

# Grower's fast path to winning awards

■ Rhys Dickinson

The story behind Cloudburst Wines is sure to inspire up-and-coming winemakers in the Margaret River wine region.

The winery's few acres of vines, which scooped three trophies at the recent Margaret River Wine Show, were only planted in 2005 and its award-winning 2010 cabernet sauvignon was the product of its first-ever vintage — and the vineyard's yield is just seven tonnes annually.

Owner Will Berliner didn't even intend to plant vines when he first bought the Ellensbrook Road property in 2004.

Mr Berliner said the vines got a berth on the site because he wanted to block the view of Caves Road in the distance.

"I actually thought I might have an avocado plant tree farm," he said.

"But I discovered we had good soil and it made sense on many levels to investigate that."

The American ex-pat — who had a science background but had worked as a filmmaker for much of his life — said he "fell into the business" and only studied viticulture a year after planting his vines.

Mr Berliner described his winemaking process as a "feel thing".



Cloudburst Wines' Will Berliner scooped three awards at the recent Margaret River Wine Show. Picture: Becky Felstead

"First, we're blessed with a very special site," he said.

"There's a lot to be said about organic farming, but I think the less manufactured stuff you put in there the better.

"It's a feel thing for me. I don't even cultivate, so sometimes the vines look ... a little unkempt."

Mr Berliner said he had no vision of building a cellar door on site and his sole goal was to create the best wine possible.

Cloudburst's 2010 cabernet sauvignon won the MRWS' Best Single Vineyard Estate Red Wine trophy, Best Cabernet Sauvignon and Best Red Wine of the Show titles.