to the rainfall patterns and volumes in Margaret River and the south-west of Western Australia. "The south-west of Australia is up to 5°C warmer in winter and receives more than double the rainfall compared to regions located on similar latitudes along western coastlines of other continents." (Pattiaratchi, Wijeratne and Proctor, 2019). Scientists consider it to be the longest boundary current in the world.

THE WEST AUSTRALIAN CURRENT BLOWS COOLING WINDS NORTHWARD

The West Australian Current is a cool surface current of the Southern Ocean and southern Indian Ocean. Surface currents distribute heat around the planet and are major influences of climate. This current is mainly seasonal, being weaker in winter and stronger in summer, and is affected by the localised winds.

THE FREMANTLE DOCTOR

The wind experienced in south-western Australia is persistent, and one of the strongest land-sea breeze systems on the planet. The colloquially named 'Fremantle Doctor' is the cooling afternoon sea breeze which is prevalent during summer months along the south-west coastal areas of Western Australia, including the Margaret River Wine Region. The breeze blows consistently from the south-west along the southern half of the west coast, starting between 10am and 3pm and often cools the coast by several degrees. It can produce strong winds of up to 15-20 knots. The Fremantle Doctor is most prevalent in December and January when the temperature differential between the land and the ocean is greatest. In February and March, wind strength is reduced by increased ocean temperatures while October and November see moderate breezes due to cooler seas. Other months have a weak or non-existent sea breeze due to the inverse effect of the land being cooler than the surrounding ocean.

Sources

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology:

<http://www.bom.gov.au/oceanography/forecasts/forecast-help.shtml>

The Western Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development Weather Database <https://weather.agric.wa.gov.au>

Pattiaratchi C, Wijeratne E, Proctor R, (2019) The Conversationalist 'A current affair: the movement of ocean waters around Australia'

<https://theconversation.com/a-current-affair-the-movement-of-ocean-waters-around-australia-96779>



Conserving the Natural Environment & Biodiversity

The south-west of Australia is one of the Earth's most important natural environments due to its large and vital population of endemic flora and fauna species. It is one of 36 internationally recognised 'Biodiversity Hotspots'. More than 46 percent of the Margaret River Wine Region is native forest, which is carefully protected by the community. Recognising the region's outstanding conservation value, alongside its ability to produce some of the world's best wines, the Margaret River Wine Association and its members are committed to numerous sustainability initiatives to protect the environment's rare biodiversity for future generations.

The richness of biodiversity in the Margaret River Wine Region reflects its distinct combination of three geomorphic areas: the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge, Margaret River Plateau and Scott Coastal Plain, alongside its diverse soils and proximity to the Indian and Southern Oceans. The region boasts a wide range of habitats that include coastal limestones in association with granite heathlands, laterised uplands, deep sands and distinct wetlands.

Biodiversity Hotspot

The south-west of Australia is one of the original 25 internationally recognised 'Biodiversity Hotspots' and the first one identified in Australia (there are currently 36 international Hotspots and two in Australia). In total, Hotspots constitute just 2.5 percent of the Earth's land surface, however, they support more than half of its endemic plant species. Within the Margaret River Wine Region there are more than 1,300 native flora species, over 80 percent are endemic to the region. The Cape to Cape area is also home to approximately 24 mammal species, 44 reptile and amphibian species and some 52 species of birds.



Native Forest & National Parks

Over 46 percent of the Margaret River Wine Region is native forest, most of which is protected within the region's national parks and state forest. Perhaps the most well-known is the 19,092 hectare Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park, which runs down the coastline from the eastern side of Cape Naturaliste in the north, to Cape Leeuwin in the south. This park sits primarily on the Leeuwin Complex, with highlights including the dramatic Wilyabrup Cliffs, Boranup Karri Forest, the Cape Leeuwin and Naturaliste Lighthouses, the Cape to Cape walking track and over 100 caves. Many vineyards are surrounded by native forest of Karri, Marri and Jarrah trees which are all endemic to the south-west region of Western Australia.



The Margaret River Wine Association's Environmental Commitment

The Margaret River Wine Association and its members value the region's outstanding conservation value and its capacity to produce some of the world's best wines. The Margaret River Wine Region Sustainability Plan was established out of a conviction to fulfil custodial responsibilities towards the region's exceptional environment, recognising the importance of sustaining and protecting its rare biodiversity. The plan identifies key initiatives and measures including environmental health and resilience, social responsibility, waste reduction and climate action. A major initiative of the Association is onboarding its members into the [Sustainable Winegrowing Australia](#) program and working with them to achieve certification.

The [Margaret River Wine Region 2024 Sustainability Report](#) captures our progress and celebrates our achievements.

Sources

Beard J.S., Chapman A.R. and Gioia P. (2000) Species richness and endemism in the Western Australian flora. *Journal of Biogeography*, 27:1257-1268.

Keighery G., Lyons M., Gibson N. and Keighery B. (2011) Vascular Flora of Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park. *Conservation Science Western Australia*, 8 (1): 31-60.

<https://www.amrshire.wa.gov.au/sustainability/biodiversity>

<https://www.cepf.net/our-work/biodiversity-hotspots/hotspots-defined>

Fast Facts – Indigenous Trees

KARRI (*Eucalyptus diversicolor*)

A species of flowering plant in the family Myrtaceae. It is a tall tree with smooth light grey to cream-coloured, often mottled bark, lance-shaped adult leaves, and barrel-shaped fruit. Found in higher rainfall areas. Karri is a tall forest tree that typically grows to a height of 10–60 metres but can reach as high as 90 metres, making it the tallest tree in Western Australia and one of the tallest in the world. The bark on the trunk and branches is smooth, grey to cream-coloured or pale orange, often mottled and is shed in short ribbons or small polygonal flakes. Some Karri specimens are thought to reach an age of up to 300 years.

MARRI (*Corymbia calophylla*)

Is a large tree that can grow up to 40 metres in height in a range of habitats, with brown to grey-brown rough bark arranged in a tessellating pattern, the Marri exudes a red or rust coloured sap. The common name Marri is a Noongar word for blood, which has been used to describe the sap that weeps from wounds in the bark. The large urn shaped nuts are commonly referred to as 'honky nuts' in Western Australia. They hold large seeds that provide a food source to native birds.

JARRAH (*Eucalyptus marginata*)

This magnificent tree can grow up to 50 metres tall and the trunk is long and straight, has few branches, and can grow to a width of 3 metres. It makes a fine specimen tree and provides habitat for native fauna. Jarrah has greyish coloured bark with vertical furrows. Its growth habit forms a shady canopy which has the potential to inhibit the growth of any seedlings below. When in bud, the shape of the cap is of a cone, and then comes a beautiful display of strongly scented white-cream flowers from June to January. These flowers attract many types of bees, marsupials and birds. Flowers are usually found in groups of seven to eleven.

Jarrah and Marri trees may look very similar although Jarrah has a dark, stringy bark while the Marri has rough, splotchy, tessellated bark and often present with a dark sap oozing from the trunk. The biggest point of difference is the gumnuts, which are actually a woody fruit. Jarrah has small, rounded gumnuts, while Marri has urn shaped nuts.

MARGARET RIVER WINE





Respectful Grape Growing & Winemaking

The innate suitability of Margaret River's land and climate to fine wine viticulture enables vigneron to grow outstanding grapes while working with the environment, holistically. Traditional, sustainable and organic practices are increasingly adopted here, with numerous wineries taking their commitment to the next level through certifications. The high proportion of artisan, family-owned wineries, alongside a community lifestyle that recreates in nature, make this 'light touch' approach to viticulture and winemaking most appealing. While many wine grape varieties ripen to perfection on these lands, it is Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay which are celebrated as superlative for their beauty, elegance and power. The well-travelled makers strive to unearth new levels of distinction and regional expression with their fusion of technical knowledge and classical methodology, inspired by the unique terroir of this extraordinary place.

A Textbook Winemaking History

In just over fifty years, the Margaret River Wine Region has earned an enviable reputation as a world leading fine wine destination. Unusually, its wine story was born from scientific research by prominent Viticulture Professor Dr Harold Olmo (UC Davis) and respected Western Australian Agronomist Dr John Gladstones (UWA), whose work spurred an enthusiasm for viticulture amongst the locals. History was made with the planting of the Vasse Felix vineyard in 1967 by wine pioneer Dr Tom Cullity. Its success, and that of Moss Wood (planted 1969) cued the start of something great. In the 1980s, Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay were catapulted to international fame when major accolades were achieved by Cape Mentelle and Leeuwin Estate. The Region's fiftieth anniversary was celebrated in 2017 with great fanfare, at which time there were 164 wine producers.

Early Settlement, Early Vines

The origins of winemaking in Western Australia align with establishment of the Swan River Colony (Perth) by the British in 1829. Soon after, farming settlements populated Augusta (1830) and Vasse (1841). Vines were planted from the earliest days in Vasse, and in the 1840s, a tiny commercial vineyard was planted near Busselton at a property called Westbrook by Elijah Dawson. This served the American whalers, who plied their trade in the local waters for most of the nineteenth century. Small plots were grown at several properties including that of the Credaro family. They settled in the Carburnup area in 1922 and have had at least one hectare planted across the generations.



Credaro and Meleri Families

Founded Upon Science

Since 1829, the Swan Valley was Western Australia's primary wine growing area. In 1955, Professor of Viticulture at University California Davis, Dr Harold Olmo was invited to Western Australia to report on 'the problems and possibilities of the viticulture industry'.

Following an eight-month visit, Olmo published, 'A Survey of the Grape Industry of Western Australia'. The paper outlined the viticulture potential of the south-west of Australia, with Olmo stating; "Quality table wines are best produced in cooler regions where higher development of colour and flavour, high acidity and only moderate sugar content can be achieved. Comparison of the degree days indicates that there is a wide band of territory in the south-west ideally located from the temperature standpoint... the area is equivalent or better than other areas to be found in the present quality wine districts of Australia or California."

Olmo's research was expanded upon in 1965 and 1966, with two reports by Senior Lecturer in Agronomy at the University of Western Australia, Dr John Gladstones. The first examined the suitability of Australia's south-west for viticulture, and the second focused solely on the Margaret River and Busselton areas, suggesting Cowaramup-Bramley and Witchcliffe-Forest Grove as suitable localities for grape growing.

"Since the unit cost of production on unirrigated lands will remain high in WA because of low yield, it is essential to produce a few distinct wines of the highest possible quality that can be consistently produced year after year and that are so unique that imitation by other wine-growing districts is impossible."

