

MARGARET RIVER

Guide



AUSTRALIAN WINE DISCOVERED

AUSTRALIAN WINE DISCOVERED

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service of alcohol.





MARGARET RIVER



AUSTRALIAN WINE DISCOVERED



Crafted from grapes grown under vast and diverse climates, across landscapes millions of years in the making, every glass of Australian wine tells a story.

Like those who came before us, our modern growers and makers continue to be passionate, resilient and creative; constantly driven to explore new ways to perfect old techniques. Our community is connected by a mutual respect and shared love of crafting exceptional wine, while protecting the natural wonders for future generations to enjoy. Applying modern thinking to our ancient lands, we take playful experimentation very, very seriously.

So, if you're looking for the taste of adventure, let Australian wine be your compass. Because in every bottle of Australian wine, you'll experience the wonders of Australia – a reminder of the adventure and diversity that defines our culture and our land.



MARGARET RIVER A FRESH VOICE IN FINE WINE

One of the world's youngest wine regions, Margaret River is something of a prodigy, achieving success, prestige and international acclaim at an early age.

- Powerful yet elegant Cabernet Sauvignon, Semillon Sauvignon Blanc blends and Chardonnay
- Grape-growing paradise
- One of the world's most geographically isolated wine regions
- Minimal-intervention farming and a dynamic winemaking community

LOOP VIDEO

Now is a good time to play the *Margaret River* loop video in the background, as you welcome people.

FIRST TASTE – This may be a good opportunity to give everyone a taste of a classic Margaret River wine. The full tasting comes later in the module.

MARGARET RIVER: A FRESH VOICE IN FINE WINE

One of the world's youngest wine regions, Western Australia's Margaret River is something of a prodigy, achieving success, prestige and international acclaim at an early age. But the soils in which its vines thrive are some of the most ancient on Earth. Together with the maritime-influenced Mediterranean climate, they create a unique region that's producing high-quality grapes and premium wines with a strong sense of place and future.

Bright young star

From the first vintages in the early 1970s, Margaret River quickly established itself as one to watch. It has since built an international reputation as a home of fine wine, producing powerful yet elegant Cabernet Sauvignon, Semillon Sauvignon Blanc blends, and Chardonnay.

Grape-growing paradise

Margaret River was established as a wine region soon after scientists determined it ideal for the production of fine wine. Its Mediterranean climate with strong maritime influence, ancient gravelly soils and long, gentle ripening season create a climate perfect for grape growing.

Tourist attraction

Margaret River is one of the world's most geographically isolated wine regions, with a rich diversity of flora and fauna. It attracts huge numbers of tourists who come for the picturesque wineries, world-class surf breaks, ancient forests and caves, and restaurants showcasing Western Australia's abundance of seafood.

Down-to-earth farming

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

Dynamic winemaking community

Local winemakers initially took their cue from classic winemaking approaches, but now a new generation is bringing fresh energy and a think-outside-the-box mentality. This is also inspiring the more established names to explore alternative styles and expressions while perfecting traditional techniques.



FUN FACT

Margaret River's first commercial vineyard was planted by a cardiologist and amateur vigneron.

TODAY WE'LL COVER

- The history of Margaret River
- Geography, climate and soil
- Viticulture and winemaking
- Prominent varieties



THE HISTORY OF MARGARET RIVER A BRIGHT YOUNG STAR

1965

Dr John Gladstones, an agronomist from the University of Western Australia, identifies that the climatic conditions of the region are ideal for producing premium wines.

