By RACHAEL OXBORROW

There is nothing brash about the range of award-winning wines being produced by Brash Vineyard.

In fact, one would suggest humble as a better description of these quality small release wines that are staying true to South West traits and charming the judges of major competitions across the country.

It has taken the Carter, McGuinness and Nitert families 15 years to get it right and now they’re onto a winner they’re preparing to release a final two wines in 2016 to complete their range.

The cabernet sauvignon is a single vineyard wine made in the classic Margaret River style and it was the first to catch the wine judging world’s eye, making it to the James Halliday’s Wine Companion Top Cellaring Selection 2015 list.

This was closely followed by the icing on the cake, a gold medal at the Association of Australian Boutique Winemakers 2015 Boutique Wine Awards.

Anne Carter, who lives on the Brash Vineyard with her husband Chris, said they had high expectations for their first cabernet under the Brash label at the Yallingup Hills property and the announcement created excitement for all involved.

“This is a single vineyard wine that has been made to be a classic Margaret River cabernet, which we believe the judges are recognising,” Ms Carter said.

“What has surprised us is that this wine is drinking so well for a young wine – it has a cellaring potential of 10 plus years.

“Great fruit and great winemaking are a wonderful partnership.”

The cabernet sauvignon in question is a prime example of a small volume wine of less than 300 cases, which allowed the winemaker to focus on micro-winemaking techniques, while using quality French oak.

“In the vineyard the grapes for this wine received a high level of attention ensuring the vines were in balance, and producing the best fruit. This involved multiple manual passes by myself and Chris,” Ms Carter said.

The wine itself is a single vineyard wine featuring vibrant aromas of cherry blossom, blueberries and cassis that lead to a rich, opulent palate driven by blackcurrant and dark chocolate tones.

It also boasts hints of cedar, freshly roasted coffee and raspberries dominate the finish, along with elegant focused tannin and a glazed cherry persistence.

“This wine has now gone on to win gold at the 2015 WineWise Small Vigneron Awards, another highly respected Australian wine competition organised by the well-known wine journalist Lester Jesberg.

Ms Carter said, as a small winemaker, accolades of this calibre were invaluable.

“These awards have definitely contributed to placing Brash Vineyard in the world of excellent Margaret River cabernets,” she said.

“Awards such as these really help to get the label onto shelves – as a new small wine producer getting recognition and placement in the market can sometimes be difficult.”

Meanwhile, the sauvignon blanc has wowed judges here in WA, winning gold in the 2014 Qantas Mt Barker

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Wine Show, bronze in the 2015 Decanter World Wine Awards, and now Trophy for Best Sauvignon Blanc at the IGA Perth Royal Show.

Ms Carter said the local recognition was “wonderful” and had attracted interest to their entire wine range.

“We knew we had a good wine when it won a gold medal at the Qantas Mt Barker Wine Show in October 2014,” she said.

“The Perth Royal Wine Show has a wonderful reputation and always attracts judges of the highest calibre.”

The wine itself has hints of French oak, citrus notes and a crisp, dry extended palate.

“The grape for this wine come from what we think is a very special site high on the Yallingup/Naturalist ridge,” she said.

“Our winemaker Bruce Dukes was tasked with creating a wine with more substance than the standard sauvignon blanc.

“His uses small elements of oak and extended time on lees to create a wine we have become very proud of.

“Our first sauvignon blanc, the 2013, also won a trophy at the Sydney Royal Wine Show – which means this wine has won a trophy every year it has been released, so far”

Winning recognition across both the white and red categories is a feather in the cap of Brash Vineyard as it looks to release a 2014 shiraz and 2015 chardonnay and complete its range.

But, Brash Vineyard never started out with these goals in mind, having primarily been grape growers supplying other wineries in the region.

“Our plan was only to ever make one wine – the cabernet sauvignon for the purpose of showcasing the quality of fruit grown on the Brash Vineyard property,” Ms Carter said.

“In 2013 we had excess sauvignon blanc and decided to make a small release and the rest is history.

“We believe we have a really, really balanced vineyard with the right varieties planted in the right places – a process that’s taken 15 years to get right – and everything we have seen in the bottle supports this.

“While we remain focused on making small volumes we are now producing cabernet, shiraz, chardonnay and sauvignon blanc.”

Brash Vineyard produces about 135 tonnes of grapes a year, supplying to larger premium producers in Margaret River with only 10 per cent retained for its own label wines.

The property’s original plantings were made in 2000 under the direction of vineyard contractor Andy Ferreira who is still managing the viticulture side of the operation with his team from Riverace Contractors.

In among the 18 hectares of vines which grow cabernet sauvignon, shiraz, malbec, chardonnay and sauvignon grape varieties, towering jarrah and marri trees protect the grapes from the elements.

The property also boasts the original farmhouse, which is now renovated and available as holiday accommodation.

For more information about Brash Vineyard and stockists of their wines, visit www.brashvineyard.com.au