



## MARGARET RIVER WINE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

### **2012 Margaret River Wine Region – Vintage Report as at 24<sup>th</sup> February**

Warm to hot conditions during the day with warmer than average nights have been the norm for Margaret River since early January and this has brought forward vintage by between 2 to 3 weeks ahead of the regional average. These and the overall weather conditions during the berry development period have provided near perfect ripening conditions for all varieties.

Most white wines have been picked in the region with the balance likely to be completed by the 1<sup>st</sup> March. Flavours are of fresh fruit with moderate natural acidity and winemakers are choosing to pick on flavour and acid instead of Baume (sugar), the result is providing improved wine quality at marginally reduced alcohol.

The warmer than average weather conditions were well handled by the vines due to excellent spring growing conditions with good rainfall thus subsoil moisture resulting in very healthy canopies.

Whites across the region have demonstrated early onset of flavour, with many Semillon and Sauvignon Blanc grapes coming into wineries this week. Flavours are fresh, with much potential for these varietal wines and their blends. The bulk of the Chardonnay in the region is now picked and happily fermenting on oak. These juices were typical of Margaret River with intense and full flavours. A citrus line predominates, with the moderate temperatures of the season providing a balanced acid backbone, with soft and fine phenolics.

The Region's reds are looking to come on quickly, with Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz estimated to be starting over the next two to three weeks. The vintage has the potential to be another great red year for Margaret River, with bright and vibrant fruit characters balanced with gentle, but long tannins.

Cabernet Sauvignon is ripening steadily, with the onset of the classic blackcurrant characters starting to appear in the fruit. Tannins are ripening in sync with the fruit character, so the year should exhibit wonderful balance in the resulting wines. The variety looks to be nearing picking in beautiful condition, with most canopies looking to be in top condition. This will no doubt yield wines with great depth and intensity, something Margaret River is so well known for.

Abundant Marri blossom leading into vintage, reminiscent of conditions in 1994, has resulted in significantly less Silverevee bird damage to grapes and reduced necessity to apply protective bird netting although many do this now as a standard preventive management measure. Also very little disease pressure has arisen due to the excellent growing conditions.

With whites mostly in the winery let us hope the weather gods are kind to reds in the coming weeks.

ENDS – Dated 24<sup>th</sup> February 2012

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**MEDIA RELEASE**