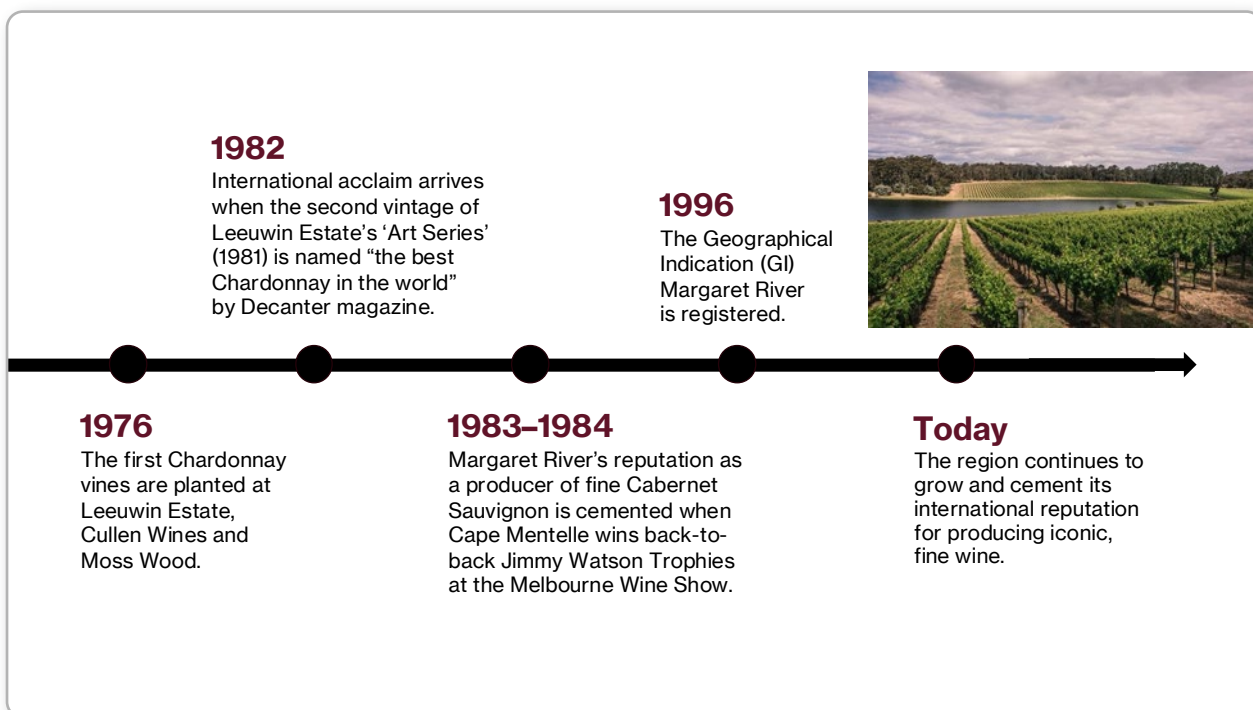


1955

Harold Olmo, professor of viticulture at the University of California, takes the first step in establishing Margaret River as a wine region, recommending the planting of wine grapes in Australia's south-west.

1967

Dr Tom Cullity plants the first modern commercial vineyard at Vasse Felix. The vineyard's original Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec plantings still grow today.



THE HISTORY OF MARGARET RIVER: A BRIGHT YOUNG STAR

In the beginning

The traditional custodians of Margaret River were the Indigenous Noongar tribe. Local cave systems show evidence of occupation by the Noongar people 55,000 years ago, making it one of the oldest occupation sites in Australia.

In 1830, European settlement was established as a pioneer outstation, which went on to provide timber and dairy. For many years, Margaret River remained an isolated slice of paradise, home to dairy farmers and surfers.

1955

Harold Olmo, professor of viticulture at the University of California, took the first step in establishing Margaret River as a world-renowned wine region. He was in Western Australia's Swan Valley studying climatic limitations of viticulture at the invitation of the Western Australian Vine Fruits Research Trust. He soon recognised that there were other regions in the state well suited to producing high-quality grapes and produced a report recommending the planting of wine grapes in Australia's southwest.

1965

Dr John Gladstones, an agronomist from the University of Western Australia, comprehensively researched the climate and soils of southwest Western Australia and found the climatic conditions of the region were ideal for producing premium wines. His geological surveys also produced encouraging results with much of the region consisting of grey loam on a subsoil of clay: excellent soil for viticulture. Gladstones' report supported Olmo's assertions with hard evidence – and people were paying attention.

1967

Less than two years later, Dr Tom Cullity, a cardiologist, planted the first modern commercial vineyard at Vasse Felix. The vineyard's original Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec plantings still grow today.

1976

The first Chardonnay vines were planted at Leeuwin Estate, Cullen Wines and Moss Wood, using the important heritage 'Gingin' clone from the Department of Agriculture research block.

1982

The region was cast into the international spotlight when the second vintage of Leeuwin Estate 'Art Series' (1981) was named "the best Chardonnay in the world" by *Decanter* magazine.

1983–84

Margaret River's reputation as a producer of fine Cabernet Sauvignon was cemented when Cape Mentelle won back-to-back Jimmy Watson Trophies for best one-year-old dry red at the Melbourne Wine Show.

1996

The Geographical Indication (GI) Margaret River was established, encompassing the shires of Busselton and Augusta-Margaret River, and the towns of Dunsborough, Yallingup, Cowaramup, Margaret River and Augusta.

Today

Margaret River has grown steadily since its establishment as a wine region and is now renowned for producing many of our most award-winning wines. Established winemaking icons are now joined by a new generation of producers, building on tradition and redefining what Margaret River wine could be.



FUN FACT

Originally a sleepy seaside town, Margaret River started making waves in 1969 when the Australian National surfing titles were first held there. Surfers flocked to the region and, thanks to the emergence of the wine industry, there was plenty of casual work to sustain them.



