

When is Reserve not a reserve, when it's a Sub Regional Series. After 15 vintages making wine in Margaret River you get a feel for the sub regions that are best suited to specific grape varieties. Rather than go down the traditional Reserve or Single Vineyard path we decided to pursue something a little different, hence the sub regional theme. Although there are no officially defined subregions in Margaret River, producers have adopted the John Gladstone proposal. In 1999 viticultural scientist Dr John Gladstone presented a paper suggesting there should be six sub regions based on climate and soil differences.

The aim with the Flametree Sub Regional Series is to showcase distinctive wine styles from vineyards renowned for growing ultra premium fruit. We've chosen to lead with Margaret River's strongest varieties, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. The Sub Regional Series represents the very best varietal wines under the Flametree label, these wines will only be made in the best vintages, volumes will be small and availability very limited.

FLAMETREE WINES MARGARET RIVER S.R.S. CHARDONNAY 2010



Season: 2010 was a fantastic Chardonnay vintage in Margaret River; most winemakers agree Chardonnay was the stand out variety of the season. Cool temperatures and moderate winds in spring set the vines up beautifully before the season gradually warmed up during late December and January. There was no disease pressure and no rainfall.

Fruit/Vineyards: The fruit for the 2010 Flametree Sub Regional Series Chardonnay was sourced from the Steven's Valley in the southern Margaret River region. As with many of the best Margaret River Chardonnays the clone of choice is Gin Gin, this fruit comes from moderate yielding vines on a nice piece of north east facing gravelly loam. The fruit was handpicked during the first week of February at 12.2 beaume.

Winemaking: The fruit for the Sub Regional Series Chardonnay was whole bunch pressed and settled overnight. Turbid juice was then transferred into barrel where the wine was then left to undergo wild ferment. The secret to successful wild ferment is high turbidity juices and low alcohols; I still see so many stressed, volatile and stuck wild ferments on the market. MLF was blocked; I believe Margaret River Chardonnay has enough texture; MLF often thickens the wines and interferes with the fruit purity. The 2010 Sub Regional Series Chardonnay was barrel fermented in French oak, 33% new, the remainder being two and three year seasoned wood.

Tasting Notes: The 2010 Sub Regional Series Chardonnay is finely structured with tight citrus and stone fruit flavours. Classic southern Margaret River regional Chardonnay fruit flavours of dried pear, grapefruit and melon are supported by subtle French oak. The Sub Regional Series Chardonnay has some complex sulphides in the struck match or popcorn spectrum; these give the wine a lovely savoury finish. After 12 months in the finest French oak, with regular stirring the wine was filtered and bottled in February 2011.

Production: 190 dozen

Analysis: Alc 13.2%, pH 3.25, TA 6.85g/l