

2014 Fire Gully Sauvignon Blanc Semillon

One of the Margaret River's hidden treasures is the view from the house overlooking the Fire Gully vineyard, its surrounding bushland and tranquil dam replete with wild ducks, black swans and a multitude of other birds. While Mike Peterkin is happy to say little about that, he is happier to talk up the wines from the mature vineyard which supplies this label.

He pioneered the semillon sauvignon blanc combination while at Cullen in 1979 and 1980 and had success with its first wine. The 1979 Cullen Semillon Sauvignon Blanc won the trophy at the Perth Show for the best full-bodied dry white. Not surprisingly when he planted Pierro in 1980, he was aware of the potential of this combination and so planted one-third of his vineyard to these varieties.

Having two vineyards and two labels, Mike Peterkin is able to offer two distinctly different versions of this classic Margaret River white combination. Complementing the Pierro L.T.C Semillon Sauvignon Blanc in the portfolio is the Fire Gully Sauvignon Blanc Semillon. In contrast to its better known sibling, the Fire Gully Sauvignon Blanc Semillon is unoaked, has more sauvignon blanc (70%) and is made in an early-drinking style to emphasise its aromatics, freshness and vibrant fruit flavours.

Making this wine involves gentle handling at the winery so that it shows restrained phenolics and tannins. Freshness and purity of flavour are what Mike Peterkin and the Fire Gully team want. The fruit is picked in 10 kilogram containers which are stacked on racks and are fork liftable so that the fruit is undamaged by handling. The racks are unloaded at the winery, enter the cool room at one end, are chilled to 5°C and then loaded into the press at that temperature.

The 2014 Fire Gully Sauvignon Blanc Semillon has delightful tropical fruit perfumes, is soft, round and full with intense, sweet tropical fruit, lychees and passionfruit with some grassy notes, and a crisp, dry finish.

As usual the Fire Gully white blend is unoaked to emphasise its freshness and fruity qualities- very much in the style that Margaret River has made its own. It is the perfect quaffing wine to be sipped gently by itself on a summer's day- or consumed with lunchtime salads or light, delicate Thai dishes.