Professor Harold Olmo



Brothers JR and David Hohnen with friends David Sands and David Paterson (Giles Hohnen had been pushed out and only his feet are visible)

Pioneer Plantings in Margaret River

The Margaret River area struggled in the 1960s and 1970s, dependent on dairy farming and timber, while frequented by alternative lifestylers who were drawn to the impressive coastline. The locals were keen to diversify into industries such as potatoes and pine plantations and some were open to the lure of viticulture. Gladstones' scientific papers proved to be the catalyst for commercial planting and led to Tom Cullity and Bill Pannell spending endless weekends scouring the region looking for the ideal plot, eventually planting Vasse Felix (1967) and Moss Wood (1969).

Gladstones had already advised Kevin and Diana Cullen to plant grapes rather than lupins and Kevin and Tom Cullity spent a weekend in May 1966 discussing the possibilities of their involvement in viticulture in the area. This led to Kevin Cullen calling a public meeting in July 1966, at which Gladstones addressed about a hundred interested locals, generating further interest in viticulture. Cape Mentelle planted vines in 1970, Cullen Wines (1971), Sandalford (1972), Leeuwin Estate, Woodlands and Wrights (1973).

By 1980 there were 20 vineyards operating in the area. The surprising quality of the wines produced in the early days, alongside successes in the Perth Wine Show, meant the fledgling industry attracted plenty of local attention.

Early International Success

Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon winning Australia's most prestigious wine trophy, the Jimmy Watson Medal, at the 1983 Melbourne Show with their 1982 vintage. The 1983 vintage repeated that feat. It was a game changer and brought the Margaret River Wine Region onto the radar of wine lovers in Australia's eastern states and overseas.

At a similar time, London-based wine magazine, Decanter, held an international Chardonnay tasting in which the 1981 Leeuwin Estate 'Art Series' Chardonnay was the highest rated wine. This vindicated two bold decisions that Leeuwin Estate had made: they released the Chardonnay at - an unheard of - five years of age and priced the wine at the pinnacle of Australian Chardonnay production. The international attention further cemented Margaret River's reputation.



Dr Tom Cullity pictured with the first vines at Vasse Felix in 1967

Margaret River Wine Geographical Indicator

A small group of vignerons began the Margaret River Grape Growers & Winemakers Association in the mid-1970s and it became incorporated as the Margaret River Wine Association in 1982.

An experimental appellation system run by the Western Australian Department of Agriculture operated with up to 14 volunteer wineries for about a decade from 1978, but ultimately failed. In 1994, the Federal Government legislated for the introduction of Geographical Indicators, establishing regional boundaries for all Australian wine regions. Dr John Gladstones responded to industry requests and offered a set of recommendations for delineating the Margaret River Wine Region in June 1994. His proposal was accepted and, in 1996, Margaret River became one of the first three wine regions in Australia to have its boundaries legally defined and entered in the Register of Protected Names.

In 1999, Dr John Gladstones presented a paper suggesting the potential to divide Margaret River into six sub-regions based on climate and soil differences. These unofficial areas are Yallingup, Carburnup, Wilyabrup, Treeton, Wallcliffe and Karridale. In the absence of official, vetted sub-regions, these localities are sometimes used to provide context and a point of reference with consumers and wine industry trade representatives. Although the term 'sub-region' is often used in these scenarios, it is important to recognise that to date the six areas proposed by Gladstones have not been scientifically verified as GI's or approved by government.

In 2017, a group of five wineries made an application to Wine Australia's Geographical Indication Committee for the determination of the region 'Wilyabrup' as a Geographical Indication. In 2020 the Committee decided not to make a final determination, citing the fact that there was still no agreement on the exact boundaries or attributes of the proposed Wilyabrup region. Read more via [Wine Australia](https://www.wineaustralia.com.au/news/2020/07/2020-07-14-wilyabrup-geographical-indication).

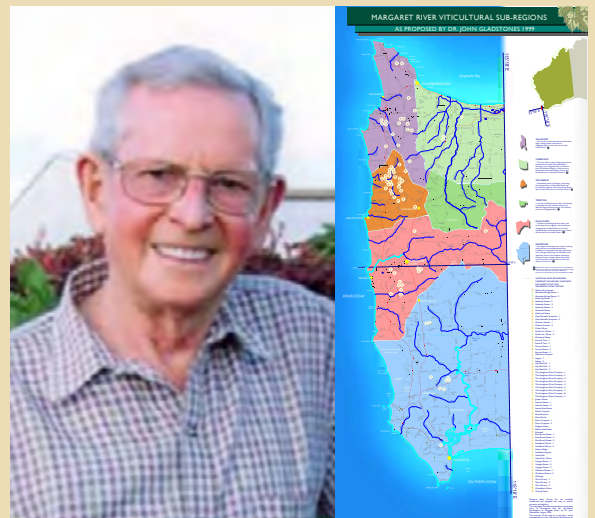
Fast Facts What is the Gladstones Line?

Dr John Gladstones AO has a line of longitude named after him. The Gladstones Line runs north to south at longitude 115°18'E, just west of Busselton to form the eastern boundary of the designated Margaret River Wine Region Geographical Indicator (GI).



Dr John Gladstones

A respected Agronomist, Gladstones proposed the possibility of sub-regions in 1999. The map illustrates these boundaries.



Historical Milestones

1955	Harold Olmo, Professor of Viticulture, University of California, recommends planting wine grapes in Australia's south-west.
1966	Dr John Gladstones, Agronomist, University of Western Australia, identifies viticulture potential of Margaret River / Vasse areas.
1967	Dr Tom Cullity plants the first modern commercial vineyard at Vasse Felix. The original Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec plantings still grow today.
1976	The region's first Chardonnay vines are planted at Leeuwin Estate, Cullen Wines and Moss Wood.
1983-4	Margaret River's reputation for fine Cabernet Sauvignon is cemented when Cape Mentelle wins back-to-back
1996	The Geographical Indication (GI) Margaret River is registered.
2002	The first regional Margaret River Wine Show was held with 356 entries.
2017	Margaret River Wine Region celebrates 50 years
Today	The region continues to grow its international reputation for producing world-class fine wine.



“Margaret River is a new classic. 50 years is a very compressed history, but it has been shockingly successful.”

Andrew Caillard MW

Fifty Years of Margaret River Wine Region

The Margaret River Wine Region celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2017. At the time, there were 164 wine producers. To mark the occasion, the most significant wine tasting ever held in Margaret River was organised by the Wine Association and featured a selection of 34 wines ranging from the 1983 through to 2016 vintage, curated by leading winemakers to reflect the heritage and the future of Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay.

The event was attended by over 60 guests and led by a panel featuring Jancis Robinson OBE MW, James Halliday AM, Andrew Caillard MW and Virginia Willcock (Vasse Felix). In summarising the first fifty years of Margaret River winemaking, Jancis Robinson said, “I think what most impressed me overall was the ageability of the wines. It was a real joy to taste these two wines from the 80s.”

A video of the event can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7Kp7K28Ow8

A celebratory ‘time capsule’ wine was also made from the fiftieth vintage, with a selection of Margaret River’s esteemed producers contributing a small sample of their





Continuing to Put Science First

Margaret River sets itself apart from most world wine regions in that it was built on the foundation of scientific endorsement. The uniqueness of an industry born in this way can only be strengthened by continual investigation into the relationship between location and local wine attributes.

A great body of work has been carried out over the past 50 years to profile the soils and climate of the Margaret River region. However, these projects led by independent researchers, government departments and industry bodies had largely remained disconnected from one another and were not readily available to the layperson.

In 2018, the Margaret River Wine Association formed a sub-committee to work closely with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) to commence an exciting collaborative project. The remit of the “Margaret River Provenance Project” is to further understand and define the region, an objective being achieved via the appraisal of existing literature alongside a number of key research initiatives. To date, the Technical sub-committee has achieved the following outcomes:

- **The Climate and Soils Of Margaret River Report, in partnership with DPIRD**
- **Statistical Analysis of Soil & Climate Data, in partnership with CSIRO**
- **Sensory analysis by Pivot Profile Method on 2020 Cabernet Sauvignon, in partnership with DPIRD and AWRI**

- **Sensory analysis by Pivot Profile Method on 2021 Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon in partnership with DPIRD and AWRI**
- **Sensory analysis by Pivot Profile Method on 2022 Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon. This time with standardised small batch winemaking by DPIRD Fast Facts**

Today The region continues to grow its international reputation for producing world-class fine wine. The use of science, innovation and technology continue to be a driving force for the Margaret River region, as the industry strives towards a greater and more rigorous interpretation of the influence of environment on wine. This is particularly relevant to the sustainability story which is rapidly becoming a pillar of the region’s production ethics and management systems.

One learning that has been acquired is that at this point we do not have sufficient empirical evidence to determine whether ‘sub-regions’ are a valid consideration for the GI.

It is our hope to uncover more of the region’s secrets and their link with our compelling fine wine offering. Read more via [Wine Australia](https://www.wineaustralia.com.au).

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Light Touch Viticulture

Margaret River's Mediterranean, maritime climate and ancient gravel-loam soils offer a superb viticulture environment for growers to take a 'light touch' approach in the pursuit of pure, site 'terroir' expression. With consistent seasons and minimal extremes, a movement towards sustainable and organic practices is prospering on the 5,840 hectares of viticultural land in Margaret River, where a relatively even split between white (60%) and red (40%) grapevines are planted. The top five varieties under vine are Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Semillon and Shiraz. The region is phylloxera free, with vineyards grown on their own vinefera root systems for the highest quality of vine propagation. The oldest vines were planted in 1967 and remain productive.

Vineyard Management

Margaret River viticulturists are known for their careful, seasonally adaptive vine and canopy management techniques to optimise fruit yield and quality. Common canopy management methods include winter and summer pruning, shoot positioning, shoot removal, leaf plucking (vigour control) and green harvesting (crop thinning). The requirement for irrigation is reduced by clay beneath the gravel-loam soils which collects rainfall over the winter months, providing a natural water source for vines over the dry summers.

In years when berry ripening starts early and the region's Marri trees have not yet bloomed, local birds called Silvereyes that reside in forests surrounding the vineyards target grapes as their food source. Growers must ensure nets are in place to protect vines early in the season.

