

MENTELLE NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF CLOUDY BAY AND CAPE MENTELLE

A 'Lousey' Decade

David Hohnen charts Cloudy Bay's fight against phylloxera – a quietly waged war won with perseverance and smart thinking.

The summer of 1989 will be remembered for two things. It was one of the hottest summers on record in Marlborough's Wairau Valley. It was also the year that the much-feared phylloxera louse showed up in the four-year-old vineyard adjacent to the Cloudy Bay winery.

In the full flush of summer growth, leaves yellowed on stunted shoots and the vines struggled to survive. Not all were struck. The diabolical contagion feared by all vignerons appeared as patches of jaundice in an otherwise dense green canopy.

Phylloxera is a root-feeding aphid, a microscopic sap-sucking bug that devigorates and ultimately kills vines by destroying their root systems.

It devastated the vineyards of Europe in the 1870s, migrated to Australia in the 1890s and thence New Zealand, where it was identified in 1895.

It took out many of the North Island vineyards before it was held at bay by replanting on resistant rootstocks.

However, this louse is a hardy critter and lay low for a long time awaiting new opportunities and the means to cross Cook Strait.

When planting commenced at Cloudy Bay in 1986 we heeded local wisdom. Vines went in 'on their own roots'. There wasn't much choice. Rootstocks were not available in any quantity and there wasn't a South Island commercial nursery supplying grafted vines.

Ironically, it was in all likelihood the nurserymen of the North Island who provided the inter-island passage for the patient phylloxera louse. The late '80s shortage of planting material meant thousands of rooted cuttings were imported from the North, contaminated soil on the cuttings resulting in the inevitable crossing.



Pulling the last 'lousey' vines, July 1998.

The first confirmation of Marlborough's infection came in 1987 at an isolated site. But no alarm bells were sounded and planting continued apace until 1989 when the long hot summer provided perfect conditions for the rapid spread of the dreaded bug. By 1990 phylloxera was raging across the valley like a bushfire.

—
*“It was a
 challenging time.”*
 —

Kevin Judd has chronicled the invasion in a series of annual aerial photographs, shots that dramatically illustrate the creeping plague of yellowing vines.

It was a challenging time. Not only were the company's vineyards slowly succumbing but those of our contracted growers showed symptoms as well.

It was clear from the outset that it would be necessary to rely on our own resources to combat the problem.

Vineyard manager, Ivan Sutherland, struck the first and most decisive blow by securing a rare and invaluable block of rootstock mother vines that would become the nucleus of a significant nursery operation.

Next priority was a 'green thumb' with grafting experience. Again we were lucky. At the top of a very short list of applicants was a young horticulturist called Mart Verstappen.

Mart had trained in his homeland Holland, before migrating to the Wairau to work with apples. The tall Dutchman didn't know much about vines but he could splice a T-bud, knew his xylem from his phloem and a thing or two about scions as well.

Continued page 4

Pelorus Mark II

David Hohnen introduces the new non-vintage Pelorus Blanc de Blancs.

In 1986 we had a Good Idea. Cloudy Bay decided to make a sparkling wine using traditional methods, a fine bubbly that would complement the existing range of still wines.

Any accountant will tell you that what we had was a Bad Idea. A scheme that locks up capital for a long time with possible risky outcomes, especially in profit terms, might even be a Dumb Idea.

For better or worse, many small to medium-size wineries are run by winemakers. So there is always an inherent element of whimsical or even idealistic decision-making in the wine business.

Typically, Good Ideas are usually more closely associated with notions of good fun and good wine than sound financial sense. Thus, despite the anguish and foreboding of the incumbent financial advisers, the Good Idea came into being in 1987 with the inaugural vintage of Pelorus.

The first wine under the Pelorus marque was a blend of pinot noir and chardonnay, a rich, creamy full-flavoured number, aged three years on yeast lees.

Released in 1991 as a vintage style, Pelorus has exceeded all expectations. Fans of this most voluptuous complex bubbly have emerged in markets around the world, none more enthusiastic than its New Zealand supporters.

Veve Clicquot, famous makers of champagne and hence a mob who know a thing or two about sparkling wine, became majority owners of Cloudy Bay in 1990.

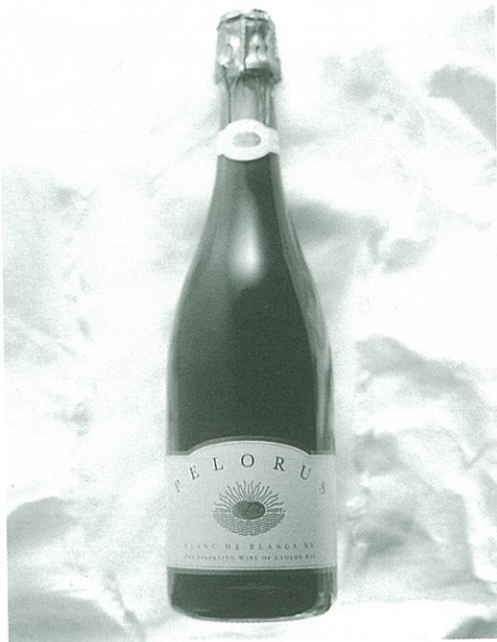
One could reasonably have expected they would stick their big French noses into the sparkling wine project. However, for reasons best known to the Frugal Frogs, they offered assistance only if required and left the Cloudy Bay crew to toddle down the sparkling path without parental intervention.

At this point, wine historians please take note! Vintage Pelorus is the creation of winemaking consultant Harold Osborne Jnr. (25 years in-the-bottle experience) and the brave team at Cloudy Bay.

Then, in 1993, we had another Good Idea.

The success of Vintage Pelorus had necessitated heavy investment in equipment and space (just as the accountants had predicted), and it seemed there were compelling reasons to make more Pelorus.

The idea was to make a chardonnay-based sparkler in the style of a blanc de blancs. It would provide a clear choice of style. Most importantly, the winemakers liked the idea because they are big fans of such wines.



Pic: Kieran Scott

At Veve Clicquot they were not sure it was a Good Idea. With a 200 year history in the champagne business they held the view that a wine made from sauvignon blanc, with only a six-month inventory, was a Bloody Brilliant idea (pardon their French). However, in a show of generous parental forbearance, they said OK.

This time round it was decided to do something uncharacteristically sensible. The Cloudy Bay team requested input from the Frugal Frogs to develop the new sparkling wine. Why ignore 200 years of experience?

Guidance came in the form of Jacques Peters, Chef de Caves (chief winemaker) at Clicquot, who stepped up to the bench to participate in blending and to pass on a few tips.

