

Wendy Stimpson

Passel Estate
Margaret River



We didn't expect to buy the vineyards. It was more of a look-see, but we fell in love and made the decision to buy. I'm from England and my husband is from South Africa's Cape winelands. We dreamt of making our own wine. We were maybe a little crazy, opening our cellar door at the same time as we launched our inaugural 2015 vintage, before we had sold a single bottle.

We currently have 6.8 hectares of vineyard, a handful of miles from the ocean, which brings important cooling breezes. Our viticulturalist, Andy Ferreira, describes the vineyards as having "Christmas cake" soils: a reference to the gravelly/loam surface, clay, and granite underneath.

It was our rockstar winemaker, Bruce Dukes, who suggested Ferreira to us. Bruce is just brilliant. He has experience of making world-class wines in Napa Valley and Australia and is extremely passionate. He loves the soils at Passel and knows this is the starting point for great wines. He is a humble and simply fabulous person.

We work sustainably and currently have winery certification, with vineyard accreditation coming soon. We also have a conservation project that's very dear to us. The western ringtail possums are an at-risk species that we're working

hard to protect. We've installed soft release enclosures alongside the creek line, to enable the possums' successful rehabilitation at the property. Our vineyards are surrounded by jarrah, red gum, peppermint, and ancient grass trees. Here the possums find shelter and have a chance to thrive. We love our local possums, and they are not a threat to the vines. We're more likely to lose fruit to birds and kangaroos.

If it needs saying, it is the western ringtail possum that has inspired the winery name.

Our philosophy is to make wines that are the purest expression of our "passion paradise". We make elegant, balanced, fruit-driven, single-variety wines that reflect both their terroir and the individuality of the vintage.

We have historically used Syrah on the Reserve wine label and Shiraz on the Estate. However, moving forward both wines will be called Syrah, to reflect their elegant Margaret River, and Rhône inspired, style.

Passel: The collective noun for the Australian possum. It is also the name of an exciting young Margaret River estate, whose wines are arriving in the UK for the first time, imported by Frederick's Wine Company.

For the future we are making plans afoot for a traditional-method sparkling Chenin Blanc. It's a few years away yet, but an exciting part of our ideas for expansion.

Margaret River's terroir isn't just about the soil beneath our feet, it's also the local community. We are blessed to be in an area where the quality of the wines is so high. We've had a good deal of support from our neighbours, including some of the more famous estates. Our wines are beautifully made and have elegance and purity. We are something of a hidden gem, a small, family-owned winery with a passion for our single-variety Margaret River wines.

Chardonnay 2018

A near perfect vintage with a long, warm ripening season. The Chardonnay is a stunning reflection of the year with voluminous white orchard fruit, toasted nuts, and pristine acidity.

Silver medal, Decanter World Wine Awards 2022; Silver medal, International Wine Challenge 2021



Cabernet Sauvignon 2017

The team did well to hold their nerve in this challenging vintage. The fruit has fantastic concentration and balance. Pristine red fruits lead to a savoury palate laced with graphite, blueberries and cedar.

Gold medal, Decanter World Wine Awards 2020; Gold medal, Australia & New Zealand Boutique Wine Show 2021



Lot 71 Reserve Syrah 2017

From select rows of hand-picked fruit. Tense and brooding. Red cherries, anise, and savoury spice. The wine has a bristling structure and texture, awash with minerality and eastern spices.

Silver medal, Decanter World Wine Awards 2022; Silver medal, Australia & New Zealand Boutique Wine Show 2021