Fast Facts – Vineyards

TOTAL SIZE OF REGION

213,000 Hectares

REMANT VEGETATION COVERING

98,750 Hectares (46.4%)

AREA UNDER VINE

5,840 Hectares (2.7%)

Over 12% of vineyards are certified organic or biodynamic



Adopting Organic and Biodynamic Practices

A growing number of vineyards are embracing reduced chemical use along with more regulated organic and biodynamic practices to maximise vine health and minimise harm to the surrounding ecology, returning good inputs such as compost back to the land. At present, 720 hectares, or 12.3% of the region's vineyards are certified organic or biodynamic. To identify the grape growers and vineyards in the Margaret River Wine Region who are certified as organic or biodynamic, or those in the process of gaining certification, see:

www.margaretriverorganicwine.com



Harvest

Harvest typically begins in February with earlier-ripening varieties such as Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon the first to be picked. Shiraz is a mid-harvest variety, while Cabernet Sauvignon requires the full ripening season, and is often the last to be harvested. The moderate climate and impact of the sea breeze allows the Cabernet to ripen over an extended time period to achieve outstanding fruit flavour and resolved tannins, while retaining natural acidity.

Hand-harvesting is widely used, particularly for the top wines. Wineries that machine harvest use this technique to harvest at night-time until just before sunrise, since this is the coolest part of the day. A particular benefit of machine harvest is the protection of aromatics of thin-skinned Shiraz and Sauvignon Blanc grapes and to allow for pre-fermentation skin contact for white varieties.

“Climate, abundant biodiversity and ocean influences combine to provide a unique environment for viticulture with high winter rainfall and long dry summers. High attention to detail and conscious management decisions around sustainability have resulted in passionate and responsible management from the custodians of the land.”

David Moulton, Viticulturist, Cape Mentelle Vineyards

Phylloxera Free

Margaret River is one of the few wine regions in the world able to grow vines on their own root system, without the need for grafting of phylloxera-resistant American rootstock (usually hybrid varieties created from *Vitis berlandieri*, *Vitis riparia* and *Vitis rupestris* species). The absence of the vine pest phylloxera has meant most vineyards have been grown from vinifera vine cuttings taken from high-quality, existing vineyards. This has allowed for the selection and propagation of very high-quality heritage clones of each grape variety. Margaret River's distinctive style of Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon is linked to two Western Australian heritage clones; Gingin (Chardonnay) and Houghton (Cabernet Sauvignon).



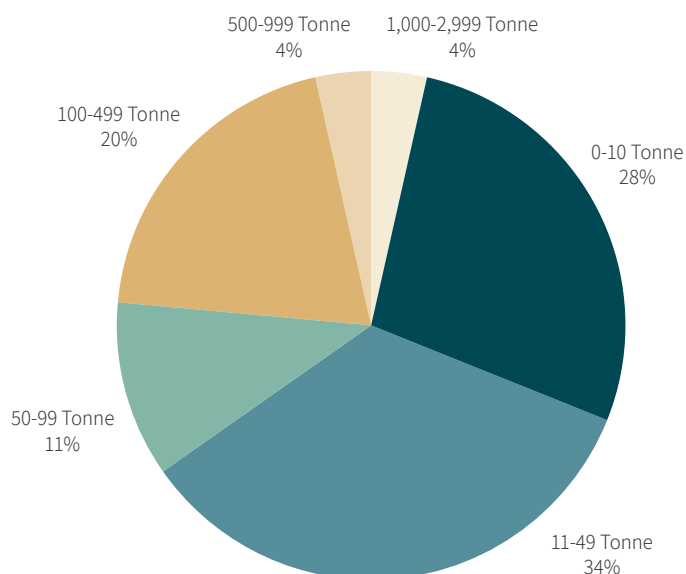
Sensitive Winemaking

Margaret River's ability to ripen fruit with excellent balance, refinement and structure allows the winemakers to take a relatively low intervention approach in the winery and let the quality of the grapes shine. The dominance of artisan and family-owned wineries encourages the practice of handcrafted winemaking and respectful creativity. Here, the world's classic wine regions are drawn upon for technique, while Margaret River's pristine environment and its worldly, close-knit wine community share an open culture where new ideas for varietal expression can be explored. Nature is cherished by the producers, making Margaret River an industry-leader of certified sustainability.

Artisan Winemakers

The region is dominated by artisan wineries, with over 60% of producers crushing less than 50 tonnes of fruit (approximately 4,000 9Le cases) from an average vintage. Larger producers are known for their handcrafted winemaking approaches that are delivered at scale, with a quality focus. The majority of Margaret River wineries are Western Australian family-owned operations.

WINE PRODUCERS BY TONNAGE RANGE



“Margaret River has a vastly different vibe compared to my upbringing in Italy. In Europe tradition means a lot and the reputation of a wine brand is built upon generational “savoir faire”.

Here it's different, as a young but classical winemaking region, I feel the freedom to experiment and push the stylistic boundaries with the wines we make. I call this the “blank canvas factor”, which keeps me engaged and enthusiastic about making wine in this beautiful place.”

Jacopo Dalli Cani,
Head Winemaker, McHenry Hohnen



Winemaking at Windows Estate

Popular Techniques

Margaret River winemakers draw on classic wine regions for technique and the local environment for inspiration. Several prominent producers are recognised Australian leaders for their longstanding adoption of low intervention winemaking techniques that most sensitively express their fruit. An example is the use of natural fermentation with only indigenous yeasts, a practice that has become increasingly widespread in Margaret River, particularly for Chardonnay.

The use of oak barrel fermentation and/or maturation is common, however winemakers practice restraint with new oak. Experimentation with array of vessel sizes (and materials eg. concrete) continues to evolve vinification programs as winemakers strive for the ultimate expression of complexity and texture, while preserving varietal character.

A Close-Knit Wine Community

Margaret River's worldly winemakers are close-knit, and a plethora of tastings are held throughout the year to share knowledge and experience. The two flagship varieties, Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay, both have an annual regional tasting, hosted at Vasse Felix. Here, hundreds of single plot barrel samples, from a single vintage, with transparency of site, viticulture and winemaking inputs are tasted and discussed. International blind tastings events featuring Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay are held at Cape Mentelle and Cullen Wines each year.



Amato Vino, Owner Brad Wehr

“Few regions in Australia have evolved as much as Margaret River. The Cabernet Sauvignon grown there is the country’s finest, up there with the best in the world, and the Chardonnay is exceptional.”

Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW

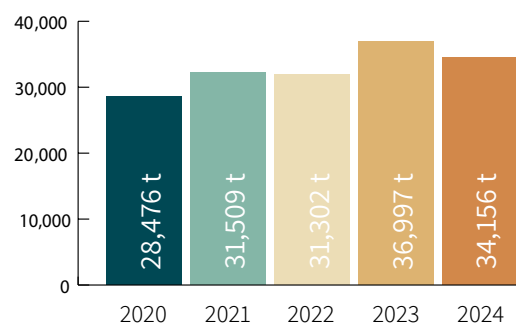
Key Varieties

The Margaret River Wine Region's Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay sit alongside the finest examples of their kind in the world. Both wines have been granted the remarkable descriptor of elegance and power, a character set that is distinct to the region. Complex and structured, Margaret River's finest Cabernets and Chardonnays stand out for their vibrance and enjoyability upon release with the ageability for extended cellaring of several decades. Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon are also grown, often combined into an aromatic white blend that has been synonymous with the region since the 1980s. Margaret River's medium-bodied Shiraz (sometimes referred to as Syrah) is also of notable standing. All up, over forty varieties are planted in the region, and a groundswell of exciting alternative varieties keeps Margaret River at the forefront of wine innovation.

