

Handpicked No.6  
2015 Cabernet Merlot  
Margaret River, Western Australia

Nº.6

STORY

Ten years ago we set ourselves a challenge to make the great Victorian Shiraz. At Handpicked Wines we salute the diversity of wines from all over the world so, naturally, we could not stop at Shiraz, or Victoria. We added Shiraz wines from Barossa and Beechworth, both supreme expressions of the grape and the region.

Margaret River is recognised internationally for its Cabernet Merlot wines and was an obvious inclusion in this collection of Australia's greatest wine styles.



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The Finer Details

**VINEYARDS**

One of the most reliable wine regions in Australia, Margaret River is blessed with abundant sunshine and year-round moderating breezes coming off the pristine Indian Ocean. This wine was grown at our Brindle Vineyard in Wilyabrup in the heart of Margaret River region, where a granite outcrop separates the vineyard from rugged ocean cliffs and provides a glimpse into the ancient geology of this area that was part of the Precambrian supercontinent, Rodinia.

The vineyard is managed with increasing emphasis on sustainable practices that improve soil health and biodiversity and, ultimately, vine health. These include the application of compost and compost teas, strategic planting of legumes and other beneficial crops between rows and a parallel reduction in the use of chemical sprays.

The Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot vines were planted in 1998 on soils of decomposed granite with coffee rock and iron stone.

**WINEMAKING**

The fruit was harvested in dry weather at the end of March and into early-April. It was destemmed and crushed and left to macerate in open fermenters before fermentation commenced naturally with wild yeasts.

The wine was matured for 26 months in French oak barriques, about 60% new. We used St Martin and Taransaud oak, including premium limited-series Taransaud T5 barrels for extra elegance and depth.

The high proportion of new oak adds flavour and oak tannins, while the extended maturation period softens the wines, adds complexity and enhances structure.

After a rigorous selection and blending process, the wine was lightly fined with egg white before bottling. It was then aged in our cellars before release to you.

Abundant rain over winter and spring set up good soil moisture. Yields were low due to the effects of frost damage the previous season and unsettled weather during flowering and fruit set.

The summer was warm and dry until heavy rain off the tail of Cyclone Olwyn in late-February, a welcome relief for late-ripening varieties such as Merlot and Cabernet. The typical autumn of dry, warm days and cool nights allowed a long, slow ripening period encouraging complex flavour development balanced with natural acid retention.

**TASTING NOTE**

This wine has the distinctive bay leaf aromas of Margaret River Cabernet together with deep cassis, chocolate and lifted red berry freshness.

The palate has brooding blackberry and cassis boosted in the mid-palate with generous bright red fruits from Merlot. Classic Cabernet structure and drive produces a long tail of fine tannin and crisp acid reinforced with subtle oak and appealing mineral notes.