COMPLEMENTARY READING

FIRST-GEN VIGNERONS: MARGARET RIVER TRAILBLAZERS

From the first vintages in the early 1970s, the Margaret River wine region quickly established itself as one to watch. This is even more impressive given that many of the region's first vigneron were newcomers to the wine game. Dr Tom Cullity at renowned winery Vasse Felix was a cardiologist from Perth, while Dr Bill Pannell of Moss Wood and Dr Kevin Cullen of Cullen Wines both practised medicine in the nearby town of Busselton.

Another example of amateurs becoming professionals comes from Leeuwin Estate, today one of the most highly regarded Australian wineries. When Denis and Trish Horgan bought a plumbing business in 1969, a grazing property just south of Margaret River was included in the purchase. The property lay untouched until 1973, when US-based Robert Mondavi, a legend in the wine world, expressed interest in purchasing the property for himself – which later became a joint venture. Robert had put California's Napa Valley on the map with technical innovations and clever marketing strategies, and he was a key advocate for labelling wines using their varietal names rather than generically. Once Robert was interested in their property, Denis and Trish decided it was time to make use of the grazing property and start planting vines.

In the early years, Robert advised on vineyard planning and the direction of the wine styles. One of his key pieces of advice was to plant Chardonnay, which was far less common in Australia in the 1970s than it was by the 1980s. This astute advice led to Leeuwin Estate's most iconic wine, the 'Art Series' Chardonnay. This wine was a beacon to other producers in the region, showing that Margaret River could make wines to rival the best in the world.



SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS

- How has Margaret River's late entry into the wine sector been an advantage for the region?
- Many of the region's first wineries were established by newcomers to winemaking. How might this have shaped the region's wine styles and overall approach to winemaking?

AUSTRALIA

MARGARET RIVER



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

MARGARET RIVER



GEOGRAPHY, CLIMATE AND SOIL

A GRAPE GROWING PARADISE

- Long, narrow region commencing 230km south of Perth
- Hugged by the Indian and Southern Oceans
- Geographically isolated, bestowed with ancient soils and a unique biodiversity
- Ideal grape-growing conditions



GEOGRAPHY, CLIMATE AND SOIL: A GRAPE-GROWING PARADISE

Margaret River sits in the south-western corner of Australia, around 270 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. This stunning stretch of land is one of the most geographically isolated wine regions in the world, bestowed with ancient soils and a unique biodiversity: 80% of its 8,000 plant species are found nowhere else in the world.

Its geography, soils and maritime-influenced Mediterranean climate conspire to create ideal grape-growing conditions – heavy winter rainfalls, cool sea breezes that lend vibrancy to the fruit and a long, dry ripening season capable of ripening Cabernet Sauvignon right to the end of the season.



DID YOU KNOW

Margaret River has no official subregions but it does have site distinctions based on climate. In 1999, viticultural scientist Dr John Gladstones presented a paper suggesting there should be six subregions based on climate and soil differences: Yallingup, Carburnup, Wilyabrup, Treeton, Wallcliffe and Karridale.



MARGARET RIVER

Climate

- Mediterranean climate with strong maritime influences from having the ocean on three sides. Most marked maritime climate in terms of rainfall of any region in Australia.
- High winter rainfall, a dry, warm summer and low risk of frost and hail provide excellent conditions for viticulture.
- Low diurnal temperature range leads to very even heat accumulation.

Latitude

- 33° 96'S

Growing season rainfall (GSR)

- 202mm (7.95in)

Calculated from October to April in Australia, GSR is a good indication of how much water is available to the vine. Margaret River receives the majority of its rainfall during winter.

Mean January temperature (MJT)

- 20.9°C (69.62°F)

MJT refers to the mean temperature of the warmest month.

Please check the Wine Australia website for up-to-date information. Altitude refers to the highest and lowest vineyard in the GI region, not necessarily the highest or lowest point within the region and is calculated using the National Vineyard Scan and state contour datasets. Latitude is taken at the central point of the GI region. Meteorological data is taken from the national climate data bank of the Bureau of Meteorology: the Australian Data Archive for Meteorology (ADAM). Climate indices have been calculated across the whole GI region by the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystem CRC as part of a research project co-funded by Wine Australia. Growing season rainfall (GSR) and mean January temperature (MJT) based on 1991–2017 averages from the Bureau of Meteorology (2018). GSR is calculated from October to April.

SOIL

Predominantly deep, well-drained, red gravelly loams on granite and gneiss. These ancient soils are low in nutrients and ideal for growing high-quality grapes.



Soil

Margaret River soils are predominantly deep, well-drained, red gravelly loams.

