

the meandering négo



## 2021 SUPER MARGS

Our 2021 'Super Margs' continues to draw influence from the highly sought after and respected Super Tuscan wines of Italy, which are typically made from Sangiovese and blended with non-indigenous varieties, in our case, the king of the Reds in Margaret River – Cabernet Sauvignon. Following on from our first Super Margs release in 2019, we have 'upped the ante' and taken it a step further by hand selecting the best fruit and barrels for this wine, and also including some Merlot and Cabernet Franc this year. The wine is again bottled with cork to highlight the rare expression, elegance and sophistication of this wine style as well as giving the old world style a little nod.

### VINTAGE & VITICULTURE

Lucky for us, the 2021 vintage came in behind a ripper growing season the previous year. The mild spring in 2020 made for great condition and a solid foundation for vintage 2021. In general, budburst and flowering was fairly normal, yields were slightly better than 2020 but still lower than average on the whole, and Marri tree blossom was around, which helped reduce the bird pressure. The unlucky part of vintage 2021 was the weather systems that resulted from La Niña and labour shortages due to Covid. Weatherwise, the long-lasting cyclone season in the north west translated to increased rainfall in the south west – specifically in November, then again in February through to April. Fortunately, December and January were dry and warmer than normal months which allowed for some early ripening which raised hopes of an 'easy' vintage – that was until a combination of tropical lows and came in in late January and soaked the south west in February. As far as cyclones go, there were four names that will be embedded in the minds of viticulturalists – Joshua, Lucas, Marian and Seroja. Joshua started the rain dance in late January and Seroja finished the dance party in April.

The rainfall however was a pro and a con, it soaked deep into the soils and was great for later ripening varieties – particularly in our dry grown vineyards, however the warm weather combined with high humidity increased the risk of botrytis disease pressure. Fortunately, our model of spending more time in the vineyard than the winery paid off, with the extra attention given to canopy structure early on in the vintage. The effort put to shoot thinning, fruit dropping and leaf plucking was rewarded in good clean fruit.

Our general take on vintage 2021 was that although it was challenging and exhausting in the vineyards, the effort paid off with clean fruit harvested. The Sangiovese comes from a vineyard within the Wilyabrup subregion and was hand harvested mid March to retain that natural acidity and brightness.

The Cabernet Sauvignon was hand harvested from our vineyard that we naturally farm in the Wallcliffe subregion a little bit later in April to ensure it had time to develop tannin ripeness and flavour. The Cabernet Franc and Malbec came from vineyards in the Treeton sub-region and was harvested at the end of March, the same time that a small parcel of Merlot was also harvested from a vineyard in Wilyabrup. All parcels of fruit were carefully harvested a little later than normal to remain longer on vine to achieve measurable softening and ripening of tannins in cooler and wetter vintage conditions.

### WINEMAKING

All parcels were destemmed and gently crushed into small open fermenters where they were fermented on skins with indigenous yeast and gentle hand plunging for 10–21 days. From there, the fruit was basket pressed into a mixture of one-year old Hungarian and older French oak barrels. The wine was then matured on oak for a period of 10 months before the best barrels were selected for this wine. The wine was then matured further in bottle before Autumnal release. The decision to use Hungarian oak was influenced from our time spent in Italy, where this was the preferred oak when working with Super Tuscan styles where the tighter grain tends to bring out a leaner, spicier element of the flavour profile of the oak. The stylistic aim of the winemaking was to continue to showcase a fruit forward wine with natural acidity and balanced savouriness, along with more structure and tannin focus. Sangiovese is the focal varietal in this wine, closely followed by Cabernet Sauvignon, and Cabernet Franc. Malbec and Merlot were added in smaller percentages to provide some final balance and additional layers.

### APPEARANCE, NOSE & PALATE

In a glass the wine presents with a wonderful inky core with a lighter crimson hue. The nose shows lifted aromas of blackcurrant and hints of dark chocolate. The palate is rich and smoothly textured, yet displays youthfulness and vibrancy. The ripe fruit of the Cabernet Sauvignon provides richness and flavour, while the Sangiovese provides youthfulness, aromatics and overall acid to the blend. The Cabernet also contributes classic layers of plums, and a touch of clove thanks to the French oak portion whilst the Sangiovese maintains spiciness from the Hungarian oak. This wine has a little more complexity mid-palate and a rich texture, which shows off wonderful fruit and well-integrated tannins.

**Region** Margaret River **Alcohol** 13.5% **Drinking Best** 2022 – 2032

