

MILES FROM NOWHERE

By Paul Foster

There's a word for the business of describing inanimate things in human terms. Anthropomorphism, I think. Well, Franklin Tate is good at it. He sees the gravelly soil of his prime Cabernet vineyard, the one you strike first as you come off the Willyabrup road, as 'unforgiving'. And he describes the loamy grey soil of his Semillon vineyard, the one you come to as you've driven across the dam wall of a sizeable lake, as 'laid back'. Then, taking things a step further, he describes his Cabernet vines as tenacious and working hard for their place on the planet but producing, in defiance, a concentrated wine, and the Semillon, enjoying a more comfortable existence, as making wine of easier access.

This is the *Miles from Nowhere* operation. At just four years the name might ring new, but its vines are not and the venture is the baby of one of the region's most experienced winegrowers, Franklin Tate. When the wheels fell off the Evans & Tate venture Franklin found himself starting again but having managed to keep two of the top vineyards he and his wife determined they'd do what they knew best and concentrate on making small parcels of site-specific wines. 'Hands-on stuff, all our own,' he says. 'Our fruit, estate-grown, made into wine with consummate care.'

Winemaker for *Miles from Nowhere* is the talented thirty-four year old Jodie Opie. With experience at some of the region's best wineries, including *Voyager*, *Cape Mentelle*, *Leeuwin Estate* and *Xanadu*, she's now making the most of the agreement between Franklin and good mate Phil Sexton that allows her the use of next-door's *Howard Park* state-of-the-art facilities. The impressive wines she's making include, in their 2010 white label range, a stylish Chardonnay and impressive Verdelho and Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon and, under the 2010 silver label, outstanding Voignier and Semillon whites. As you'd expect, their black label Cabernet (made only in vintages when top quality can be realised) is something special again.

Margaret River is one of the world's most beautiful wine regions; do make it your business to go there.

miles from nowhere

Limited Lot

Semillon 2010

Exciting wine of racy acidity and keen, lingering, grassy lemon fruit flavours. From the best block of fruit in the Miamup Road vineyard; 15% barrel fermented. (\$23)

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Best Block

Cabernet sauvignon 2008

Elegant and making a strong regional statement. Black and red berry fruit factors with something that's definitely gravelly. Deep, intense and finishing firm with ripe skin tannins. (\$30)

NEW REVIEW – IN PLACE OF THE SEMILLON

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Margaret River

Sauvignon Blanc Semillon 2010

Fresh drink-now wine. Crisp with keen acidity and full of green pea, green grass and asparagus qualities. Passionfruit, too. The intensity and clarity of flavour is impressive. Perfect for the likes of tuna or salmon. \$XX