

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

S.R.S. WILYABRUP

CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2013



Grape Variety / Region
100% Cabernet Sauvignon
100% Margaret River

Season

There will be a lot of discussion and debate over which is the better Cabernet Sauvignon vintage in Margaret River, 2012 or 2013. The 2012 vintage was set up by a traditional wet spring (more than a meter of rainfall over winter and spring) that resulted in above average yields and plenty of early season vegetative growth. In contrast the 2013 season was drier with less vegetative growth and lower yields? Both vintages have produced super wines with all the perfume, colour and structure you'd expect to see in great Margaret River Cabernet vintages. The vagaries of wine seasons and the resulting quality of the wines still continue to bewilder me after almost 20 years.

Fruit / Vineyards

The fruit for the 2013 Flametree S.R.S. Cabernet Sauvignon was sourced from the famous Wilyabrup sub-region of Margaret River, long regarded as the benchmark sub-region for Cabernet Sauvignon based wines. This Cabernet parcel was machine harvested, using the latest selective harvesting technology, from the wonderful Wilyabrup Estate vineyard on Puzey Road. This vineyard is situated on a beautiful piece of east/north-east facing gravel. The soils are typically very bony on top with gravel/quartz sub-soils underneath. These mature vines cropped at around 5 tonnes per hectare. The clone used for this Cabernet hails from old Houghton cuttings. This year's wine is 100% Cabernet Sauvignon.

Winemaking

Because the fruit was picked so clean with the selective harvester we were able to tip the individual parcels directly into a small open top fermenter without putting the fruit through a traditional crusher destemmer. After a few days, as the fruit warmed up and the wild ferment kicked in, we started working the cap by hand for soft tannin extraction and aeration. Ferment temperatures were maintained around 28 degrees. After some extended skin contact the wine was pressed into 50% new French oak for 16 months maturation. The barrels were then blended together and after a light egg white fining the wine was bottled.

Tasting Notes

This 2013 SRS Cabernet Sauvignon is a classic Wilyabrup Cabernet Sauvignon produced from a fantastic Margaret River vintage. It shows all the perfume and structure that make Wilyabrup Cabernet Sauvignon wines so famous. Lifted blackberries, mulberry, plums, earth and dark chocolate dominate the nose and palate at this early stage. Whilst showing plenty of inky dark fruits, violets and bitter chocolate. The palate also displays wonderful fruit and oak tannin, the result of 16 months oak maturation. A lovely full bodied Cabernet Sauvignon that shows Margaret River Cabernet in all its glory. This vintage will drink beautifully as a young wine, however a wine with this much fruit and extract will also mature wonderfully for the next 10-12 years.

Analysis: Alc: 13.8% v/v pH: 3.55 Acidity: 6.38g/l

Winemaker: Cliff Royle