Running down the middle of the region is the Leeuwin-Naturaliste ridge, which connects Cape Naturaliste to the north and Cape Leeuwin to the south. The granite bedrock of the ridge is 150–600 million years old, layered in places with two-million-year-old limestone. Over time, the ridge has created a complex network of gneiss, schist and granite-based soils, the oldest in the world. These soils are low in nutrients, resulting in low vigour in the vineyard – ideal for producing high-quality grapes.



SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS

- Why do Margaret River's geography, climate and soils make it such a successful wine-producing region?
- Margaret River is known for producing some of Australia's most elegant Cabernet Sauvignon. What role does terroir play in this?



VITICULTURE AND WINEMAKING: MASTERS MEET THE MASTERFULLY EXPERIMENTAL

GRAPE GROWING IN MARGARET RIVER

With its ideal grape-growing climate, Margaret River allows for a light-touch approach to viticulture. Growers are intent on minimising intervention to produce pristine fruit that reflects their vineyards' unique terroir. Excellent ripening conditions mean the vines flourish in the mild summer and autumn, producing grapes with outstanding fruit flavour and high natural acidity.

Many of the region's vineyards are small and family-run. There is a relatively even split between red and white grapevine plantings, with the top five varieties planted being:

- Cabernet Sauvignon.
- Sauvignon Blanc.
- Chardonnay.
- Semillon.
- Shiraz.



GRAPE GROWING

- Minimal intervention to produce pristine fruit that expresses terroir
- Growing adoption of sustainable, organic and biodynamic practices
- High-quality heritage clones
- Harvest: February–April

Organic and biodynamic practices

Minimal-input farming is well suited to the region, so it makes sense that sustainability has become a key focus. The number of local vineyards being farmed organically and biodynamically increases every year.

Clones

The absence of phylloxera means most of the region's vineyards have been grown from cuttings taken from high-quality existing vineyards. This has allowed for the selection and spread over time of high-quality heritage clones of each variety. These unique heritage clones have played an important role in creating the distinctive Margaret River style of Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Vineyard management

Vine and canopy management techniques can vary from one year to the next, helping viticulturists optimise fruit yield and quality. Common canopy management methods include winter and summer pruning, shoot positioning, shoot removal, vigour control and green harvesting.

In years when berry ripening starts early and the region's marri trees have not yet bloomed, birds target grapes as their food source. Growers must ensure nets are in place early in the season.

Harvest

Harvest generally begins in February, with earlier-ripening varieties such as Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon the first to be picked. Shiraz is typically a mid-harvest variety, while Cabernet Sauvignon requires the full ripening season and is among the last to be harvested.

Hand harvesting is common. Among wineries that machine harvest, many pick at night-time, just before sunrise, since this is generally the coolest part of the day. This helps minimise the oxidative impact of the enzymes in the grapes, particularly in aromatic white grapes such as Sauvignon Blanc, protecting the freshness and purity of the fruit flavour.



ADVANCED NOTES

THE INFLUENCE OF CLONES IN MARGARET RIVER CHARDONNAY

Growers and winemakers have been experimenting with different Chardonnay clones since Margaret River was established as a grape-growing region in the 1960s. These clones are believed to be a key factor in the distinctive style of many local Chardonnay wines.

Clones occur both naturally and through human intervention, when a piece of the mother vine is cut off and either planted directly into the soil or grafted onto another vine. The clone is genetically identical to its 'parent', but variations can arise through genetic mutation, resulting in a clone with different characteristics.

Clones can have a significant influence on the character of the wine, and some clones become linked to particular regions because they work especially well with the climate and soils. The Gingin clone is the one most associated with Margaret River, and many acknowledge it as being key to the success of the region's Chardonnay. It's typified by low yields, loose and small bunches, and hen and chicken (millerandage) – a phenomenon where grape bunches contain berries varying greatly in size and maturity. It's known for producing powerful yet elegant wines with complex and concentrated citrus and tropical fruit flavours.

The origins of the Gingin clone have long been unclear. However, recently the Western Australian Government's Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development has been researching its origins. It's now thought that the Gingin clone, previously known as 'FPS 1', was brought to Western Australia from California in 1957 thanks to Professor Harold Olmo, professor of viticulture at the University of California. The clone was recognised in Western Australia as the Old Farm (OF) selection of Chardonnay, and later became known as the Gingin selection, named after the vineyard site where it was planted.

Another common Chardonnay clone in Margaret River is the Mendoza. The Gingin clone was often believed to be the same as the Mendoza clone, just with a different name, but recent research shows that they are not the same. A number of more recently imported French clones are also commonly used, with some producers favouring them for their finer, more restrained wine styles with lower alcohol levels than the ubiquitous Gingin.