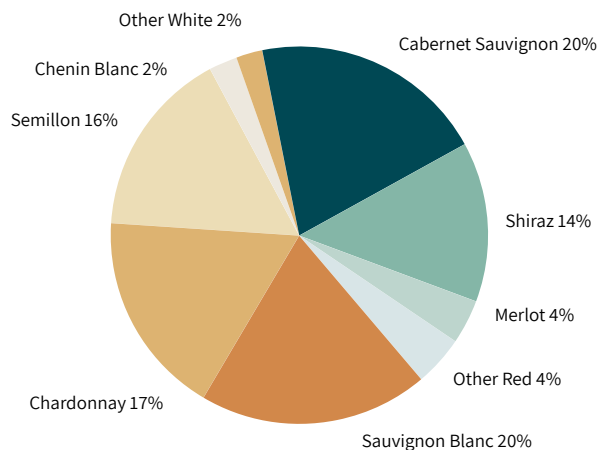
Margaret River's Grape Crush

5 YEAR AVERAGE - 32,488 tonnes

Less than 2% of Total Australian Wine Grape Crush



Key Varietals

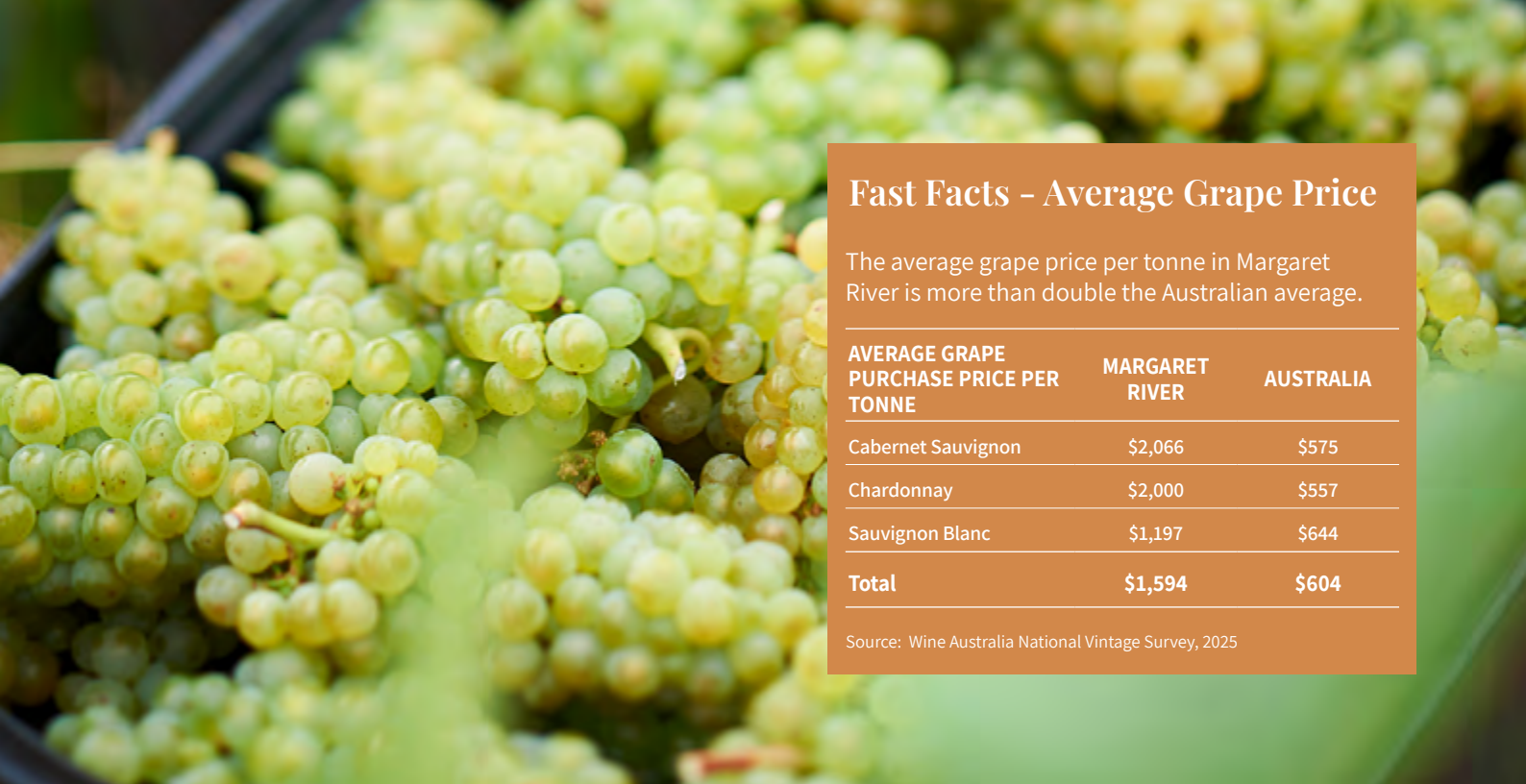


Cabernet Sauvignon

Margaret River is renowned for its refined and age-worthy Cabernet Sauvignon. The wines tend to be medium bodied, very perfumed and elegant in style, with powdery, emery-fine tannins and balanced acidity. The wines are suited to long term cellaring.

Many Cabernet Sauvignon vineyards are based on Western Australia's heritage Houghton clone and have an average vine age of over 20 years. This produces low crops (average 4 to 6 tonnes per hectare in a reasonable yield season). Bunches comprise of small, thick-skinned berries with a fine tannin structure. Other clones planted in Margaret River include SA125 and SA126.

DESCRIPTORS: PERFUMED, CASSIS/BLACKCURRANT, RED-CURRANT, CEDAR, BAY LEAF.



Fast Facts – Average Grape Price

The average grape price per tonne in Margaret River is more than double the Australian average.

AVERAGE GRAPE PURCHASE PRICE PER TONNE	MARGARET RIVER	AUSTRALIA
Cabernet Sauvignon	\$2,066	\$575
Chardonnay	\$2,000	\$557
Sauvignon Blanc	\$1,197	\$644
Total	\$1,594	\$604

Source: Wine Australia National Vintage Survey, 2025

Chardonnay

Margaret River is recognised for its pure, layered and expressive Chardonnays. The wines tend to be concentrated yet refined. Complexity is often expressed through natural fermentation in French oak barrels, building texture and secondary character development from maturation on lees. Many Chardonnay vineyards are based on Western Australia's heritage Gingin clone. This produces low crops of small bunches with "hen and chicken" berries. The tonnes per hectare vary by site from as low as 2 tonnes to 5 or 6 tonnes per hectare. The tiny berries in Gingin bunches provide intense fruit concentration and mineral acidity, in a distinguished regional style. Chardonnay Dijon clones 76, 95 and 97 are also planted.

DESCRIPTORS: MANDARIN, GRAPEFRUIT, NECTARINE/WHITE PEACH, GUNFLINT, NOUGAT.

Chenin Blanc

Chenin Blanc makes up only a tiny portion of the region's plantings, however, some passionate producers are dedicating serious effort to elevating the variety. Made in a range of styles from sparkling to still, some examples are crisp and dry, fermented in stainless steel while others are rich and full-bodied, wild-fermented in oak barrels. The regional style shines due to its versatility. Fruit-driven and ripe, these wines gain balance from vibrant natural acidity and saline minerality. Complexity comes through partial or full malolactic fermentation as well as lees ageing and stirring.

DESCRIPTORS: WHITE FLOWERS, PINK GRAPEFRUIT, PEAR, PEACH, BEESWAX.

"The top rank of Margaret River Chardonnay and Cabernet is, simply put, in the top rank of the world. And by that, I'm including the likes of Burgundy (for the Chardonnay) and Bordeaux and Napa Valley (for Cabernet Sauvignon)."

Matt Kramer, Wine Spectator USA

Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon & Blends

Margaret River produces its own distinctive white wine blend using Semillon and Sauvignon Blanc. The wines are lively, fresh and fruit-driven, with many producers employing barrel or skins-contact fermentation for added complexity, weight and concentration. These wines are very well-suited to food pairing, particularly with the region's abundant seafood.

DESCRIPTORS: GOOSEBERRY, PASSIONFRUIT, LIME, LEMON CURD.

Shiraz / Syrah

Margaret River Shiraz or Syrah is the second most planted red variety in the region and has a well-established following. The wines tend to be a medium-bodied style, featuring perfumed, fruit-driven aromas and bountiful forest fruits on the palate. They can be more spice-driven and cool climate in style, therefore sometimes labelled as Syrah.

DESCRIPTORS: MULBERRY, BLACKBERRIES, PLUM, SPICE, VIOLETS.

Distinct Heritage Clones

At the heart of Margaret River's world-renowned Cabernet Sauvignons and Chardonnays are two Western Australian heritage clones, each with distinct genomes and mysterious histories. Interestingly, both the Gingin (Chardonnay) and Houghton (Cabernet Sauvignon) clones have attributes that at different points in their history saw them considered less than ideal. However, modern success reflects their absolute suitability to the region's climate and soils. Both clones share common characteristics of small berries, bunches and low yields. The fruit is of exceptional quality and embodies Margaret River's defining wine characteristics of elegance and power.

Gingin Clone (Chardonnay)

The Gingin clone of Chardonnay is ubiquitous with Margaret River, representing a major portion of Chardonnay plantings in the region. It is known for its small bunches and its 'hen and chicken' berries (millerandage). Gingin grapes are intense, concentrated in fruit power and typically retain high natural acidity. This clone has a modern heritage that began in Western Australia, with recent research confirming Gingin's unique genomic sequence.

Heritage

The clone was originally imported into Western Australia in 1957 by the Department of Agriculture from the University of California Davis. 24 canes of "Pinot Chardonnay" were imported, allegedly as a disease indicator vine, with the transaction thought to have been overseen by Dr Harold Olmo, who had visited WA in 1955 to provide viticulture recommendations to the industry. The vines were planted at the Department's Swan Valley Research Station, and eventually supplied to a vineyard in the Swan Valley and another in Gingin (located north of Perth), called Moondah Brook Vineyard (formerly Valencia Wines). Cuttings from this vineyard were supplied to vineyards at Leeuwin Estate, Moss Wood and Cullen Wines in 1976 and subsequent vineyards in 1978.

As Margaret River Chardonnay grew more prolific in its global reputation, the clone's genetic heritage became a well-debated mystery, often thought to be the same as Mendoza. In 2018, the Australian Wine Research Institute completed genetic sequencing that proved the clones have a shared heritage, likely via "Chardonnay-1" a clone in an old Californian source block at the University of California, Davis, where Chardonnay diseases were being researched.



Despite their shared origins, Gingin and Mendoza are as distinct from each other as they are from any of the other clonal selections of Chardonnay.

A prominent viticultural characteristic of the Gingin clone is poor fruitset which leads to 'hen and chicken' (or millerandage) where loose bunches exhibit a combination of both large and, often many, smaller berries ranging from peppercorn to marbles in size.

Gingin Clone Characteristics

The Gingin clone vine vigour is moderate, bunches are usually smaller, around 70 to 100 grams which typically offer much more fruit concentration than other Chardonnay clones. Bunches ripen slowly and retain flavour and natural grape acid which is an asset. The clone requires less winemaking influence to build weight which allows the pure fruit flavours of the vineyard to be retained. Gingin produces a great intensity of fruit and maintains wonderful acidity and elegance. While Chardonnay styles are often influenced by winemaking intent, generosity of flavour is the hallmark of Gingin clone Chardonnay grown in Margaret River.



Houghton Clone Cabernet at Juniper Estate

Houghton Clone (Cabernet Sauvignon)

Many of Margaret River's finest Cabernets are made with the Houghton clone. It is a heritage clone, unique to Western Australia, that has become the preferred Cabernet Sauvignon clone of many Margaret River vintners for its ability to ripen grapes with a superb balance of blackcurrant, berry and cassis flavours, impeccable structure and resolved tannins. Houghton clone-based wines are synonymous with Margaret River's universally distinct Cabernet Sauvignon descriptor of 'power and elegance'.

Heritage

The original Cabernet Sauvignon vines that became the Houghton clones were introduced to Western Australia between 1836 and 1895. The exact arrival remains a mystery, however local folklore suggests possible South African origins.

Cabernet Sauvignon remained an insignificant variety in Western Australia until the 1930s. Plantings were limited because of the low bearing nature of the variety. In the 1930s the Houghton Vineyard (Swan Valley) took cuttings from old bush vines in Middle Swan to establish a 1.6 hectare planting known as the 'Houghton Cabernet block'. Although the vigour, yield and winemaking qualities varied across this block, one of Western Australia's most legendary winemakers, Jack Mann, was adamant that grapes from the block could be used to make outstanding wines.

This plot eventually became the source block for the first Cabernet Sauvignon planted in the Margaret River region in 1967 in the Vasse Felix vineyard, followed by plantings at Moss Wood (1969), Cape Mentelle (1970) and other pioneer properties.

From 1976 to the late 1990s, the Houghton clone diminished in popularity as dominant South Australian clone SA126 became favoured. This clone is generally considered to be higher yielding, producing aromatic Cabernet Sauvignon that can be lighter in palate weight and may show pronounced leafy, herbaceous characters unless fully ripe.