Four years on, this issue of *Mentelle Notes* heralds the release of *Pelorus Blanc de Blancs NV*. In keeping with established tradition, the vintage date has been eschewed. But for the record, this first release is predominantly from the 1995 vintage. It is made from two clones of Wairau Valley chardonnay, mendoza and UCD6 sourced from four contract growers and is aged two years on yeast lees.

James Healy, intrepid cork tree climber, Cloudy Bay oenologist and Pelorus Project coordinator, describes Cloudy Bay's new sparkler as:

Pelorus Blanc de Blancs NV

"Straw-coloured with appealing aromas of ripe citrus framed by bready notes. In the mouth, savoury flavours reminiscent of freshly toasted bread and cream enhance a well-balanced, structured palate. The finish is refreshingly crisp but delicate with lingering nutty flavours."

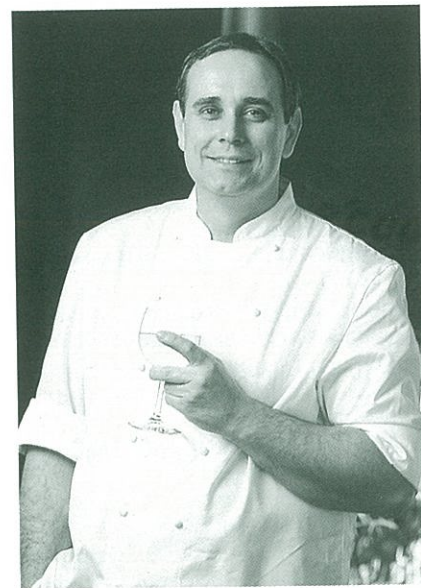
SKY HIGH

Thirteen years after its release Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc continues to make an impression – even at 30,000 feet over the Pacific on Air New Zealand 747s where it is in the First Class fridge.

But if you're in the middle-size chairs, take heart, Air New Zealand's Business Class has recently been applauded in *Business Traveller's* annual 'Best Cellar in the Sky' competition. No wonder, a great deal of care has gone in to their airborne cellar.

Air New Zealand wine consultant, Jim Harre, explains that high altitude causes palate fatigue, a result of low humidity. "Tannins and astringency become even more pronounced, so to refresh customers we offer wines with high fruit content and lively acidity."

Which is possibly why they selected the Sauvignon Blanc. MN is sure it'll match the high-flying creations of recently appointed consultant chef, Philip Johnson of the acclaimed Brisbane restaurant E'cco. He's a Kiwi and a CB fan, and his specially created menus debut on Air New Zealand this month.



MUSTS

Cloudy Bay at the French Cafe

20 & 21 October, 1998

Tickets: \$130

Bookings: Connie Clarkson
PH (09) 377 1911

'Well-Versed'

with Gary McCormick & Sam Hunt

Sunday 31 January, 1999

Cloudy Bay Winery

Bookings: Chris Mullany
PH (03) 572 8914

Wine Marlborough - Festival '99

Saturday 13 February, 1999

Brancott Vineyard, Blenheim

Details: PH (03) 577 8977

email: winemarlborough@xtra.co.nz

The Full Monty

Globetrotter Michael Palin and avowed Cloudy Bay fan, ponders wine, waiters and wankery.

Wine is all about mental notes. They're what you mean to scribble down, and never do, as a particularly noteworthy bottle is whisked away from the table.

One of the things I like least about restaurant wine service is this tendency to keep the identity and indeed, sometimes the existence of the bottle you've chosen a closely guarded secret. The wine list is wrenched from your grasp as soon as the choice has been made and the bottle, once produced, is either wrapped in a napkin (old-fashioned but still a feature of posh places) or grasped so firmly by the waiter that you need to prise fingers apart to catch a glimpse of the label. In too many establishments it's considered a hostile act to show any interest in seeing the label at all, as if you suspect them of having switched bottles.

If it's a white wine you've chosen you may see the bottle very rarely indeed, as it is removed, often some considerable distance, to nestle in a whole lot of other bottles in a sort of white wine crèche, well out of arm's way.

I think it's time to redress the balance. Time to take a Blair-ite, Third Way-ist approach and devolve power from the staff back to the customer.

So, waiters, no hiding bottles away, no topping up glasses in that 'I'm bored and I was passing and anyway you're not drinking it up fast enough' sort of way. No cork sniffing, none of those baskets that make the bottle look as if it's a sick dog on the way to the vet.

Help with selection by all means, show the bottle, offer a tasting, provide a cooler if necessary, then leave the rest to the purchaser.

I think I've inherited these perfectly sensible phobias from my father, not a patient man at the best of times. I was brought up in that post-war atmosphere in which wine was a luxury, to be taken mainly with Christmas turkey.

The few times we did go out for 'an occasion' I used to pray there would not be a wine waiter in the establishment. In the same way that cats home in on the laps of asthmatics and inveterate cat haters, so wine waiters were attracted to my father, despite the fact that he viewed them with the same sort of respect as grave robbers.

He would bring the most lyrical spiel to a halt with the subtlety of a sixteen-ton weight. He didn't care which side of the hill the wine was grown on, if it was over three pounds ten shillings he wasn't interested.

As a result of teenage embarrassments in the dining rooms of the north of England I tended at first to over-compensate, treating wine

waiters like Stephen Hawking, marvelling at their knowledge, laughing knowingly at any references to ignoramuses like my father, and swallowing their superciliousness toward any tittle that didn't come from Bordeaux or Burgundy.

In those far-off days I howled with laughter at Eric Idle's Australian wine sketch: 'Chateau Chunder. One for laying down and avoiding.'

But that was then.

Now so much has changed since the world was ruled by Chateaufeuf du Pape, that a good wine list (like Adnams of Southwold in Suffolk) reads like an urbane travel guide.

New Zealand and Australia have become *grandes dames* of wine production, as places like Idaho and Uruguay catch the eye and the palate. We laugh at unlikely producers at our peril. Gaza Strip Rosé might well be Safeway's new line.

“New Zealand and Australia have become grandes dames of wine.”

This has not only freed wine appreciation from the clutches of a Gallocentric elite, it's also improved the quality of life for BBC crews.

Though I deny any oenophilic bias on the choice of the Pacific Rim for our latest excursion, the thought of Australia, New Zealand and Chile raised morale almost as much as a newspaper report that doctors were recommending red wine as the best way of avoiding stomach upsets.

