



Woodlands

2017

CABERNET FRANC - MERLOT

Margaret River - Australia



NATURAL



VEGAN

Stats

Grapes: 51% Cabernet Franc - 45% Merlot - 4% Malbec

Vineyard: Woodlands Brook Vineyard (70%) - Bantry Bay Vineyard (30%)

Vine Age: 16-years-old (Woodlands Brook) - 14-20-years-old (Bantry Bay Vineyard)

Soil Type: Primarily gravelly, clay loam atop a bed of white clay

Viticulture: Practicing Organic (Woodlands Brook Vineyard) - Sustainable (Bantry Bay Vineyard) - dry-farmed

Fermentation: Native - stainless-steel

Skin Contact: 21-25 days

Aging: 13 months in 2-3-year-old French barrique

Alcohol: 13.5%

Total Production: 1,100 cases

UPC: 9336111000372

Reviews

Wine & Spirits | 91 points

The Wine Front | 91 points

Vinous | 92 points

About

2017 marks the tenth vintage of this Cheval Blanc inspiration. This wine is simply put, sublime... one of the great values in Bordeaux-inspired blends. The growth in sales of this wine has outstripped the supply and in mid-2015 the Watsons embarked on a search for a site and a grower they felt would meld perfectly with their ethos and style. Thus the Bantry Bay Vineyard was added to supplement the organically grown Woodlands Brook fruit for this and the Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot blend. 2017 was a year that had very unusual weather patterns throughout the region. Winter was very wet, Spring was bitterly cold, and Summer was mild. La Niña conditions resulted in a longer flowering and growing period across Margaret River, roughly 2-3 weeks later than normal (this is actually more in line with the historical phenology of the region). Heavy rains came through in late February for a few weeks, delaying the harvest further - Cabernet Sauvignon was not harvested until the end of April! Given the cooler vintage and summer rains it was surprising to see some of the darkest berries that have ever come off of the estate and really alluring aromatics.

The fruit was hand-harvested and fermented in large stainless-steel tanks with ambient yeast. Some of the later ripening Cabernet Franc picks were co-fermented with the Cabernet Sauvignon off of the Woodlands Brook Vineyard. Gentle pumpovers were employed for velvety textural extraction and the time on skins was extended beyond the usual amount in order to extract a bit more tannin and color due to the vintage. After a little more than three weeks the wine was pressed to French barriques and lightly sulfured. After 13 months of aging the barrels were racked to tank to settle naturally and then blended. The wine was bottled without fining or filtration and just another small addition of sulfur.

Tasting Note

Deep crimson. The nose sits pretty, with a woven braid of satsuma plums, crushed violet, and Asian spices. The spirited acidity of Cabernet Franc combines with a playful pop of red fruits. Complex and structured.