



2009 Cabernet Merlot

Winemaker	Clive Otto and Kate Morgan
Harvested	26 th March -11 th April 2009
Wood	10 months in French Oak
Bottled	8 February 2010
Alcohol	14.0 %

Wine Blend

63% Cabernet Sauvignon
22 % Merlot
11% Malbec
4% Cabernet Franc

Winemaker's overview

The style of Cabernet Merlot we are making at Fraser Gallop Estate is a wine that has greater freshness from a short barrel maturation and good concentration of flavour that comes naturally from dry grown Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend. The result is a sumptuous blend that drinks well early however can be cellared for a short period of 4-6 years.

The blending of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot has been proven in Margaret River's short history and elsewhere, such as Bordeaux where the blend originated. The varieties work so well because structural tannins of Cabernet are tamed by the inherent mid-palate richness and softness of the Merlot grape.

Vintage 2009

The 2009 growing season was picture perfect if you were a grapevine, warm but moderate temperatures allowed the fruit to ripen slowly without any major heat spikes. During the growing season between flowering and harvest there was 1000 hours in the temperature range of 18 to 28 Celsius, on average usually receiving 900. (Compare this with 2006 when it was 600 hours). There was only 21 hours above 30 C when the average is usually around 48.

There was a shower of rain end of February, however this had little detrimental effect on the quality of the grapes if anything freshened the grapes and took the dust away.

Viticultural Notes

The Fraser Gallop Estate vineyard constantly produces first class fruit, 2009 was no exception. Both the Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot are sourced off unirrigated blocks resulting in concentrated fruit, and the vines have been caned pruned by the same person each year to ensure crop levels are low and the fruit is of the highest quality. Throughout the growing season two passes with the vine trimmer were required to ensure maximum fruit exposure. Just after berry set the vines were leaf plucked to open the canopy (especially on our East-West rows) and ensure good fruit exposure. This aids in flavour development and tannin ripeness, minimising any green characters.

Winemaking Notes

The hand-picked fruit was de-stemmed with minimal crushing to keep berries whole then and chilled to 8°C for three days cold soak in closed fermenters (designed with a one-to-one ratio of height and length, great for colour and flavour extraction). The wine was pumped over daily using a turbopiguer which is able to pump whole grapes at up to 70, 000 litres per hour allowing better homogenisation and extraction without damaging the berries. During fermentation wine was tasted daily to monitor the tannin extraction and was on skins for 10 - 14 days before being pressed off-skins, this was the point that the best combination of fruit and tannin balance was achieved. The wine was then transferred to barrel for malolactic fermentation, the barrels were all French barriques from a number of Bordeaux cooperages. The wine was racked twice during the following 10 months in barrel to aid in maturation and development. The individual varieties were kept in separate barrels until blending. The wine was not fined, however we cross-flow filtered it prior to bottling.

Tasting Notes

A wine brimming with vibrancy of colour in the glass with attractive deep cherry red hues. Blackcurrent, red currants, dusty, earthy, orange chocolate and cedar oak - a lovely smelling wine. It is a well balanced wine with persistent gravelly tannins with a cranberry like freshness. Flavours of dusty mulberries, chocolate and a hint of olives give it a savoury edge. A wine to serve with hearty winter meals like lamb, pasta and cheese influenced meals. Careful cool cellaring of up to 6 years will see this wine improve with time.