In the late 1990s, at the request of the Western Australian Wine Industry, the State's Department of Agriculture re-established research into the viticultural and wine quality traits of several Houghton clone cuttings sourced from the Margaret River, Swan Valley and Great Southern Wine Regions. The favourable results from blind sensory tastings, led to a new generation of Houghton clone prominence for planting and re-planting in Margaret River.

Houghton Clone Characteristics

Houghton clone Cabernet often displays lower vigour vines, lower yields and smaller berries. It produces wines with ripe skin and seed tannins, medium to full weight and great intensity. It generally displays less herbaceous characters and a lovely density with classic, blackcurrant and cassis characters and demonstrates that 'power and elegance' are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Margaret River's Other Famous White Wine (Sauvignon Blanc)

The blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon is synonymous with Margaret River. The blend became incredibly popular in the late 1980s and early 1990s as the quintessential Australian aromatic white wine – fresh, crisp, fruit-driven and approachable, suited ideally to the outdoor lifestyle. Margaret River continues to lead the premium end of this category in the domestic market.

Complementary to this, statement-making white blends and complex Sauvignon Blanc expressions feature in the folios of many Margaret River winemakers, where the fusion of technical and intuitive prowess is unearthing creative new frontiers. Practices such as maceration (grape skin-contact) and oak contact during fermentation, plus evolving maturation vessels such as barriques and foudres are driving complexity, texture and age-ability in a new generation of industry-leading styles. As an indicator of their stature, Margaret River's defining Sauvignon Blancs have seen the region recognised as Australia's leader for this varietal in the Halliday Wine Companion for at least the last four years. 45% of 'The Best of Best' in the 2024 edition came from Margaret River.

Heritage

Dr John Gladstones' two seminal research papers in 1965 and 1966 drew parallels between Margaret River's climate and that of Bordeaux, France. These papers inspired the planting of Margaret River's first generation of vineyards, and while Cabernet arrived first, it was a natural progression for early winemakers to explore the white varietals of Bordeaux.

The first Margaret River Semillon Sauvignon Blanc was produced in 1979 for Cullen Wines by winemaker Dr Mike Peterkin and sold under a label of the same name. It is thought to be the first wine of its kind in Australia and won a medal at the Perth Royal Show for the 'Best Full-Bodied Dry White Wine'.

The stature of Margaret River's "SSB" and "SBS" blend grew with the 1980s planting of the Pierro vineyard by Dr Peterkin, and at Cape Mentelle in the mid-1980s. The style was famously labelled 'Classic Dry White' by Vasse Felix Winemaker David Gregg with their inaugural release in 1987 and popularised further by Evans & Tate owner Frank Tate throughout the 1990s.

The international rise and dominance of Sauvignon Blanc in the 2000s spurred many Margaret River winemakers to craft a more serious, complex and age-



worthy regional blend. Producers introduced slightly oaked, savoury, textural and food-focused styles to elevate themselves above the crowded category. The 2010s onwards have seen this progress into stately single varietal expressions, particularly of Sauvignon Blanc.

Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon, combined, represent one-third of Margaret River's annual grape crush.

Varietal Characteristics

Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon grapes are sensitive to the temperature variance from north to south of the Margaret River region. Overall, both varieties are elegant in form, with pronounced fruit and retention of natural acidity as hallmarks.

In the north, more overt characteristics of passionfruit and lemon curd are seen. The southern fruit displays more delicate characters of citrus, gooseberry and lemongrass. From a varietal point of view, Sauvignon Blanc typically contributes fruit generosity and body, with tropical notes, while Semillon provides acidity and palate structure, with citrus and herbaceous qualities. The art of blending allows the winemaker to compose a mosaic of their choice.



Sustainability

The south-west of Australia is one of the original 25 globally recognised 'Biodiversity Hotspots' and the first identified in Australia. Margaret River's natural environment is ideally suited to producing some of the world's most celebrated wines. The Margaret River Wine Association Sustainability Program was born from a conviction to uphold our custodial responsibility for this unique environment, and a shared commitment to caretake the region for future generations. The program focuses on protecting biodiversity and driving action across pillars of environmental resilience, social responsibility, waste reduction and climate action. A cornerstone is supporting wineries to engage with Sustainable Winegrowing Australia, achieve certification, and build a sustainable future.

Sustainable Winegrowing Australia

The Margaret River Wine Association is progressing towards an ambitious goal to achieve 100% of members compliant to the national Sustainable Winegrowing Australia program (and 50% certified) by December 2025.

Sustainable Winegrowing Australia is Australia's national program for grape growers and winemakers to demonstrate and continuously improve their sustainable practices in the vineyard and winery through the environmental, social and economic aspects of their businesses. The voluntary program takes a holistic approach to managing, supporting, and promoting sustainability and is modelled on global best practices and aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, with progress towards these monitored annually.

This program is an obvious extension of the natural environmental advantage of Margaret River as one of the world's most pristine fine wine producing regions and complements the Association's ongoing sustainability work.

Search members at sustainablewinegrowing.com.au

Margaret River's Certified Members

Currently, the Margaret River Wine Region has 65 Sustainable Winegrowing Australia Certified Vineyard Members who account for 2,787 hectares, or 48% of the region's vineyards. There are also 20 Certified Winery Members who crushed 26,114 tonnes in vintage 2024.



McHenry Hohnen Vineyard

Margaret River Sustainability Report

This 22 page report captures the annual progress, celebrating the region's collective and individual producer's achievements.

[DOWNLOAD A COPY](#)



Vineyard at Cullen Wines

Certified Organic and Biodynamic Producers

The Margaret River region's pristine natural environment lends itself to minimal-intervention viticulture, and a growing number of vineyards are embracing organic and biodynamic practices and philosophies.

To identify the grape and wine producers in the Margaret River Wine Region who are certified as organic or biodynamic or those in the process of gaining organic or biodynamic certification, see the Margaret River Organic Wine dedicated website margaretriverorganicwine.com/inprocess

Margaret River Lightweight Glass Charter

Margaret River wineries are leaders in the uptake of lightweight glass and the Margaret River Wine Association has launched a Lightweight Glass Charter to acknowledge the action taken by producers to reduce the carbon footprint of their business and encourage their peers.

This Charter supports a similar retail campaign in Europe, and is supported by Wine Australia's Emissions Reduction Roadmap which identifies a shift to lightweight as a leading action to reduce emissions.

Learn more about the Charter, signatories, and find Margaret River wines in Lightweight Glass at margaretriver.wine/lightweight-glass-packaging-charter/



MARGARET RIVER WINE





Breathtaking Wine Experiences

The magnificent landscapes of serene bays to rugged cliffs, towering forests to vineyard vistas and cellar doors to artist studios make the Margaret River region a wonderland. The region is the traditional land of the Wadandi (Saltwater) People and one of the most compelling places on Earth to visit for stunning nature and world class wines. Here, coastal swims, forest hikes, winery tastings, long lunches and fine wines at sunset are the daily norm. The world-renowned produce lures chefs from afar, and several stay on to join the burgeoning culinary scene. Every season brings its own unique attractions, whether summer at the beach, the buzz of harvest in autumn, cosy vineyard chalets with woodfires in winter or stunning wildflowers of spring. Margaret River's spirited culture fuses wine, food, nature and the arts, which are celebrated through a coveted events program, featuring some of Australia's leading festivals.

Visiting the Margaret River Wine Region

The Margaret River Wine Region is a destination of spectacular culinary experiences, stunning natural attractions and well-travelled artisan makers, who choose to call this magical place home. It is Australia's principal region for wine tourism, with 100 cellar doors, world-renowned winery restaurants and a growing list of 'beyond the cellar door' experiences. 130 kilometres of pristine coastline surround the region, forming picturesque bays through to epic surf breaks. Wonderous ancient caves, lush towering forests and a plethora of recreational and leisure activities enrich Margaret River's culture, heritage and allure. The region is a three-hour drive from Western Australia's capital city, Perth.

Australia's Premier Wine Tourism Destination

The Margaret River Wine Region attracts over 1.5 million overnight visitors per year. In 2019-20, Winery visitation by domestic travellers was higher in this region than in any other Australian wine region, and second highest for international travellers, following the Yarra Valley in Victoria. This is unsurprising, given the breadth and depth of the region's 100 cellar doors, which span quaint owner-operated tasting sheds, through to many of Australia's most coveted winery destinations.



Transport and Accommodation

Margaret River is an easy 3-hour drive from Perth on very well-maintained roads. Flights from Melbourne, Victoria to Busselton (a 40-minute drive from Margaret River town) are also available. Allow 1 to 1.5 hours to travel from the north (Cape Naturaliste / Dunsborough) to the south (Cape Leeuwin / Augusta) of the region. If planning to visit a lot of wineries, it can be helpful to group them geographically to optimise time spent. It may also be helpful to organise a charter vehicle, private driver or a tour. A range of helpful self-drive itineraries and trails are available ([refer to Winery Experiences and Trails](#)). Western Australia is home to Australia's first electric highway, so you can charge your car on the drive from Perth to Augusta.

The region has a broad array of accommodation options, from backpacker hostels and camping sites through to centrally-located hotels and apartments, luxury beachfront resorts and holiday house rentals. Public transport and taxi services in the region are minimal, and rideshare services are unavailable, so visitors are encouraged to keep this in mind when building itineraries. Margaret River (town), Dunsborough, Busselton and Augusta are the major towns in the region and offer accommodation options within walking distance of restaurants and other useful amenities.

Popular Regional Attractions

Outside of wine and extraordinary culinary experiences, the Margaret River Wine Region's natural environment is both pristine and breathtaking. There are over 130 kilometres of coastline and beaches including postcard-perfect protected bays and 75 surf breaks, including one of the world's most celebrated at Surfer's Point, Prevelly Beach, where the World Surf League World Championship Tour visits annually. Bounded by ocean on three sides, the region is a true aquatic playground, hosting recreational activities including snorkelling, fishing, diving and a six-month whale watching season from June to December, which is one of the longest in the world. Every year, over 35,000 Humpback and Southern Right whales make the journey from Antarctica to the waters of Margaret River.

On land, the environment is recognised as a global Biodiversity Hotspot, with more than 1,400 species of flora, mammals, birds and reptiles/amphibians. Offering splendour throughout the year, a highlight is around springtime (August to November) when wildflowers prevail, especially within the National Parks, such as the famous Cape to Cape track, a 125-kilometre walking trail. The Boranup Forest is a majestic destination of towering Karri trees, while a visit to one of the many caves (the original tourism attraction of the region) is a mystifying experience. The heritage-listed Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse marks the point at which the Indian and Southern Oceans meet and is the tallest lighthouse in Australia.

