



LEEWIN ESTATE

1999 PRELUDE VINEYARDS CABERNET MERLOT

Region

Margaret River, Western Australia

Varieties

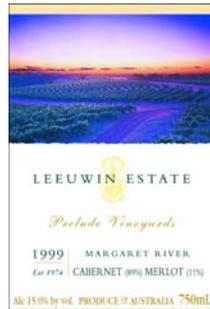
Cabernet (89%), Merlot (11%)

Maturation

22 months in older French oak barrels

Technical Analysis

14.5% alc/vol; 5.6 g/l total acidity, 3.67 pH



Background

'Prelude Vineyards' wines are made from fruit producing the most readily expressive characteristics, with the objective that they will drink well soon after release.

The mid-palate richness from the merlot in this wine allows for earlier consumption, although will comfortably live for five to seven years. Plump and juicy with earthy overtones, it's one to drink while the Art Series waits patiently in the cellar.

Viticulture

A very dry year with warm days and cool nights suggesting a late vintage. There were a few days of warmer weather just prior to vintage which hastened the ripening of the early varieties, but then a period of cooler weather followed slowing down the ripening of the later varieties such as cabernet which was picked about two weeks later than normal, making 1999 an excellent year for red wines.

Winemaking

Fermentation took place in the normal fashion in closed fermenters at temperatures up to 86°F with extraction gently attuned to each individual lot. After fermentation the wine was left on skins for up to three weeks before pressing. After malolactic fermentation the components from different parts of the vineyard were blended and put into barrel for ageing.

Tasting Notes

The color is ruby plum with purplish edges. The initial impact of the aromas is sweet fruit - black currant predominant with hints of leather and good rich autumn notes. In the background, though once perceived, never forgotten, is that distinctive cabernet note of slightly dusty berries. Oak does not play a large role in this wine except to build a structure on which the various fruit flavors revolve around. Flavors like plums and violets tend to show in the palate with the merlot contribution lingering on with chewy black chocolate notes. A wine to drink early, based on the 1999 vintage's reputation for extraordinary structure, but with a projected 15 to 20 year life span.

Additional Notes:

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