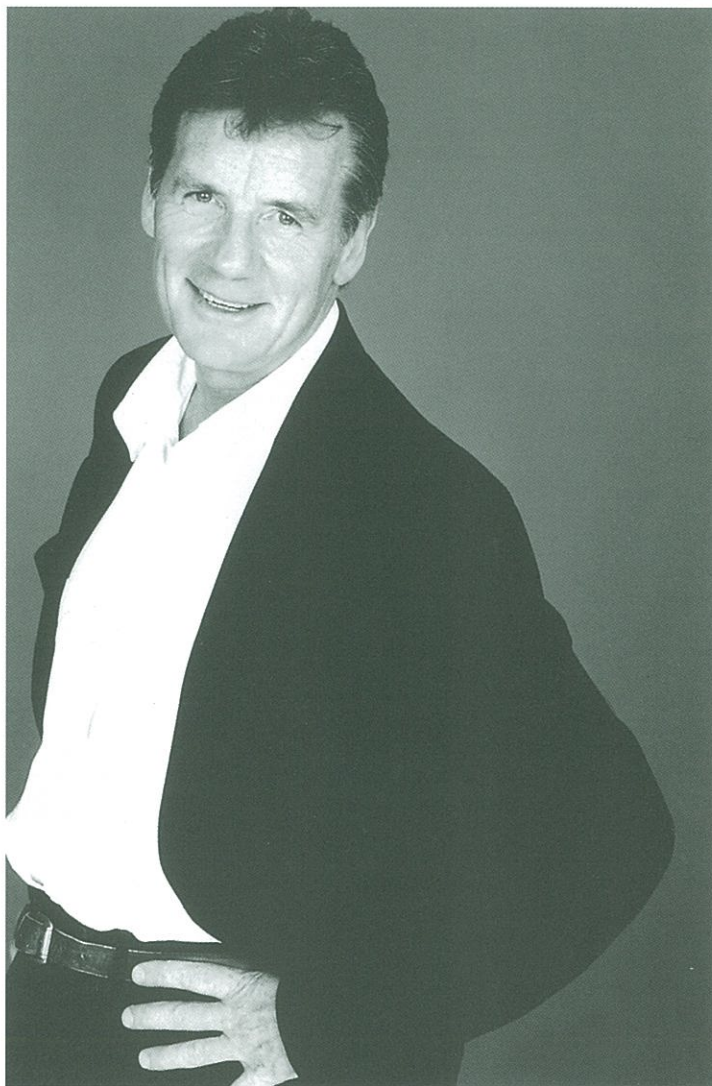


Photo: John Swannell

As it turned out, we found good wine in the most unlikely places, including the north-east coast of China, where the Hua-Dong vineyard produces an attractive peachy chardonnay and a fine, delicate riesling.

We had one of the best bottles of the entire ten-month journey at Lima airport. It could have been something to do with the fact that we'd been in the jungle a week, but that Errazuriz Chilean Chardonnay went in the book with a star.

Of course, there are still some confusions along the way. If you order a Santa Marta Red in Colombia be prepared to light it rather than pour, and in the unlikely event of your being in the Amazon village of Shivankoreni in Peru, beware the palm wine. I was offered a very powerful gourd-full and drank it politely, much to the pleasure of the old lady whose saliva, I was told later, had helped ferment it.

Near the Vietnamese border I had to drink wine out of a buffalo horn as part of a local ceremony. It was strong and unremarkable, but the winespeak was spot on. 'We save this,' said my translator, peering proudly into my glazed eyes, 'for our most extinguished guests.' I made a Mentelle note to avoid that one next time round.

Michael Palin, best known for his travels in the real and comic world, was a member of the infamous Monty Python team. More recently he has gone around the world in 80-plus days, most of which have been lubricated with wine (or rocket fuel). His favourite tittle when returning home is Cloudy Bay Chardonnay.

Chilly Celebrations

In August Marlborough celebrated its first Winter Wine Weekend. Regarded by all as a heart-warming success, it's likely to become an annual event.

Key events included a Charity Wine Auction and the 1998 National Wine Options Final.

The Cloudy Bay auction lots performed rather better than the 'Grey Cloud' option team who at least managed to pick their own wine!

A vertical selection of Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc (1986-1997) fetched \$330 (a steal by international standards). While a Jimmy Watson brace of Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon captured \$100 a bottle.

Kevin Judd's wintry morning vineyard landscape, featured on the auction catalogue, also went under the hammer. Poet Gary McCormick started bidding off at a feisty \$500 to help boost the final auction tally to \$23,000.

Other events were well patronised too. The Wine Workshops were attended by over 400 people, some of whom even got to blend their own drop of Marlborough sauvignon blanc.

If you can't wait till next winter for a dose of Marlborough hospitality, please note the annual wine festival, now Wine Marlborough, is to be held on Saturday 13 February, 1999.

from page 1

A 'LOUSEY' DECADE

continued

Mart and Ivan quickly established a bench-grafting facility, propagation hot-house and field nursery. By the summer of 1990 they had 5000 grafted vines on the go.

In the beginning, the learning curve was steep and the mortality rate high. But soon Mart was producing resistant young vines that each spring underplanted and replaced the stricken vineyards. The planned replanting program has also involved the removal of some healthy vines on their own roots.

This summer 185,000 vines were grafted in the nursery, 70 per cent of which will be available for the 1998 replant – the last.

So, 1998 is a year of quiet celebration. The last phylloxera infested vines have been pulled, marking the end of an era that we could have definitely done without. The company's growers have also undertaken a total replant program and by next year all of their vineyards will also be on rootstocks, most supplied by the Cloudy Bay nursery.

To put the eradication plan in some perspective, Mart produced over 500,000 grafted vines at an approximate cost of \$1 million. These vines are sufficient to replant 280 hectares at a cost (not including loss of earnings) of \$2 million. Quite a few lousy dollars, whichever way you look at it.



The Grey Clouds (from left: Kevin Judd, James Healy, Ivan Sutherland and Al Stanbury) waiting for the mists to rise.

A DROP OF GUINNESS

Sir Alec Guinness, one of Britain's most brilliant actors, known and loved for his many cinematic and stage performances, has a passion – Cloudy Bay. He confesses all in *My Name Escapes Me*, a diary format addendum to his memoirs, *Blessings in Disguise*.

Being an octogenarian of careful detail, he records Monday 8 April, 1996 thus:

"Yesterday Piers Haggard and his wife Anna came to lunch. They had been warned it would be meagre – just kedgeree washed down with Cloudy Bay followed by an apple flan."

Enquiries haven't revealed if it was sauvignon blanc or chardonnay, but MN's food match editor is planning to contact John le Carré to suss out that old sleuth George Smiley's drinking habits.



WOMEN AND WINE

Now girls, here's the news you've been waiting for! Two independent researchers have come to the conclusion that wine drinking is more beneficial to women than men. The French National Institute of Health reports that imbibing in moderation can improve the brain function of aging women. Those who drink 2 or more glasses a day are 2 1/2 times more likely to score well in neuropsychological tests than non-drinkers.