ADVANCED NOTES

THE HOUGHTON CLONES

From 1968 to 1970, the Department of Agriculture conducted a survey of the Houghton Vineyard in Swan Valley, with the objective of sourcing high-quality vines for Margaret River. The team sought vines of good health and fruit flavour, and wanted them to deliver solid yield improvement. The mission was a success, with 21 vines selected – which were initially planted as cuttings from 1930s vines. These high-performing vines would become known as the 'Houghton clones', with initial trials planted at Gingin and Frankland in the early 1970s.



ADVANCED NOTES

THE ART OF RIPENING

Climatic conditions during the grape-ripening process, and the length of ripening, are key factors that influence a wine's characteristics. As veraison (the onset of ripening) occurs, the berries change colour, with sugars in the grapes rising and acid levels falling. The balance between sugar and acid is a critical aspect in producing quality wine, so growers carefully monitor acidity and pH levels, along with other factors, to determine the best time to harvest.

Margaret River wine is defined by its elegance, and this is thanks in large part to its ripening season influenced by the unique Leeuwin Current. This warm ocean current flows from the north and runs close to the region's coastline, moderating winter temperatures and reducing the risk of frost. In summer it moves away from the coast, allowing the cold currents to flow up from the Antarctic. These currents create cooling afternoon sea breezes that moderate summer temperatures, leading to a long, slow and gentle ripening season. This protects the grapes' delicate aromatic compounds and allows them to retain natural acidity.

THE RIPENING OF CABERNET SAUVIGNON

One of the region's two hero varieties (the other being Chardonnay), Cabernet Sauvignon is a late-harvest variety that requires a long, slow ripening season. The later the harvest, the more the grapes will develop the black fruit and high tannin traits that are characteristic of high-quality wines.



WINEMAKING

- Classic techniques influenced by the local environment
- Climate lends itself to low-intervention approach
- Most wines see oak but winemakers practice restraint
- New generation of innovative winemakers experimenting with alternative techniques

WINEMAKING IN MARGARET RIVER

Margaret River winemakers draw on well-established winemaking regions for technique and the local environment for inspiration. The region's consistent and reliable grape-growing conditions mean winemakers can minimise intervention in the winery and let the quality of the grapes shine.

While most wines see oak barrel fermentation and/or maturation, winemakers typically practice restraint, combining new oak barrels with seasoned oak to give complexity and depth while preserving varietal character.

The new and the bold

Many winemakers favour traditional practices, however there's a new generation of ambitious and innovative winemakers who are willing to push the envelope and experiment with alternative techniques. These include minimal-intervention approaches such as whole-bunch fermentation and natural fermentation using indigenous vineyard yeast.

This new generation isn't just inspiring each other – they are also inspiring the established names to experiment. It's a wonderful example of new talent respecting their mentors and perfecting traditional techniques, while inventing their own ways of doing things and adding to Australia's diverse and creative wine scene.



COMPLEMENTARY READING

DOWN TO EARTH: BIODYNAMIC VINEYARDS FORGING NEW FRONTIERS

Organic and biodynamic farming is increasingly common in Margaret River, with growers striving to let the purity of their fruit shine. This minimal-intervention approach is reflected in the winery, where natural winemaking is a growing trend.

One of the region's best-known producers, and a founding family of the modern Australian wine community, Cullen Wines has been a proponent of natural, holistic growing practices for more than 40 years. It was the first winery in Australia to be certified 100% carbon neutral, and gained organic certification in 2003 and biodynamic certification in 2004. Biodynamic farming is a philosophy that recognises the link between plant growth and the cosmos, and treats the vineyards as a living system that interacts with the environment. It focuses on cultivating fertile, sustainable soil that nourishes the vines and surrounding environment.

Come vintage, winemaker Vanya Cullen practises biodynamic principles in the winery too, with hand-harvested fruit handled gently and fermented using wild yeast. The dedication to quality and authenticity has paid off, with Cullen Wines appearing on wine lists in some of the world's best restaurants.



DID YOU KNOW

Margaret River winemakers are a close-knit bunch, with many tastings held throughout the year to share knowledge and experience. The region's flagship varieties, Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay, both have an annual tasting hosted by Vasse Felix, where hundreds of single-vineyard barrel samples from a single vintage are tasted and discussed.



SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS

- How does Margaret River's relatively short winemaking history influence practices in the vineyard and winery?
- Why has organic and biodynamic farming become a greater focus for growers in recent years? How is this influencing winemaking trends and wine styles?
- Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay wines are commonly oaked. What does oak bring to the winemaking process?

