

Western Australia: Killing-It

By: *Lisa Perrotti-Brown*
eRobertParker.com

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Unquestionably one of the most beautiful corners of the planet, which I am fortunate enough to have the excuse to visit regularly, Western Australia continues to deliver a small but significant proportion of exciting offerings to the “new” Australian wine scene. Although this is not to say that this new-wave contribution is entirely coming from new names. To kick-off my Western Australia coverage for the year, this report features the wines of eight stellar producers who are killing-it when it comes to innovation, quality and coaxing the terroir into the bottle: Cloudburst, Cullen, Frankland Estate, Leeuwin Estate, Moss Wood, Peccavi, Plantagenet and Woodlands. Fans of this region will note that all except three of these were amongst the pioneers that established the major Western Australia regions in the late 1960s and early 1970s. But these stalwarts are not the sort to rest on their laurels. Of particular note are the recent, awe-inspiring efforts of Vanya Cullen at Cullen winery. Of the newcomers, Cloudburst’s new little piece of heaven, a closely planted, dry-grown, biodynamically farmed vineyard just off the Cave’s Road, continues to yield stunning results. But one of the biggest stories in Margaret River is the new Merlot clone planted at Peccavi, established by newcomer Jeremy Muller. I

have long bemoaned the dearth of decent Merlot planting material, which could properly support and enhance the top-notch Cabernet Sauvignon that this region has to offer. The recently bottled (but not yet commercially available) initial results from these young new Peccavi Merlot vines are truly something to shout about and absolutely what Margaret River needs to take their Bordeaux blends to the pinnacle of quality.

Finally, I wish I had lots of juicy peaks and troughs to relate to readers about the recent vintages in Margaret River, but apart from the annual threat of bush fires, there is really nothing much to report. The weather in recent vintages has been so gloriously warm, sunny and consistent it’s almost boring. Eh, well, fortunately the wines are anything but.

- *[Lisa Perrotti-Brown](http://eRobertParker.com)*