American cardiologists led by a Dr Klatsky concur. They examined 130,000 heart patient records and determined that alcohol consumption is inversely related to cardiac disease, with wine being the most protection for women.

No wonder canny wine companies are designing labels to appeal to the female shopper!

GREAT SCOT

Cloudy Bay and Cape Mentelle's international success is due to the combined efforts of many dedicated wine folk including Zubair Mohammed, the company's first official Scottish wholesaler.

Zubair has been trading Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc since its first release in 1986. He recalls phoning then agent Peter Diplock, a most dapper gentleman and member of two St James clubs, to request his annual allocation.

'Zubair, any bastard can sell Cloudy Bay. Why don't you order something else?' retorted Diplock.

He did, but 12 years on still offers the customers of Raeburn Fine Wines in Edinburgh a range of CB and CM wines.



NEW
RELEASES

Spring Fever

This issue of *Mentelle Notes* announces four new releases – two great Cloudy Bay ambassadors, an addition to the sparkling family (see Pelorus Mark II page 2), and the long-awaited return of the late harvest sticky. Make room in the fridge for them all!

Pelorus 1994

As toasts are proposed to the end of the 'lousey' years at Cloudy Bay (see cover story), it will be *Pelorus 1994* that fills the vineyard crew's glasses. An impressive wine by any standards, it is a reflection of eight years of careful practice with bottle-fermented sparkling wine.

The mentor and visiting winemaker who created Pelorus, Harold Osborne Jnr, took time out from his Californian day job to write these succinct notes:

"Aromas of freshly baked bread and oranges complement more savoury notes of cream and soy in this Pelorus 1994. The palate is richly textured with subtle flavours that leave an impression of fresh yeast and roasted nuts on the finish."

Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1998

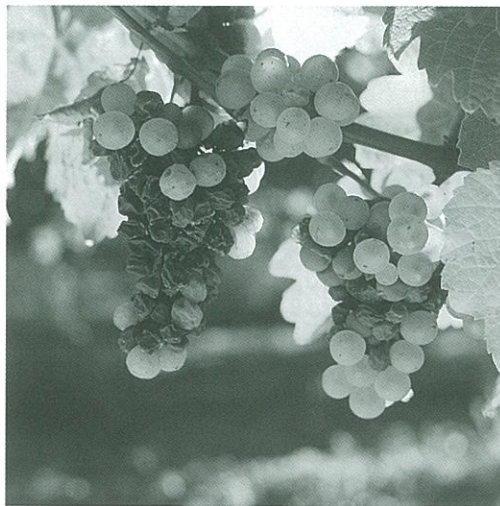
The '98 vintage at Cloudy Bay was of great concern to Kevin Judd – it just seemed too damn easy. From October till April he scanned weather maps for signs of hail-bearing weather depressions and cyclonic rains. He kept an eye on the crest of the Richmond ranges, watching for the tell-tale wisp of cloud sneaking over the peak that foreshadows a low in the Tasman, and certain rain.

But it was a real bummer. Such vigilance during a perfect season that presented no challenge greater than getting out of bed every morning. The consistent good weather, with temperatures close to those of the toasty 1989 season, saw the grapes ripen early. Harvest commenced mid-March.

It was unusually uneventful but the wines certainly are not. Full ripeness was easy to achieve; the challenge lay in capturing the 'zing' that is Marlborough.

Kevin is already worrying about 1999 but in a moment of calm wrote:

"The Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc is heralded by exuberant aromas of ripe tropical fruits. Waves of mango, pineapple and papaya mingle with the gooseberry and herbal notes so typical of Marlborough. The fresh aromas and flavours are harnessed by a rich, mouth-watering palate and crisp lingering finish."



Noble, rotten riesling grapes.

Cloudy Bay Late Harvest Riesling 1996

Sweet-tooths have waited five years for another chance to luxuriate in one of Kevin Judd's superior stickies, and they're not likely to be disappointed with the successor to the popular 1991 vintage.

Small quantities of shrivelled botrytised bunches of riesling were picked on three days in mid- to late May from the Dog Point vineyard in the lower Brancott sub-region of the Wairau. The crop averaged 31° Brix and with tender-loving care was destined to make another luscious but non-cloying late harvest style.

Kevin confesses not to be a pudding person, unless it's liquid, late-picked and lightly chilled. He suggests you try his latest delish dish with ripe summer fruits, or all on its own. Just close your eyes, take a sip and dream of:

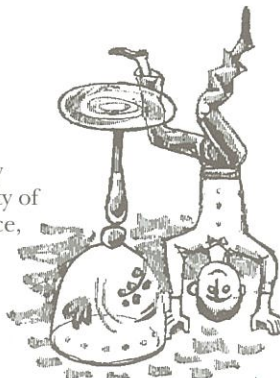
"Fragrant aromas of honeyed orange blossom, ripe peach and nectarine combined with secondary characters of toasty beeswax, culminating in notes of rich apricot. The refined balance between acid and sugar lends focus to the flavour, which is luscious but not overly sweet. The finish is long, ending with slight savoury notes."

KING HIT

Futurists and economists are busy debating the viability of electronic commerce, shopping on the Internet, many claiming e-commerce is still a long way from profitable reality. Maybe so. But the latest stats from the NZ Wines Online site suggest that at least Cloudy Bay has the potential to pull curious customers.

Since May 1997 over 50,000 wine buffs have visited the CBV site, double the traffic of any other New Zealand winery. What's more the hit rate has risen every month.

Catch Cloudy Bay on the web at: www.nzwine.com



CLOUD NINE

Cloudy Bay has been getting about... *Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1996* made a rare appearance on the US auction scene where a case was sold for a remarkable US\$500 by the Chicago Wine Company.

It would almost have been cheaper to follow Ian Ryan, President of the Federation of Wine & Food Societies of Australia, to San Juan in Puerto Rico, host city for the IWFS Festival, where the 1996 was featured on a gala dinner menu. But was it a good match with the stuffed cassava fritters or pigeon peas with plantain dumplings?

This same wine has been preoccupying the mind of *New York Times* wine columnist, Frank Prial, who is outraged by the pricing disparity of the Big Apple's wine lists.

He quotes a Zagat survey that found *Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1996* listed for a respectable US\$29 at Jean George Vongerichten's restaurant, \$36 at the Rainbow Room, and a staggering US\$75 at the Manhattan Ocean Club. Take comfort from the fact that Chateau Latour 1982 is US\$2400 at Le Cirque.



Cloudy Bay is also being poured by sommelier Joelle Marli at Pont de la Tour, London.