Home to one of the world's longest unbroken human occupations (over 50,000 years), visitors can take a guided cultural tour with Koomal Dreaming and learn about the Wadandi people's fascinating culture and deep connection to the land. Taste native foods, experience traditional fire lighting or a uniquely memorable didgeridoo cave experience.

The Margaret River Wine Region is also a gourmet food lover's delight, with locally grown olives, venison, award-winning cheeses, chocolate and organic fruit and vegetables. Many of these can be found at the famous Margaret River Farmer's Market, which takes place every Saturday morning. Plus, no visit is complete without enjoying the exceptional fish and seafood caught just offshore.

Thoughtful travel and a collective consciousness around sustainability is growing in the region with many businesses leading the way in eco-tourism and environmental conservation. From off-grid accommodation options, eco-educational tours to zero-waste restaurants, visitors can find plenty of ways to have a more meaningful stay.



“Take one look at Meelup Beach and you’ll wonder where it’s been all your life: the West Australian bush parts to reveal ocean the hue of a Bombay Sapphire bottle, which is typical of the coastline stretching from Margaret River to the state’s south. Beyond the sand, some of the country’s slickest wineries, breweries and restaurants lie between tracts of tall-tree forest and kangaroo-dotted farmland.”

Lonely Planet



Winery Experiences & Trails

Bountiful experiences of Margaret River's world-class wines are available, and the wineries love to share their stories and wares via cellar door tastings, which are extra memorable with so many boutique, family-owned estates. For something more bespoke, seated tastings and behind-the-scenes tours are growing in prevalence and creativity. Food produce of the Margaret River Wine Region and surrounds is as sought-after by gourmet connoisseurs as the wines, and many outstanding international chefs now call Margaret River home, in order to work with its outstanding ingredients. Thus, a centrepiece of all visits should be a gastronomic journey of some kind.

Go Beyond the Cellar Door

Meandering from cellar door to cellar door is both straightforward and spectacular, with vistas of farmland, vineyards and dramatic coastline adding to the journey. Within the region are 100 cellar doors, including more than 42 Halliday Wine Companion 5-star wineries and many coveted Australian restaurants.

Aside from the concentration of boutique cellar doors, perhaps the region's greatest charm is its diversity of wine experiences. There is everything from farm door or winery shed tastings, through to architecturally elaborate estates. Pre-release wine tastings, museum releases and barrel samples are often an added benefit of visiting a cellar door. Picnic spaces to enjoy a glass of wine and a snack are quite common, as is a showcase of local artisan wares, reflecting the strong ties between the Margaret River Wine Region's makers.

Bookable winery experiences are growing in availability and creativity. Find an unknown treasure at an owner-operated estate, where the person hosting the tasting experience may, in fact, be the winemaker. Or perhaps 'become the winemaker' with a tutorial or wine blending class. A full spectrum of behind-the-scenes tours are available and advanced bookings for specialty experiences or tastings with smaller wineries are recommended, as demand can be high.

"...it's so lush and beautiful... The entire region is stunning and unforgettable."

CURTIS STONE, BON APPÉTIT MAGAZINE



Culinary Experiences

The Margaret River Wine Region and surrounding areas of the south-west of Western Australia are renowned for exceptional local produce that complements the wines perfectly. Prized ingredients such as Marron (an indigenous crustacean), Black truffles and Greenlip abalone are found here, and sought-after by international chefs. Many of the world's most esteemed chefs have visited the region to experience its produce firsthand, while other international chefs have relocated to this culinary utopia. Several wineries have restaurants onsite. Menus are often contemporary fusion in style, and showcase seasonal local ingredients, so for the ultimate culinary experience, indulge in a degustation menu with paired Margaret River wines.



The Margaret River Wine Region's restaurants are regularly reviewed as leaders of their kind in Australia's national rating systems such as Gourmet Traveller Magazine's Top 100 Restaurants and the Australian Good Food Guide, which is Australia's original restaurant guide, inspired by the Michelin and Gault Millau guides of Europe. In 2022, eleven restaurants from the Margaret River Wine Region were awarded 'Chefs Hats' (star equivalent) by the Australian Good Food Guide.

Winery Trails

Margaret River Wine Region trails are a great way to discover what makes the region so special. Trails have been designed around the region's hero varieties, [Cabernet Sauvignon](#) and [Chardonnay](#), as well as [small family-operated wineries](#), [organic wineries](#) and [lo-fi wineries](#). Trails are consistently updated.

A comprehensive guide to the full spectrum of winery experiences in the Margaret River Wine Region can be found in local wine tourism publication, The Wine Adventurer. Discover wineries and other local attractions you may like to visit and build an interactive driving map using the trail making functionality on the Margaret River Wine Association website.

"It's hard to resist that extraordinary combination of outstanding natural beauty, wonderful food and produce and excellent wine!"

NIGELLA LAWSON ON MARGARET RIVER

Protecting Our Vines

Margaret River is one of the few wine regions in the world that can grow vines on their own root system due to the absence of the vine pest Phylloxera (fil-ox-era). These microscopic, aphid-like pest attacks grapevine, impacting vine health and ultimately causing decline. For more information on this pest, visit the [Phylloxera website](#). The advantage of growing phylloxera-resistant American vines on their own roots, as opposed to being grafted to a rootstock, is that the inherent genetic characteristics of the wine variety can fully shine through.

Shoes and clothing can spread pests and diseases from other grape growing areas. Please help protect Margaret River vines from phylloxera and other pests and diseases whilst visiting the region.

- **Please do not walk amongst the vines or enter vineyards without permission.**
- **Please observe biosecurity protocols when visiting.**

Help protect Margaret River's unique grape growing environment and rich biodiversity by treading thoughtfully on this unique and ancient land.

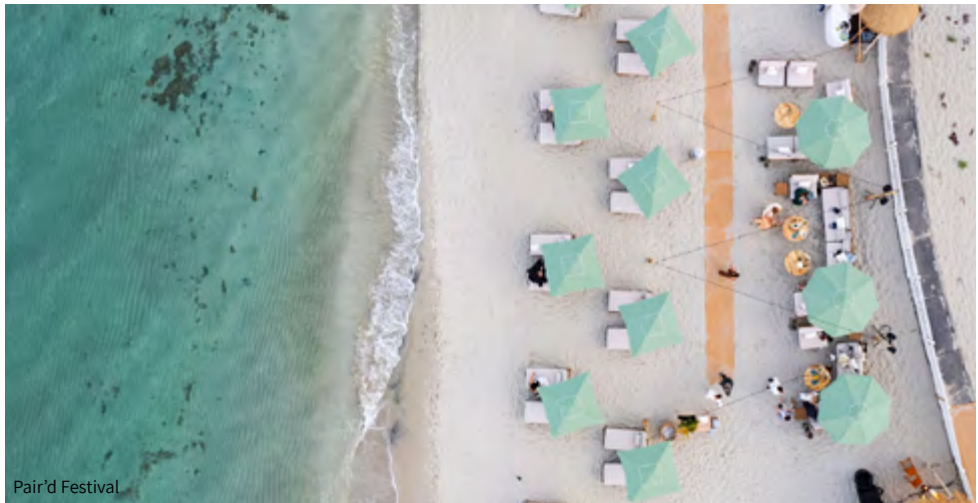
Drink Wise

Margaret River Wine Association encourages the responsible consumption of alcohol and recommends the visitors to the region don't drink wine on an empty stomach, drink plenty of water, use spittoons and if planning to drive, choose a designated driver or take a

Drawcard Events

The Margaret River Wine Region is home to a vibrant calendar of popular Australian events. These celebrate the dynamic cultural tapestry of the region's wine, food, surfing, adventure sports, arts and film sectors. The wineries themselves are often host to extraordinary culinary, arts and performance events too, meaning every season is bursting with activity. Summer is great for the beach, seafood and Chardonnay, while winter is perfect for a glass of Cabernet Sauvignon beside a cosy fireplace. Late summer and autumn bring the action of vintage, while in spring, the region bursts into colour with the wildflower season.

Major Events

AUTUMN	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER
Margaret River Pro (April) One of only two Australian events in the prestigious World Surf League World Championship Tour, which includes 10 events. The Margaret River Pro is positioned as a mid-season decider for the world's top professional surfers. The event hub has a festival vibe with big screens, food trucks and merchandise.	Cabin Fever Festival (July) A 10-day program of winter feasts, rich wines, magnificent parties, live music that represents the weird, the decadent and the raucous to showcase the culture of Margaret River. Events are staged at vineyards, wine bars and other wonderful sites the beautiful Margaret River Wine Region is famous for.	Margaret River Region Open Studios (September) A free annual open art studios event that showcases the diverse, vibrant visual arts throughout the region, and the biggest of its kind in Australia. A huge variety of art forms are represented; painters, print makers, ceramicists, sculptors, mixed media artists, photographers, tattoo artists and more.	GWM Ironman Western Australia (December) A must-do event for athletes around the globe, renowned worldwide for being the place to go for a personal best. The bike and run courses are among the flattest on the global IRONMAN circuit, with stunning seaside views and unrivalled local support.
X-Adventure (April) Australia's largest off-road triathlon, X-Adventure Dunsborough is the ultimate mix of triathlon and adventure racing; featuring ocean swimming, trail running and mountain bike riding, conducted in a friendly, welcoming atmosphere for everyone.	CinefestOZ Film Festival (August) The premier destination film festival in Australia, with high calibre guests and a sensational line-up of new films (some competing for Australia's largest film prize). CinefestOZ premieres feature films and events in the cinemas and picturesque venues of Margaret River and Busselton making for an unforgettable getaway.	Pair'd Festival (November) Western Australia's top wine and food festival, set in Margaret River. With a 'wine first' approach, Pair'd brings together the best culinary, music, and cultural experiences to create an unforgettable celebration. Discover eclectic tastings, culinary pairings and performances that have never been seen or heard before.	Busselton Jetty Swim (February) The premier ocean swim around the iconic Busselton Jetty, in the south-west of Western Australia. Since 1996, the Busselton Jetty Swim has grown from a local gathering to an internationally recognised event. The swim is 3.6 km. Family friendly entertainment runs over the swim weekend.
Margaret River Readers & Writers Festival (May) The biggest regional literary event in Western Australia and flagship literature event for Arts Margaret River, the festival fosters a love of literature and the arts within the community. It features thought-provoking novelists, journalists, academics and storytellers from WA, interstate and overseas.			
Margaret River Ultra Marathon (May) Registered with the International Trail Running Association, this race offers 80 kilometres of magnificent trail running through one of the most breathtaking regions of Australia – the Cape to Cape coastline of the south-west of Western Australia.			