NOTEWORTHY
VARIETIES

TASTE OF MARGARET RIVER



TASTE OF MARGARET RIVER: NOTEWORTHY VARIETIES

In this rugged, isolated region, wines tend toward the elegant and refined. Its signature wines are:

- Semillon Sauvignon Blanc blends.
- Chardonnay.
- Cabernet Sauvignon.

As well as these flagship styles, you'll also find world-class Shiraz coming out of Margaret River, along with a sprinkling of other varieties including Chenin Blanc, Merlot and Malbec, with each wine an authentic expression of this distinctive region.

TIME TO TASTE – Now is an appropriate time to taste and discuss your selected mix of wines.

MARGARET RIVER TOP 5 VARIETIES



Source: Wine Australia National Vintage Survey.
Variety share based on average tonnage from 2015–2019

MARGARET RIVER SEMILLON SAUVIGNON BLANC



HELPED PUT
MARGARET
RIVER ON THE
WINE MAP

TYPICAL FLAVOURS

- Gooseberry
- Passionfruit
- Lime
- Lemon Curd
- Grapefruit

TWO VARIETIES THAT
ARE INHERENTLY
COMPLEMENTARY

SEMILLON SAUVIGNON BLANC BLENDS

This classic white blend is one of Margaret River's signature styles and helped put the region on the wine map. The two varieties are inherently complementary, with Semillon contributing flavour and roundness to the more austere, sharper Sauvignon Blanc notes, and adding a touch of weight to the Sauvignon Blanc mid-palate, to create a wine that's greater than the sum of its parts.

The wines typically show tropical fruit characters, lemony notes and pronounced herbal, grassy tones. Unoaked styles are vibrant, fruit-filled and crisp, and generally made for early drinking. Many producers are employing barrel fermentation for added complexity, weight and concentration. These wines are very well matched to food.

Notable Semillon Sauvignon Blanc producers include:

- Cape Mentelle.
- Clairault.
- Cullen Wines.
- Pierro.
- Vasse Felix.
- Voyager Estate.
- Xanadu.

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DID YOU KNOW

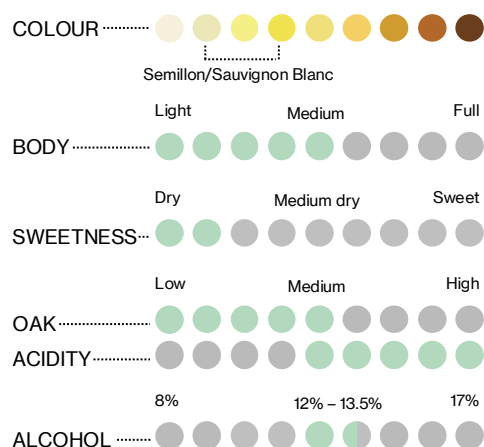
In blends with a larger proportion of Semillon, that variety's name will appear first: Semillon Sauvignon Blanc (SSB). Wines with a higher quantity of Sauvignon Blanc are usually called Sauvignon Blanc Semillon (SBS).

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COMPLEMENTARY PROGRAM

To learn more about these wines, check out the **Semillon and Sauvignon Blanc** module, available at www.australianwinediscovered.com

MARGARET RIVER SEMILLON/SAUVIGNON BLANC CHARACTERISTICS



MARGARET RIVER CHARDONNAY

TYPICAL PRIMARY FLAVOURS

- Gooseberry
- Passionfruit
- Lime
- Lemon Curd
- Grapefruit

TYPICAL SECONDARY FLAVOURS

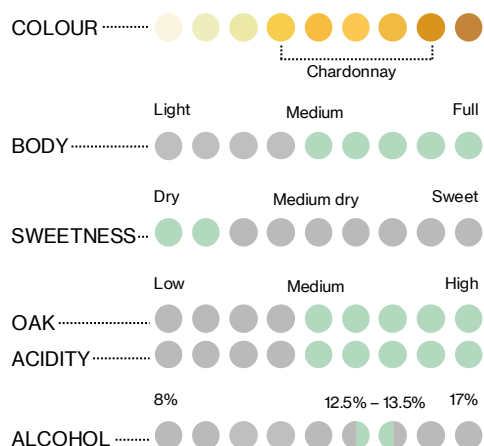
- Toast
- Toasted Almond
- Spice
- Chalk
- Gunflint
- Nougat
- Minerality



WORLD CLASS!