CHARDONNAY CHALLENGE

They called it the 'Kiwi Annihilation?' – a taste-off of New Zealand and Australian chardonnays but it played out more like a re-run of the Bledisloe Cup.

The trans-Tasman chardonnay tasting, arranged by Sydney's Bistro Moncur, featured two fit teams including Kiwi performers Vavasour, Martinborough, Neudorf, and Cloudy Bay.

The Aussie all-stars included Coldstream Hills, Giaconda and Tyrrells Vat 47. All wines were from the 1995-1997 vintages and served with chef Damien Pignolet's signature marinated salmon, and boudin blanc. The applause meter put the Aussies on top, with plenty of hearty cheers for the Marlborough men.

Cork Talk

James Healy, Cloudy Bay oenologist, reports from Portugal.

You're standing by the barbie and you pull the cork on your favourite red but something's not right with the wine. It tastes a bit musty perhaps, or a bit old? Hard to put your finger on the problem, but it's definitely not normal.

Chances are, the cork has ruined the taste because something went wrong in the country where it came from. Heaven forbid that it should happen to Petrus.

The problem is a fungus-induced chemical that only has to be present in parts per trillion to stuff the wine. So how do the cork producers do it?

Several things – if you delve into the intricacies of cork production.

Quercus suber (or cork oak to the uninitiated) grows primarily in Portugal and Spain. Lesser plantings surround the Mediterranean in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Sardinia, Italy and France.

The sheer volume of cork produced today is mind-boggling – about 250,000 tonnes per annum, especially when one considers that a tree must be in the ground 25 years before the first crop is harvested.

Thereafter, a crop is removed every nine years. But the first two crops are not suitable for wine corks, so the tree is 43 years old before it yields a single bit of bark destined to seal a bottle.

So, how are corks made?

Firstly, a team of strippers enters the forest at dawn, armed with little medieval axes. Half climb the oaks and cut the bark. The other half catch the falling sheets, piling them onto a trailer which drops its load in the centre of the forest where the sheets are assembled into huge stacks.

The stacks are left to season for several months, allowing tannins and other nasties to leach out. Very similar to the process used to season oak staves destined for barrel production.

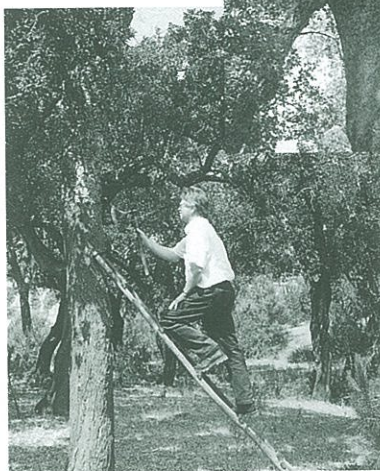
By this point, two things may have already gone seriously wrong.

Firstly, the location of the cut on the tree is important. Too low to the ground and the bark may remain damp; at branch points and rainwater may become trapped, both spots increasing the chance of fungal infection which results in 'off' flavours.

Secondly, the harvested cork is typically just dumped on the ground and left to season. Water can become trapped in pockets within the stack, humidity can be high, mould grows and hey presto! Musty flavours.

Taint problems can therefore exist before the cork leaves the forest. But what happens next?

The slabs are loaded onto trucks and taken to a factory for sorting. Inferior pieces are weeded out to become tiles, gaskets and shoes. Uniform slabs are gathered for cork production and the scene is set for the next nightmare



A closer cut... harvesting cork, Portugal.

James Healy goes for the cork chop.

Firstly, the slabs are boiled to make the cork pliable and remove bitter phenolics.

Then it is cut into strips and the corks punched by hand. (This must be done manually due to the variability of the slabs.)

The time between boiling and punching is critical. Two or three weeks maximum or the bales go mouldy, very mouldy. Add to this the fact that the most time-consuming stage in the process is the actual punching.

What's more, no cork factory is big enough to punch all their own corks. So the slabs are farmed out to backyard punchers where quality control is anyone's guess. God knows how long it is before the corks arrive back for finishing.

From this point, the cork is relatively safe, especially if kept dry.

“The tree is 43 years old before it yields a single bit of bark.”

Final processing essentially involves grading by machine and eye. The corks are then treated to remove dust, and a thin wax coating is applied for easy extraction. It also seals in any musty flavours, and the fate of many wines.

Alternatives to cork do exist and in some cases do a better job. There is a strong movement, especially in the 'New World' to supplant corks with synthetic stoppers that offer a consistent seal.

Some wineries even use brightly coloured stoppers as a marketing gimmick. But the romance of pulling a natural traditional cork out of your favourite wine is lost.

It's not that cork is inherently a faulty product, it's just that the industry that grows and provides it, needs to improve their game.

If more attention was paid and money spent on the problem areas, taint would virtually disappear. Then the BBQ wine would always taste good. If it doesn't, there is a real possibility that at some time in the future you'll be pulling a plastic 'cork' out of the Petrus (if you can afford it).

Cloudy Bay and Cape Mentelle wines are sealed with top quality corks, but even these occasionally suffer from their origins.

SUMMER VERSE

You've heard of the Dead Poets' Society, well what about the Poets' Picnic? A frolick of humour and verse, dished up by New Zealand's best known folk hero poets – Sam Hunt and Gary McCormick.

Hunt, who has lived on the Cook Strait coast for 30-odd years and McCormick, comedian and social commentator, are kindred spirits. They have journeyed New Zealand's highways and byways together, performing their popular verse in pubs, jails and schools. Their last tour, 'Roaring Forties', is recorded for posterity in a glossy coffee table book.

Never at a loss for words or next destination, the lads are off on the road again with 'Well-Versed' coming first to Cloudy Bay, on Sunday 31 January, 1999.

Join in this lazy summer afternoon of humour and relaxed poetic philosophy (and the launch of Gary's new book - *McCormick's Guide to Staying Alive in New Zealand*), lubricated by a glass or two of chilled Pelorus or Cloudy Bay. Tickets \$25. Bookings: Chris Mullany PH (03) 572 8914



McCormick and Hunt rehearse their verse.

WINPAC'S DECADE

Hong Kong is undeniably one of Australasia's more important south-east Asian wine markets. As a business and tourism hub it boasts more five-star hotels than a peacock has tail-feathers. Within these gleaming towers lie some of the city's finest restaurants and their wine lists provide exposure to an influential range of consumers.

Until recently the market has been dominated by the French, especially the Bordelais, but thanks to one man's vision these barriers have been well and truly breached.

Supreme court judge and expat Australian, Justice Noel Power, has for ten years championed New Zealand and Australian wines at Winpac (Wines of the Pacific Rim), a joint venture between Hong Kong's International Wine and Food Society and the Furama Hotel.

