



Stella Bella, Cabernet Merlot, Margaret River, Australia, 2021

Producer Profile

This boutique winery in the heart of Margaret River creates idiosyncratic named ranges like Suckfizzle in a low interventionist and organic way keeping their approach as simple as possible to allow their cherished vineyards to show their quality.

It is not merely in the names where these wines are memorable, as once you have tasted them you will see why Luke Jolliffe, the winemaker, continues to receive recognition and awards from around the world for wines that have that wonderful Margaret River restraint and elegance, but are bound together with a fruit purity that makes them delectable.

Viticulture

Their philosophy regarding viticulture is simple, and that is to operate in a manner that consciously respects the vineyards that they tend as well as the local environment. Minimal chemical inputs and fertilisers are used along with minimal intervention as - aiming for vine balance. Stella Bella are acutely aware of the environmentally pristine nature of this part of the world and manage their vineyards accordingly. An example of this is their recent introduction of *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri* (the Australian Native Ladybird) to predate on mealy bugs. This has been a very successful natural control measure. Unlike almost all other wine producing regions, because Western Australia is free from Phylloxera, Stella Bella wines are all on their own roots, and not on rootstock, which arguably gives them a purer expression of the various cultivars grown and the respective sites they are planted in. Fruit is picked on a combination of flavour, vine condition, sugar/pH/TA and intuition. They pick across a spectrum of ripeness levels for complexity. Every block is picked and vinified separately for maximum blending options. Swards of rye and clover have been planted to help prevent soil compaction and to assist in fixing nitrogen. The vines are all trellised using Vertical Shoot Position (VSP), and are spur-pruned with the exception of a couple of older blocks of Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc that are cane pruned. Spur-pruning helps to ensure that the spur spacing results in the correct shoot spacing in the canopy, which in turn leads to well-exposed leaves and fruit. This results in them obtaining the optimum balance between leaves, canes and bunches.

Winemaking

The Cabernet sauvignon component was held on skins for 10 days to help build the structure of the wine. The merlot was pressed earlier to retain bright fruit aromatics, while still providing mid palate sweetness. The traditional Bordelaise winemaking technique of *délistage* was used during maceration to provide bright aromatics while increasing oxygen in order to help with tannin polymerisation. 10% new French oak was used on this wine to complement the fruit while providing some subtle mocha and vanillin oak sweetness. The wine was held in oak for 12 months and racked and returned twice before being fined with Margaret River free range eggs, filtered and bottled.

Tasting Note

This Cabernet Merlot packs a punch! Bright and charming, the perfume of Cabernet Sauvignon strikes you first, followed swiftly by its precise and structured palate. With its partner in crime Merlot providing the palate weight, with fruit generosity and richness. Violets, satsuma plums and glazed cherries lift out of the glass in an explosive fashion. Followed by aromas of red currants, raspberries and subtle vanillin oak with a hint of smokiness. Juicy, medium bodied and full of flavour. Red currants, cherries and blueberries fill the palate complemented by the dusty fine-grained tannin and precise structure. The refreshing acidity balances the supple tannin and red fruits for an extremely smash-able wine that leaves you wanting more.

Food Matching

Red meat. Simple!



Product code: 2433

Technical Details

Varieties:

Cabernet Sauvignon 73%

Merlot 20%

Malbec 7%



ABV: 13.8%

Closure: Screw cap

Colour: Red

Style: Still wine

Case Size: 12 x 75cl

Oak Ageing

Time: 12 Months

Type: French Barrique

% wine oaked: 100

% new oak: 10

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