RICHER, POWERFUL STYLES
PROVIDE A CONTRAST TO
LEANER, COOL-CLIMATE
STYLES

MARGARET RIVER CHARDONNAY CHARACTERISTICS



CHARDONNAY

Margaret River Chardonnay is world class. The heritage 'Gingin' clone is prominent, producing low crops of small bunches with tiny berries. These provide intense fruit concentration, complex flavours and mineral acidity. The wines are concentrated yet refined, with savoury complexity from natural fermentation in French oak barrels and layered textures from maturation on lees. Many Margaret River winemakers produce richer, riper styles of Chardonnay, providing a contrast to the leaner, cool-climate styles.

Notable Chardonnay producers include:

- Leeuwin Estate.
- Cullen Wines.
- Vasse Felix.
- Moss Wood.
- Lenton Brae.
- Evans & Tate.
- Deep Woods.
- Domaine Naturaliste.
- Xanadu.



COMPLEMENTARY PROGRAM

To learn more, check out the **Chardonnay** module, available at www.australianwinediscovered.com

MARGARET RIVER CABERNET SAUVIGNON

TYPICAL PRIMARY FLAVOURS

- Cassis
- Blackcurrant
- Blueberry
- Red currant
- Bay leaf
- Dried herbs

TYPICAL SECONDARY FLAVOURS

- Smoke
- Cedar



**HERO VARIETY
FOR MANY
LOCAL
PRODUCERS**

**HIGH QUALITY AND SUITED
TO LONG-TERM CELLARING**

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

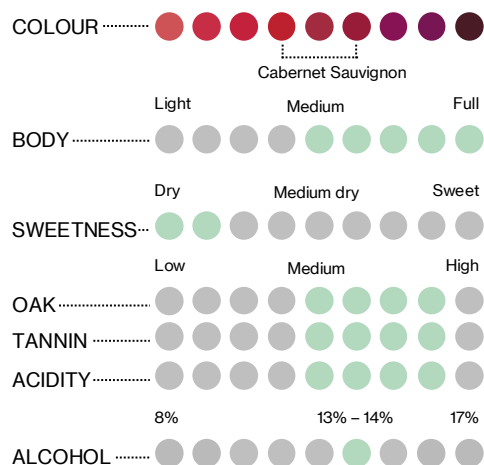
Cabernet Sauvignon is the hero variety for many in Margaret River, and almost every wine producer makes one. Many of the region's Cabernet Sauvignon vineyards are based on the heritage Houghton clone selection, which produces low crops of very small berries with particularly fine tannin structure.

The Margaret River style is medium-bodied to full-bodied, and richer in flavour and more rounded in texture than that of Coonawarra – Australia's equally famous Cabernet-producing region. In their best years, Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignons show an astonishing

balance of fruit ripeness, acidity and defined tannin structure, and are suited to long-term cellaring. The wines are characterised by red currant and cassis fruit characters, and bay leaf or dried-herb aromas. Margaret River is renowned for its red and black fruits.

The region has also gained a reputation for producing powerful yet elegant Cabernet Sauvignon blends. These wines are medium-bodied to full-bodied, with earthy characters and ripe cassis and violet aromas.

MARGARET RIVER CABERNET SAUVIGNON CHARACTERISTICS



Notable Cabernet Sauvignon producers include:

- Leeuwin Estate.
- Cullen Wines.
- Vasse Felix.
- Moss Wood
- Cape Mentelle.
- Woodlands Wines.
- Howard Park Wines.
- Juniper Estate.

BEST OF THE REST

Other noteworthy varieties include:

- Chenin Blanc.
- Merlot.
- Shiraz.
- Malbec.



ADVANCED NOTES

CABERNET SAUVIGNON AND CHARDONNAY: AGEING LIKE A FINE WINE

Many Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignons have great ageing potential, with tannin structure, concentration and complexity allowing them to age for decades. Young Cabernet Sauvignons have firm tannins, high acidity and flavours of cassis, blackberry and herbs. As the wines mature, their tannins soften, becoming mellow and smooth, and they take on characteristics of cedar, tobacco, earth and cocoa. Winemakers frequently use oak to age premium Cabernet Sauvignons. This can add additional tannins and flavours, such as smoke, coffee and cedar.

Many Margaret River Chardonnays are also great candidates for ageing. Chardonnay is one of the most revered white grapes for ageing gracefully, averaging 5–8 years, although the very best Chardonnays from special sites (such as the Leeuwin Estate 'Art Series') have the potential to age for up to 20 years. As it matures, it develops rich, buttery characteristics and nutty and caramel flavours. Margaret River winemakers use high-quality grapes to produce powerful wines with outstanding balance and a strong backbone of acidity: all the makings of Chardonnay with excellent cellaring potential.