When society president Power is not busy putting smugglers and thieves in jail, he devotes a great deal of time to the event which this year celebrated its 10th anniversary. It featured an exhibition, a competitive tasting of 850 wines, seminars and wine options.

New Zealand's Bob Cambell MW and CMV's David Hohnen were official guests at Winpac, which David believes has been a 'secret weapon' in winning the ex-colony's wine war.

Cool Britannia

Food is defining fashion in London, according to MN's hungry roving reporter.

In the '60s it was Mary Quant and the Beatles who made Britain hip. Three decades later the hype that underpins Britain's economic recovery is led by a phalanx of restaurateurs and chefs – Terence Conran, Damien Hirst, Marco Pierre White, Gary Rhodes and Antony Worrall Thompson to name but a few.

Conran's machine led the way with scene-stealer sites like *Le Pont de La Tour* near London Bridge. Crustacea spilled from ice-covered foyer displays; waiters glided with warm smiles to your Conran-monogrammed table, and wine lists welled with wonders from the New World.

With simple strokes, Conran designed Britain a bright new culinary future.

A decade later the man who configured the 'gastrodome' is still powering on. His flash food complexes now include *Quaglino's*, *Mezzo*, *Bluebird* and the latest, *Coq d'Argent* that caters to City pinstripes.

With an appropriately charged credit card, there are many other taste-good discoveries awaiting you in London.

Mentelle Notes is pleased to commend:

Axis (PH 171 300 0300)

Subterranean neo-deco newie near Australia House where chef Mark Gregory has trawled old cookbooks for inspiration. The slow hay-baked Welsh lamb, jugged hare with creamed celeriac (1922 recipe) and West Country fish and scallop stew show his style.

The Capital (PH 171 589 5171)*

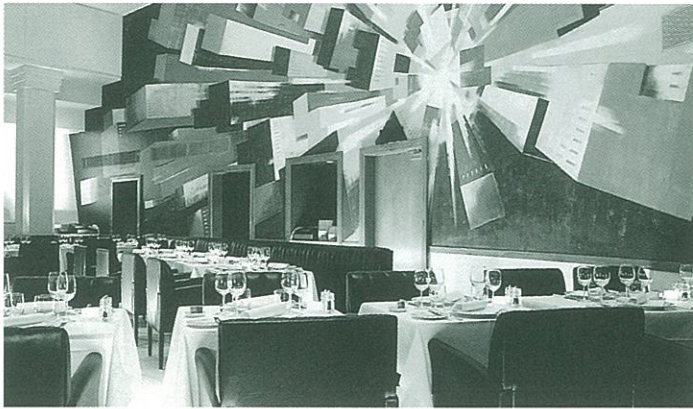
Intimate hotel restaurant occasionally frequented by Sir Alec Guinness with a terrific wine list, Omo-white napery, sparkling silver and glassware. Fine food to match.

Chez Bruce (PH 181 672 0114)*

Classical French overlooking Wandsworth Common where succulent beef with bearnaise meets the mighty CM Cabernet. Local haunt of author Douglas Kennedy whose books invariably feature some Mentelle stimulation.

Clarke's (PH 171 221 9225)

Sally Clarke (a Chez Panisse protégé) runs an impeccable house. Seasonal foods, many sourced direct from farmers, served with satisfying simplicity. Wine list features strong Californian selection. Ideal for ladies who still lunch.



Axis the neo-deco basement restaurant near Australia House that serves terrific trifle.

The Crescent (PH 171 225 2244)

Drop-in centre for vinophiles. Over 200 wines listed from around the globe; 25 by the glass. Bistro fare led by char-grills, salads and risotto.

The Oak Room (PH 171 437 0202)*

Where king Marco Pierre White rules over Britannia's revitalised culinary kingdom. A high altar worth the investment. Set lunches £29.50 will avoid a raid on the Bank of England.

“Restaurants have revolutionised people's attitudes to food in Britain.”

TERENCE CONRAN

Pasha (PH 171 589 7969)

Spot the stars in this splendidly ornate basement souk where rose petals, candles, low chairs and waiters in trad mid-eastern garb offer a magic carpet ride and splendid authentically spiced Moroccan food.

The Square (PH 171 839 8787)*

Another icon site where chef Philip Howard does delicious things to crustacea and ducks and the wine list reads like a vinous Who's Who. Burgundies a speciality.

Sugar Club (PH 171 437 7776)*

Kiwi chef Peter Gordon's hangout that has been wowing the London scene for several years. Now moved to larger, serene and cream premises. Sophisticated Pac Rim with a twist.

Zafferano (PH 171 235 5800)

Gallivanting gourmet Paul Levy is a regular. Exemplary nuovo Italian in an intimate, sunny and cossetting room in Knightsbridge.

* Stock Cloudy Bay wines

CELLAR RAT

G'day, Rugby, Grapes, Mates and Middle Age...

Nothing in common right? But they all came together to give the Rat a grand awakening!

First, there was THE birthday, 40 years.

How could I have let time slip by so fast.

God, it only seems like yesterday. Hell, it was.

Then rugby... Fifteen years ago the Rat and 14 other youthful mates ran, sweating, screaming and puffing round a field. We called it rugby. People who saw us probably weren't convinced, but we had a bloody good time.

Well, that rugby club (Yeoval) was celebrating 50 years of continuous play, a great effort for a town of just 1000, and the Rat was invited to the party.

To get there I had to convince two people.

First Al, production manager at Cloudy Bay, who, being an ex-prop could relate to the kinship of ex-rugby players.

If the harvest wasn't incredibly bad and we had enough people, no problem. Well, the gods smiled and the harvest was just about finished by the time I left.

Not like a few years ago when we had our worst vintage and someone who will remain nameless (James), took off to see the Rolling Stones in our hour of need.

OK, one down, one to go.

Next to convince – the wife. The choices – a new dishwasher or 5 days in Australia with 300 rugger-buggers.

No contest! My response 'I'll need a few pairs of rubber gloves, thanks dear'.

I was on my way.

Sitting on a plane at 30,000 feet, stuck between the Dunstall Young Farmers and the Oamaru Pipe Band.

The Rat was getting pretty excited.

Would he remember them? Would they him? Would they have aged as badly?

Watching the Dunstall Young Farmers and the Oamaru Pipe Band at play brought back memories of trips taken with Yeoval. The comradeship, getting pissed and mateship. The Young Farmers were winning hands down, but then it must be hell playing bagpipes with a hangover.

The Rat actually comes from Cumnock, 20 km from Yeoval, NSW. If you're ever in Cumnock you could look up a mate. His name is Bob Gilmour and he owns Cumnock's only winery, Hoppers Hill Vineyards.

