

Vasse Felix

Vasse Felix Tom Cullity 2020 is Margaret River Cabernet at its most sculpted: bright garnet in the glass, a sea-breeze lift, and a long, seamless palate built on supremely fine tannins.

VASSE FELIX

98
WINEENTHUSIAST



Tom Cullity Cabernet Malbec 2020

Margaret River, Australia

Region and Vineyards

Margaret River, in Western Australia, is renowned for Cabernet Sauvignon of classical proportion: ripe yet poised fruit, savoury herbal detail, and tannins that feel polished rather than aggressive. In Wilyabrup, the ocean's influence helps moderate warmth, extending flavour development and supporting the region's hallmark freshness, even in sunnier years.

Tom Cullity represents the pinnacle of Vasse Felix, drawing on the estate's most historic material and best-performing blocks. The 2020 season was warm and low-yielding, leading to early ripening and naturally concentrated berries, then cooler conditions later helped preserve flavour definition and tannin finesse. In this vintage, the blend leans into Cabernet's structural authority, while old-vine Malbec brings darker, mulberry-toned depth and aromatic intrigue, with a small seasoning of Petit Verdot to refine the frame.

Winemaking

The 2020 blend is **81% Cabernet Sauvignon, 16% Malbec, 3% Petit Verdot**, harvested from 6 to 27 March. Fruit was hand-picked, destemmed, and transferred to tank without crushing, then fermented with wild yeasts. Fermentation was entirely whole berry, with a mix of static ferments and open-top lots, tailored parcel by parcel to shape texture and preserve purity.

Extraction was handled with restraint and purpose: gentle pump-overs for static lots, hand plunging for open ferments, and extended time on skins (10 to 29 days) to build a structurally sound, age-worthy tannin profile. Batches were basket-pressed to French oak barriques and matured for 18 months (54% new), with most barrels left on lees throughout to enhance palate cohesion and nuance, before bottling on 21 January 2022.

Alcohol :14,50 %

Composition: 78% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Malbec, 5% Petit Verdot

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Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Bright garnet.
- **Aroma:** A slowly unfurling, complex perfume of woodsy raspberry pip, salty sea breeze, potpourri and fresh rose petals, with orange peel, crushed rock, mulberry leaf and a savoury shiitake note.
- **Palate:** Plush yet beautifully fresh and elegant, textured by classically fine tannins. Raspberry and orange peel glide over savoury, mineral tones and a subtle cigar nuance, finishing long and super fine.

Did you know?

Tom Cullity is named in tribute to Dr Thomas Brendan Cullity, who founded Vasse Felix in 1967 and helped define Margaret River's modern wine story. Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec were among his early plantings, and this cuvée is conceived as the estate's purest, most historical expression of place and vintage.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Charcoal-grilled lamb rack with rosemary**: The wine's savoury edge and fine tannins echo the grill char, while the ripe Cabernet fruit lifts the lamb's sweetness.
- **Dry-aged ribeye with peppercorn jus**: Dense fruit, cigar nuance, and structural tannin meet umami and fat with effortless authority.
- **Roast duck with cherry and orange**: The raspberry and orange-peel accents in the wine lock beautifully with the dish's sweet-sour profile.
- **Wild mushroom risotto with aged hard cheese**: Shiitake-like savoury notes and crushed-rock minerality resonate, while the tannins stay refined against creamy texture.

98 WINEENTHUSIAST

Wine Enthusiast (WE) : 98 Points (2020)

From an excellent vintage, Vasse's top dog red deftly demonstrates the unique juxtaposition of grace, perfume and power inherent to this unique West Aussie region. 2020 is particularly aromatic and fruit driven, but the pop of fresh cherry, currant, raspberry and red licorice is neatly underscored by savory herb, graphite and dark-chocolate nuances. Ultrafine, chalky tannins are beautifully integrated with the silky red fruit and fresh acidity on the palate. A highly classy, harmonious and expertly made bottling that could cellar for decades whilst offering drinkability right now.Cellar Selection

97

Robert Parker (RP) : 97 Points (2020)

The 2020 Tom Cullity Cabernet Sauvignon Malbec is looking so good today, at just five years from its harvest. The tannins are shapely and permeate the fruit characters on the palate, while the length of flavor persists long after the wine has gone. This feels immediately more approachable and succulent than the other vintages tasted here before it, and while the wine may live long into the future, it's offering some very attractive arguments.

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Tom Cullity Cabernet Malbec 2020



James Halliday (JH) : 97 Points (2020)

Winemaker Virginia Willcock worries about her flagship wines leaving the fold, as in Heytesbury Chardonnay and Tom Cullity, released too young, she says. And while she's right, anyone buying them knows time will reward the patient. It's built for ageing, but I'm impatient, and this Tom Cullity is youthful but also complete. Malbec, off the original plantings, comprises 16% of the blend; 3% petit verdot, too, is fundamental to the shape and flavour profile. Dark-fruited, meaty, spicy, complex, roasted chicory accented, floral and beguiling. Fuller bodied with exceptional tannins, all textural, expansive and long, working in tandem with the acidity to a long finish.

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