Critical Acclaim

Margaret River wines, particularly the Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay, have an impressive representation in Australia's highest classifications, as measured by media reviews, wine shows and auctions. This is noteworthy, given Margaret River crushes only 3.2% of the Australian national crush of Cabernet Sauvignon (4,937 of 153,644 tonnes in vintage 2024) and 1.5% of Chardonnay (4,915 of 332,643 tonnes in 2024). The most respected critical measures of wine quality in Australia are James Halliday's Australian Wine Companion, LANGTONS, The Real Review and Australia's National Wine Show circuit. Producers from the Margaret River Wine Region have a disproportionate representation of accolades within each.

Langtons Classification

The premier guide to Australian fine wine, The Langton's Classification has been compiled since 1990, as an independent list based on their demand and performance in the secondary market (at auction). **12 wines from Margaret River** were part of the 100 wines selected for the 8th Edition, unveiled December, 2023.

1ST CLASSIFIED

CULLEN WINES Diana Madeline
LEEWIN ESTATE Art Series Chardonnay

CLASSIFIED

CAPE MENTELLE Cabernet Sauvignon
CULLEN WINES Kevin John Chardonnay
DEEP WOODS ESTATE Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon
LEEWIN ESTATE Art Series Cabernet Sauvignon
MOSS WOOD Chardonnay
MOSS WOOD Cabernet Sauvignon
VASSE FELIX Heytesbury Chardonnay
VASSE FELIX Tom Cullity Cabernet Blend
WOODLANDS FAMILY SERIES Cabernet Sauvignon
XANADU Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon



The Real Review

The Real Review Wine Classification comprises the greatest wines of Australia and New Zealand with an outstanding track record of a decade or longer. Each wine has demonstrated its quality in our blind tastings over a period of at least ten years. Many of the wines in our Classification have earned their place over several decades.

Price or resale value of a wine on the secondary market plays no role whatsoever in the assessment. Our objective is to classify those wines, which have demonstrated outstanding quality, time and again, over a long period, regardless of price.

64 Margaret River wines (over 10%) were included in the 2025 Classification.

11 x 3 MERIT WINES

Iconic wines of the country, wines of true provenance and exemplary track record. Fewer than 0.5% of wines produced achieve this tier. Most of these wines have received gold ribbons for recent vintages. Top vintages will score 98 points or more.

22 x 2 MERIT WINES

Wines that achieve gold and high silver ribbons in recent vintages, with top vintages achieving 96 points or more.

31 x 1 MERIT WINES

Wines that reliably achieve gold and silver ribbons in recent vintages, with top vintages achieving 95 points or more.

“No matter whether you are a winemaker, a retailer, a writer, or otherwise, few would argue the toss on the primacy of Margaret River for Cabernet and Cabernet blends.

It towers over all other regions, and if you doubt that, look at any of the results from capital city wine shows.”

James Halliday AM

Halliday Wine Companion

Created by esteemed vigneron, author and wine critic, James Halliday AM, the Halliday Wine Companion has long established itself as the ultimate guide for Australian wines and wineries. As the nation's most comprehensive wine resource, the Halliday Wine Companion sets the standard for winemakers, consumers, and collectors alike. Since 1986, Halliday has published an annual overview of Australian wine, continuously singling the Margaret River Wine Region out for superb its high-quality Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay.

Whilst James Halliday AM is no longer involved in the Halliday Wine Companion it continues to be an important reference of Australian wine across the world.

2026 Halliday Wine Companion Best Wineries

This is a roll call of exceptional wineries. Although Margaret River accounts for only 2% of Australia's vineyards, it boasts a significant share of the country's **5-star wineries - 42 in total.**

23 WINERIES

RED NAME + 5 RED STARS

“Recognised for having a long track record of excellence – truly the best of the best”

7 WINERIES

BLACK NAME + 5 RED STARS

“Consistent record of excellence for at least the last three years”

12 WINERIES

BLACK NAME + 5 BLACK STARS

“Have achieved excellence this year (and sometimes longer)”



2025
Winemaker of the Year
Virginia Willcock
Vasse Felix



2024
Viticulturist of the Year
Bart Molony
Vasse Felix



2023
Winemaker of the Year
Glenn Goodall
Xanadu Wines



2022
Viticulturist of the Year
Vanya Cullen
Cullen Wines



2020
Winemaker of the Year
Vanya Cullen
Cullen Wines



2019
Winemaker of the Year
Julian Langworthy
Deep Woods Estate

Halliday Wine Companion Regional Performance: Best of the Best by Variety

Chardonnay

WINE REGION	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	5 YEAR TOTAL
Margaret River	14	19	13	6	9	61
Yarra Valley	6	9	18	12	17	62
Beechworth	1	2	1	0	2	6
Denmark	3	1	0	1	1	6
Adelaide Hills	2	1	6	4	2	15
South Eastern Australia	1	1	0	0		2
Geelong	0	1	1	5	4	11
Tasmania	2	0	4	5	3	14
Mornington Peninsula	2	0	0	2	2	6
Piccadilly Valley	1	0	0	0	0	1
Padthaway	0	0	1	0	0	1
Hunter Valley	0	0	4	9	4	17
Other (combined)	1	0	7	6	5	19
TOTAL	33	34	55	50	49	221
% of Margaret River	42%	56%	24%	12%	18%	28%



Cabernet Sauvignon / Blends

WINE REGION	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	5 YEAR TOTAL
Margaret River	26	25	26	20	17	114
Yarra Valley	9	6	20	23	21	79
Coonawarra	7	5	14	14	12	52
Great Southern	5	2	3	6	5	18
McLaren Vale	3	0	0	5	3	11
Clare Valley	2	1	0	6	2	11
Hunter Valley	1	0	0	0	0	1
Orange	1	2	3	1	0	7
Langhorne Creek	1	3	7	3	2	16
Other (combined)	1	5	11	15	19	50
TOTAL	52	49	84	93	81	359
% of Margaret River	50%	51%	31%	22%	21%	32%



Sauvignon Blanc

WINE REGION	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	5 YEAR TOTAL
Margaret River	10	6	13	9	9	47
Adelaide Hills	6	7	4	1	1	19
Yarra Valley	3	2	3	2	3	13
Geelong	0	1	3	2	3	9
Wratonbully	1	2	1	2	2	8
Great Southern	0	0	0	0		0
Tasmania	1	1	2	1	1	6
Other (combined)	2	3	3	4	4	16
TOTAL	23	22	29	21	23	118
% of Margaret River	43%	27%	45%	43%	39%	40%



Trophy winners at the 2024 Margaret River Wine Show

Margaret River Wine Show

The first Margaret River Regional Wine Show was held in 2003, with 424 entries and 8 trophies awarded.

In 2024, the show received 650 entries from 91 producers, with 20 Trophies awarded.

While Wine of Show has traditionally celebrated the region's hero varieties of Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon, the event also includes other sought-after trophies, such as the Rosé Trophy, which comes with custom-tailored 'pink jacket'.



Previous 'Wine of Show' Trophy Winners

SHOW YEAR	TROPHY WINNING WINE
2024	Devil's Lair Cabernet Sauvignon 2022
2023	Stella Bella Suckfizzle Chardonnay 2022
2022	Deep Woods Estate Single Vineyard G2 Cabernet Sauvignon 2020
2021	Cherubino Margaret River Chardonnay 2020
2020	Xanadu Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 2018
2019	Ringbolt Cabernet Sauvignon 2018
2018	Stella Bella Suckfizzle Chardonnay 2017
2017	Nocturne Chardonnay 2016
2016	Stella Bella Serie Luminosa Cabernet Sauvignon 2014
2015	Evans & Tate Cabernet Sauvignon 2012
2014	Deep Woods Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 2012
2008	Houghton Gladstones Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon 2007
2007	Houghton Gladstones Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon 2004
2006	Windance Cabernet Merlot 2004
2005	Evans & Tate Margaret River Chardonnay 2004
2004	Ashbrook Chardonnay 2002
2003	Sandalford Cabernet Sauvignon 2002



Wine Shows

Trophies for Western Australian wines at Australia's seven National Wine Shows are tracked by no-one else in the world as closely as longstanding local wine commentator, educator and retailer, John Jens. As a former statistician, John proudly shares WA's show results widely.

“Since 2014, the West has won 41 of the past 51 Best Cabernet Trophies. From memory only one of these Cabernet Trophies was from the Great Southern – the rest being from Margaret River.”

JOHN JENS



Trophies Awarded to Margaret River Wine

There are seven National Wine Show trophies awarded annually for Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon. The table below highlights the frequency and success with which Margaret River wines have claimed these prestigious awards.

YEAR	BEST CHARDONNAY TROPHIES	BEST CABERNET TROPHIES	BEST SAUVIGNON BLANC TROPHIES
2014	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆
2015	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆
2016	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆
2017	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆
2018	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆
2019	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆
2020	🏆🏆 (COVID cancellations)	🏆🏆 (COVID cancellations)	🏆🏆 (COVID cancellations)
2021	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆*	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆
2022	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆*	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆*	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆*
2023	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆
2024	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆	🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆

* Brisbane cancelled in 2021 & National Wine Show was cancelled in 2022

Sources

Halliday Wine Companion, www.winecompanion.com.au/resources/vintage-chart

Langton's Classification VIII, www.langtons.com.au/classification

Vintage Reports

Since the earliest days, the Margaret River Wine Region has benefited from the remarkable consistency of its seasons. The moderate Mediterranean climate and considerable maritime influence allow vignerons to achieve physiologically ripe fruit in most years. The region’s vintages have been rated in the highest echelons for both red and white varieties in James Halliday’s Australian Wine Companion, more than any other Australian region since 1987. It’s this consistent quality that sets Margaret River apart from other domestic wine regions, where variation is charted.