So, to the reunion...

The Rat looked in the mirror: He was 21 again and out with the boys. For this special night the Rat decided to take his first and best mate, who'd stuck with him even when he was an idiot and never punched him – his Dad.

It was a great night, 300 people, lots of handshakes and 'what are you doing nows?' Business cards were exchanged and e-mail (what a Welshman says when he looks in his letterbox) addresses, and jokes.

'What does a weed-spraying contractor do in a drought?' Bugger all!

Most were farmers swapping tales of drought. The Rat, who'd just come from Marlborough's worst drought in 70 years, joined in with a few tales but was left literally in their dust.

In the morning the Rat looked in the mirror. He was 40 going on 80. The night had taken its toll.

In a flash it was over, and a great time had by all. Thanks Yeoval for letting me be part of your celebration. I'd better start planning for the 100th. Hope Al lets me have the time off.

OK, so that's it. Not much I can do about being middle-aged. It'll pass and I'll be old-aged, the grapes will keep growing and mates will always be mates. Shame about the rugby, but I can still crash-tackle my five-year-old if I time it right!

Love, light and peace,

Gerald

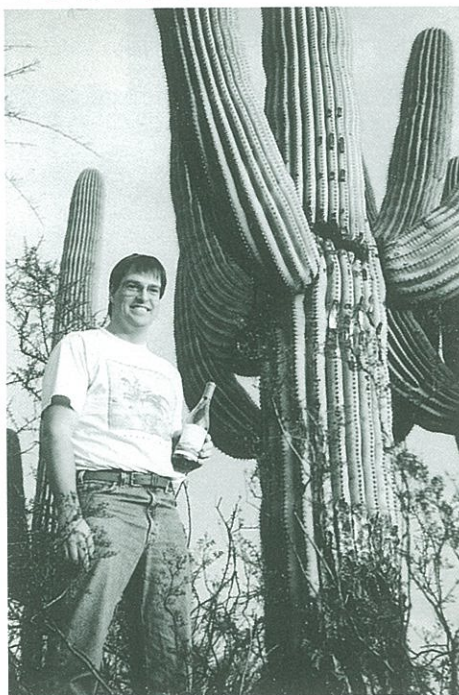
Thirst Quencher

We've heard all about what grows under cabbages, but look what they drink under giant saguaro cacti in Arizona!

Congratulations to the latest Mentelle Ambassador, Bart Janssen, who found a thirst-quenching bottle of *Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc* in a wine shop in Tuscon. Instead of sitting down in a cool air-conditioned diner, he and partner Kim Snowden headed out to the Sonoran Desert, only known habitat of the mighty saguaro cactus, for a picnic under big blue Arizonan skies, their thirst slaked by a bottle of cool Cloudy Bay.

It's reported that later that night they knocked off a bottle of Mentelle Shiraz, ambassadorially selected from the cellar of 'Anthony in the Catalina's' restaurant, another Tuscon landmark. Had they run out of the local tipple, tequila?

If you too wish to be part of CBV's export effort, keep your eyes peeled. Next time you're in some far flung corner of the globe and spot a bottle of Cloudy Bay or Cape Mentelle – in a dutyfree shop in Dubai, a trattoria in Treviso or wine shop in Wyoming, buy it and take a photo. Then send it to The Editor, Mentelle Notes. Taking a bottle with you is also highly



Bart Janssen of Mt Roskill, Auckland samples CB Sauvignon and Saguaro.

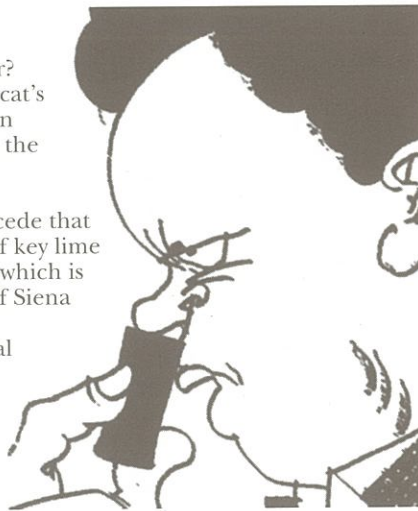
commended and encouraged. MN will publish the best and most alluring photo and the winning Mentelle Ambassador will receive a FREE mixed case of CBV wine. All entrants receive a CB T-shirt.

NOSE JOB

So you think you've got a well-tuned hooter? Can smell ripe raspberries, sweaty saddles and cat's pee twenty paces from the bottle on the kitchen table; can out-sniff all your wine club chums at the monthly tasting, and detect cork taint across a crowded room... Sure!

The more reasonable wine buff might concede that smell can be very subjective. What's redolent of key lime pie to one, might be bitter lemons to another, which is why scientist Professor Miguel Gregorkiewitz of Siena University has invented the 'electric nose.'

He claims his electronic schnoz, an artificial membrane that filters gases and aromas, imitates the function of the human nose 'without the imperfections'. Several Italian wine companies are funding the professor's research to take the subjective out of wine smells. What party-poopers!



SANTA'S SIX PACK

MN's editor was talking to the postmaster the other day, who reckons that the Internet is making at least one guy's life easier – the chap who's got the job of forwarding Santa's letters. It seems Santa has a web site and all grovelling goodie two-shoes can now put their pitch directly by email.

MN recommends a more traditional approach and will be happy to pass on all snail-mail orders for this year's splendid Santa Six-Pack. It comprises two bubbly bottles – *Pelorus Vintage 1994* and the new *Pelorus Blanc de Blancs NV*; *Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1998* [2 bottles]; *Cloudy Bay Cabernet Merlot 1996* [1 bottle] and that little sweetie, *Cloudy Bay Late Harvest Riesling 1996*. [375 ml]

Santa's superior selection will add sparkle to your Christmas celebrations, especially at the festive price of **\$159.95**. Place your order early so the sleigh boys have time to deliver!

The little sweetie.

Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc

"A warped New World view perhaps, but I rate the Sauvignon Blanc the best in the world, all vintages taken into account."

97 points, JAMES HALLIDAY'S WINE COMPANION 1999

Pelorus

"Sparkles like the sunlight on the deep blue Tasman Sea."

JAMES CHATTO, FOOD & DRINK, CANADA

"One of the most positively flavoured and structured sparkling wines from Australasia."

JAMES HALLIDAY'S WINE COMPANION 1999

Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1996

"The usual Cloudy Bay gobsmacker... a very pretty wine, delicious now."

★★★★ PENGUIN GOOD AUSTRALIAN WINE GUIDE 1998 – 99

"Wonderful wine – big and complex and flavoursome... plus well-integrated oak, some butteriness and a lovely nuttiness."