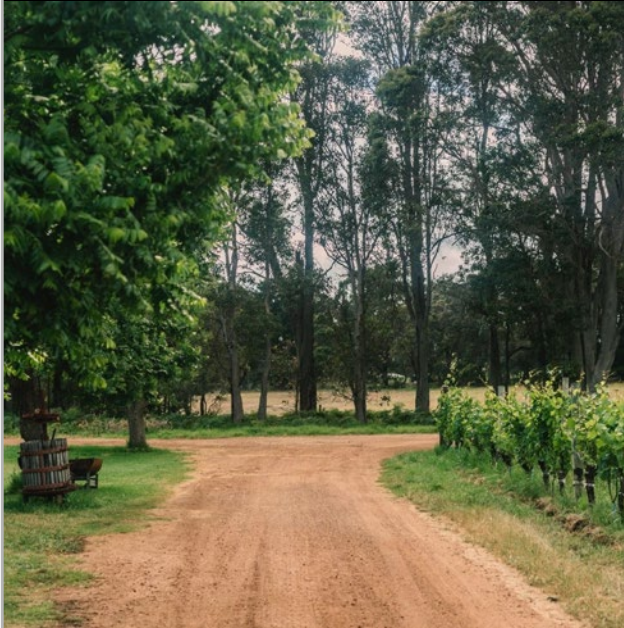
SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS

- How might you distinguish a Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon from a Cabernet from Coonawarra?
- How has the broader Australian trend towards leaner, racier expressions of Chardonnay affected the winemaking approach and styles of Margaret River?
- Why has Margaret River become Australia's most successful producer of the Semillon Sauvignon Blanc blend?



COMPLEMENTARY PROGRAM

To learn more about this variety, check out the **Cabernet Sauvignon** module, available at www.australianwinediscovered.com



SHORT HISTORY LONG FUTURE

Fine wines and innovative winemaking techniques that are setting the standard for Australian wine.

Margaret River is a premium wine region with a relatively short history but a long, bright future ahead. Its community of passionate winemakers have played a vital role in driving the Australian wine community forward and setting the standard for its flagship varieties. With local winemakers striking a balance between perfecting classic approaches while boldly treading their own path, this exciting coastal region is one to watch.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- The Margaret River wine region was established in the late 1960s, and quickly established itself as one to watch. This momentum hasn't slowed, with the region building an international reputation as a home of fine wine, capable of producing wines to match the world's best.
- Margaret River is renowned for producing wines of power, elegance and intensity. Its signature wines are Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Semillon Sauvignon Blanc blends.
- Located around 230 kilometres south of Western Australia's capital city of Perth, it's one of the world's most geographically isolated wine regions.
- Its geography, soils and maritime-influenced Mediterranean climate conspire to create ideal grape-growing conditions: heavy winter rainfalls, cool sea breezes that lend vibrancy to the fruit and a long, dry ripening season.
- With a focus on allowing the region's unique terroir to shine through, growers and winemakers take a light-touch approach, with growing numbers embracing sustainable, organic and biodynamic practices.

Suggested timings

This program is designed to be taught in one to two hours. How long you spend on each topic – or whether you cover it at all – will depend on your attendees as well as time allocation. Below are two different examples of how you may wish to divide your time.

ONE-HOUR CLASS

Topic	Time
Welcome and introduction	5 mins
The history of Margaret River	5 mins
Geography, climate and soil	5 mins
Viticulture	5 mins
Winemaking	5 mins
Noteworthy varieties (including tasting)	30 mins
Summary and class close	5 mins

TWO-HOUR CLASS

Topic	Time
Welcome and introduction	5 mins
The history of Margaret River	10 mins
Geography, climate and soil	10 mins
Viticulture	10 mins
Winemaking	10 mins
Break	10 mins
Noteworthy varieties (including tasting)	55 mins
Summary and class close	10 mins

SUGGESTED WINES TO TASTE

These are just suggestions – you can select whichever wines best suit your tasting and audience. Wines may or may not be available in your area.

- Vasse Felix ‘Classic Dry White’
Margaret River Semillon Sauvignon Blanc
- Fraser Gallop ‘Parterre’ Margaret River
Semillon Sauvignon Blanc
- Cullen Margaret River
Sauvignon Blanc Semillon
- Amelia Park ‘Reserve’
Margaret River Chardonnay
- Voyager Estate
Margaret River Chardonnay
- Credaro Estate Margaret River Chardonnay
- Pierro Estate Margaret River Chardonnay
- Woodlands Margaret River
Cabernet Merlot
- Voyager Estate Margaret River
Cabernet Merlot
- Fraser Gallop ‘Parterre’ Margaret River
Cabernet Sauvignon
- Vasse Felix Margaret River
Cabernet Sauvignon
- Howard Park ‘Leston’ Margaret River Cabernet
Sauvignon
- Flametree Margaret River Shiraz

THANK YOU