Halliday Wine Companion Vintage Ratings

							2024	2023	2022	2021
RED							9	9	9	8
WHITE							8	9	9	8
	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
RED	9	8	9	8	9	8	8	9	10	9
WHITE	9	9	9	8	9	9	9	9	8	8
	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
RED	9	9	9	8	7	9	9	8	8	8
WHITE	8	9	9	8	9	9	8	8	8	8
	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991
RED	9	10	7	8	8	9	9	7	8	10
WHITE	8	8	7	6	8	9	8	9	8	8

“Margaret River has the most reliable climate of all the major wine regions – indeed all – of Australia.”

James Halliday AM

Source: www.winecompanion.com.au/resources/vintage-chart





2025 Vintage

A vintage of classic conditions for producing outstanding wines. A wet winter followed by a moderate spring led into a warm, dry summer, with cooling afternoon sea breezes supporting an extended, even ripening period. Low disease pressure allowed fruit to be harvested in pristine condition. Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc stood out among the whites, while reds like Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec and Shiraz are showing great promise, with excellent balance, structure and flavour. The season is being hailed as one of the best in recent memory—drawing favourable comparisons to the exceptional 2018 vintage.

2024 Vintage

Early, fast-paced and bodes well for some superb-quality wines. Above-average spring temperatures and almost no rainfall led to an early budburst and accelerated growing conditions for the vines. Flowering occurred early and went through quickly. The vintage was blessed with one of the most abundant marri (*Corymbia calophylla*) flowering seasons, keeping the birds from the vineyards, and with warm, dry conditions there was no disease pressure. White grape harvest began in mid-January, four weeks earlier than usual. Grapes continued to ripen rapidly, making vintage compressed and fast-paced. Precision harvest timing was crucial. 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. Freshness and acid retention in white varieties was a pleasant surprise. There will be some special wines from this vintage

2023 Vintage

An excellent, modest season with optimal, dry conditions and mild weather enabling gentle, consistent ripening across all varieties. Winter temperatures were lower than average, and budburst and vine development was delayed about 2-3 weeks to average. Good fruitset resulted in healthy yields (approx 6% higher than 5-year average). What started as a slow burn in spring for the viticulturists resulted in a glorious summer of optimal temperatures when January brought consistent warmth, allowing vine development to catch up, and providing ideal ripening conditions. Disease pressure was minimal. Marri Blossom was scarce. A year of elegant, fresh Chardonnay with lovely natural acidity and inky and dense Cabernet Sauvignons with intensity and a very fine tannin structure.

2022 Vintage

Steady winter rains filled soil profiles early, enabling a fair recharge of groundwater reserves. Budburst and shoot growth were surprisingly even in spring, albeit a little behind average, with wet and cloudy conditions continuing through to late November. The flowering period happened under similar cool, wet and cloudy conditions with some variance noted in fruit set and early berry development stages. Phenological dates lagged right through the growing season by about 3 weeks later than averages. Then dry, clear conditions and no rainfall over December and January pushed phenological development forward quickly. Early harvested varieties matured around a week later than the historical average.

A cooler change in the night temperatures and rain in early February and early March meant a long sustained 'hang time' period and a large picking window for red varieties, perfect for targeting various winemaker styles. The Marri blossom was well-timed and kept native birds from feeding on the grapes. All varieties reached moderate to excellent quality and ripeness across the region with crop levels bouncing back to more average volumes.

2021 Vintage

A mild spring with reasonable rainfall provided excellent conditions for budburst and flowering for moderate crops. La Niña created a strong cyclone season in Western Australia's north which doubled Margaret River's long-term average November rainfall. December and January were dry with warm daily temperatures. Cool nights offered a reprieve. As harvest commenced in early February, a significant rain event soaked deep into the soils, ideal for the later ripening Cabernet Sauvignon. Warm, humid conditions followed, increasing disease pressure risk in some vineyards. Those who put extra work into leaf plucking and some fruit dropping of red varieties reaped the rewards of physiological ripeness. Labour shortages necessitated pre-planning and forecasting, and the community came together to help. White varieties had incredible flavour at a lower baume. A season of elegant Chardonnay, standout Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet Sauvignon with fine, polished tannins that will age gracefully.

2020 Vintage

This vintage was a real treat for viticulturists. The only downside was one of the smallest harvests in recent years. A significantly wet winter with rainfall 30% above average was ideal, before temperatures gradually crept up to a warmer than average spring. High summer temperatures caused an acceleration in grape development and harvest began at the end of January, one of the earliest starts on record. This evolved into perfect summer growing conditions for a wide range of varieties from early to late ripening. Low disease pressure, timely flowering of Marri trees and little-to-no rain meant that growers could literally "take their pick" when they wanted, enabling fruit to reach its best. The lower yields resulted in exceptional, physiologically ripe fruit with divine concentration of aromas and flavours.



2019 Vintage

A comparatively late and long season. A mild, cool end to 2018 was beneficial to vine growth and an atypical rain event in mid-January recharged the soil when needed. Harvest started two to three weeks later than normal due to cooler spring and summer conditions. Minor rainfall and high humidity mid-March presented some disease pressure challenges, however great weather pursued until the end of April and with astute vineyard management, the region achieved a high-quality harvest overall. The wines are parallels with 2017 vintage. The cooler conditions resulted in amazing flavour intensity and acid retention in the whites, particularly Chardonnay. Beautiful weather until late-April allowed the reds to attain physiological maturity and finessed tannins.

2018 Vintage

Heavy winter rainfalls recharged soil moisture levels and blocks with well-established root systems could be dry grown. A modest spring enabled moderate crop levels, and while the growing season felt cool, it was in fact warmer across daytime average temperatures in the lead up to harvest. There was a "mega blossom" of the Marri trees - the most blossom in living memory - keeping bird

Vintage Growing Season	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	1989-2019 Average
Mean January temperature (°C)	21.8	22.0	20.9	22.0	22.0	20.1	19.2	20.7
Accumulated GDD (Oct-Apr)	1,925	2,163	1,711	1,872	1,829	1,964	1,660	1,849
Annual Rainfall (Jun-May) (mm)	956	730	935	987	1,077	991	865	n/a
Mean diurnal temperature (Oct-Apr) (°C)	12.7	14.3	12.5	12.5	12.4	12.5	11.8	10.5

Accumulated GDD (Oct-Apr): measures the heat (equal or above 10°C) accumulation during the growing season.

Annual Rainfall (Jun-May): Calculated from the beginning of winter to the end of Autumn to capture the rainfall influencing the grape vine growth.

Mean diurnal temperature (Oct-Apr): mean of the daily range between maximum and minimum mean daily temperature.

pressure to almost zero. Vintage timing was on average, with minor rainfall freshening red vines for the finish. A long, dry, warm Indian summer followed, with no heat spike events. One of, if not the best, Cabernet Sauvignon vintages of the decade, with ultra-fine, perfectly ripe tannins, moderate sugars and good natural acidity. Vibrant colours. Complex and lifted aromas.

2017 Vintage

Budburst and early development were delayed by higher-than-average rainfall and a cooler spring. Vines enjoyed warming trends in December and January, growing mid-sized, well-balanced canopies. Vintage timing returned to more traditional dates following a string of early harvests, with a benefit of minimal bird pressure due to good Marri blossom. The cooler vintage produced abundant natural acidity in physiologically ripe grapes, at moderate sugar levels and very high anthocyanin levels in red wines. Most producers were very pleased with fruit quality, making some truly memorable wines. Chardonnays are of optimal flavour and natural acidity. The long, slow ripening of reds allowed for ripe skins and seeds, deep vibrant colour and amazing perfume, at lower than usual potential alcohol. A very age-worthy vintage.

2016 Vintage

Good early winter rains followed by a dry spring with warmer-than-average temperatures, ideal for flowering and fruitset. Early summer was generally fine with strong afternoon sea breezes. Temperatures were slightly above average in January and February (with a welcome rain event in the second week of January) and vintage timing was early for the region. Closer to average temperatures were experienced in March and April, slowing down ripening during mid and late vintage. A very strong year for Chardonnay, Semillon and Sauvignon Blanc, with bright, intense varietal fruit flavours and excellent natural acidity. An excellent year for reds, where Cabernet Sauvignons show very good palate density and intense varietal lifts.

2015 Vintage

A lower-yielding vintage for all varieties due to the impact of inclement weather, cold night-time temperatures and rainfall during flowering and berry development. Many wine producers reported the earliest white wine vintage ever, some completed their whites harvest as early as the first week of March. Bird pressure occurred due to delayed Marri blossom. Classic autumn weather patterns returned from early March and a low weather pattern from Cyclone Olwyn delivered some rain and cooler night-time temperatures, extending the ripening period for reds. This enhanced fruit

flavour profiles, with softer tannin levels observed. A year of intense and varietal Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon with crisp natural acidity and Chardonnay of great length, acidity and soft phenolics. Overall, very good fruit quality.

2014 Vintage

An excellent growing season led up to this vintage, with the only downside being lower crop levels due to some storms at flowering. Harvest timing for whites was average. Milder weather conditions in late-April and early-May delayed final ripening and the harvest of reds was about a week later than average. Even at the end of May, when vintage finished in the more southern areas, Marri blossom remained prevalent; thus, bird damage was minute. There was negligible disease pressure because of the very consistent weather conditions. Chardonnays display outstanding natural acidity. Reds show vibrant, ripe fruit intensity, great colour and balanced tannin profiles. Cabernet Sauvignon is concentrated and textured with good weight. A very high-quality vintage showcasing hallmarks of elegance, finesse and great ageing potential.

2013 Vintage

Warm to very-warm conditions during the day and higher than average night temperatures from early January until the end of February. Consistent, good growing conditions led to very little disease pressure. Minimal bird damage from Silvereyes was recorded due to prevalent Marri blossom throughout the region. Yields were down slightly, between 5% to 15% depending upon varieties. A true 'Indian summer' extended into autumn and allowed full development of flavours and sugars in the red varieties. Chardonnays balance the tightrope of natural acidity with full, rich flavours and soft, fine phenolics. Quite outstanding in their youth, the Cabernet Sauvignons are of excellent ageing potential.

2012 Vintage

Settled and warm weather conditions brought forward vintage by two to three weeks compared with the regional average for both whites and reds. An abundant blossoming of Marri before and during vintage kept birds well at bay. Disease pressure was also minimal because of seasonal consistency and dry conditions from January to the end of March. An extended period of warm weather and cool nights resulted in balance and ripeness. Berry size in Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot was small with particularly thick skins, great colour and tannin. This vintage was something truly special for intense, full-flavoured Chardonnays with weight and length, and Cabernet Sauvignons of deep colour, fine extended tannins, elegance and generosity.



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