GRAEME BARROW, NORTHERN ADVOCATE

"Another complex wine with a fine pedigree."

CHARMIAN SMITH, OTAGO DAILY TIMES

Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 1996

"Tastes like a high alcohol style: the nose is fumeey and laden with brandied cherry...woody smells. It has a mouth-filling quality with spiritry warmth, lots of fruit and flavour, and high tannins...big and generous."

★★★★ PENGUIN GOOD AUSTRALIAN WINE GUIDE 1998 – 99

"Terrifically intense wine with a concentrated heart of fierce fruit...A class act!"

KEITH STEWART, THE LISTENER

Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon 1994

"Swoonworthy slurping guaranteed..."

PHILIP WHITE, ADELAIDE ADVERTISER

Cape Mentelle Shiraz 1996

"A rather decadent Rhône-style red with cherry, spice and savoury flavours."

95 points, Bob Campbell MW, CUISINE

Cape Mentelle Zinfandel 1996

"A great zin. Should improve in the cellar and live till eternity – if you can keep your mitts off it."

★★★★ PENGUIN GOOD AUSTRALIAN WINE GUIDE 1998 – 99

CHRISTMAS CHEER ... SURPRISE

FAMILY & FRIENDS WITH A

'SEND 'EM MENTELLE IN THE UK'

CELEBRATION CASE OF

NEW ZEALAND'S FINEST. ORDERS

CLOSE MONDAY 30 NOVEMBER.

[See enclosed form for details.]

MENTELLE NOTES

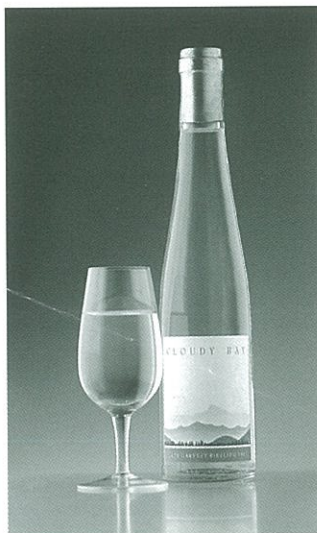
is the publication of CLOUDY BAY & CAPE MENTELLE VINEYARDS

For further information contact

PO Box 376, Blenheim.

Tel (03) 572 8914 Fax (03) 572 8065

email: cloudybay@xtra.co.nz



A View from the Vineyard



James Healy, Oenologist, Cloudy Bay, and his family.

Pic: Kevin Judd

“Play, women and wine are enough to make a prince a pauper.”

C.H. SPURGEON



PRICE LIST & ORDER FORM

OCTOBER • 1998



Wine	Description	Price per Case	Price per Bottle	Amount Ordered	Cost
Pelorus 1994	Rich, golden with enticing aromas of bread and oranges. Celebrate the festive season with Marlborough's finest...	(Six-pack) \$228.00	(Two-pack) \$76.00		
Pelorus Blanc de Blancs NV	The new CBV sparkling stablemate. Pure chardonnay with effervescent citrus bread notes. Treat yourself!	(Six-pack) \$191.70	(Two-pack) \$63.90		
Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1998	The legend lives on... Tropical fruit salad meets tingling gooseberries. A top wine from a top year.	\$263.40	(12 x 375ml) \$21.95		
Cloudy Bay Late Harvest Riesling 1996	The sweetie returns. A luscious treat with fragrant orange, peach, toast 'n' honey. Finishes long, crisp and clean.	\$263.40	\$21.95		
SANTA'S SIX PACK	1 x Pelorus 1994 1 x Pelorus Blanc de Blancs NV 2 x CB Sauvignon Blanc 1998	1 x CB Cabernet Merlot 1996 1 x CB Late Harvest Riesling 1996	\$159.95	N/A	
T-SHIRT OFFER Black <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/>	Small <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Large <input type="checkbox"/> XL <input type="checkbox"/> XXL <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	\$25.00 (inc. postage)		
APRON OFFER	Black, pull-through adjustable strap.	N/A	\$25.00		
UK DELIVERY Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc '98 Pelorus 1994	Please indicate your requirements below for delivery to the UK and include price in your total order. ORDER BEFORE 30 NOVEMBER FOR XMAS DELIVERY	\$273.00 \$316.00	N/A N/A		

SEND THEM MENTELLE IN THE UK *Order 3 Cases and receive a CLOUDY BAY T-SHIRT FREE!*

If you would like to surprise family and friends why not send them a gift case of Cloudy Bay wine.
(Prices include VAT and delivery within mainland UK)

Wine	Price per Case Delivered in UK	Amount Ordered
Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1998*	\$273.00	
Pelorus 1994 [6 bottle pack]*	\$316.00	
* Limited availability		Total \$

Address wines to be sent in UK
(Please print)

Name

Address

..... Post Code.....

Tel: ()

ADD FREIGHT COSTS (SEE BELOW)

TOTAL \$
(INCLUDING GST)

Name: (Mr/Mrs/Ms)
First Surname

Postal Address:

.....Postcode

Tel: () (Daytime)

Fax: ()

Is this your first order of Cloudy Bay wines? YES NO

Signature:

REMITTANCE DETAILS

Cheque Bankcard Visacard Mastercard American Express Diners

Credit Card Number.

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

FREIGHT

<i>Freight Charges</i> All national deliveries	<i>Per Case</i> \$6.00
---	---------------------------

EXPIRY DATE /

DELIVERY ADDRESS & INSTRUCTIONS

Note any special delivery instructions below:

Delivery Address:

Sign up – we'll send you Mentelle

If you or a friend within New Zealand would appreciate receiving a copy of *Mentelle Notes* please complete this coupon. Send to: PO Box 376, Blenheim or Fax to: (03) 572 8065

Name: (Mr/Mrs/Ms)
First

Surname

Address:

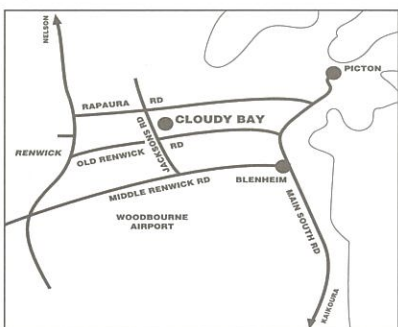
..... Postcode:

Tel: ()

Fax: ()

“Wine is the best broom for troubles.”

JAPANESE PROVERB



Cellar Door Opening Times
CLOUDY BAY
Monday to Sunday - 10:00am - 4:30pm
It would be appreciated if groups would make a prior appointment

Cloudy Bay Vineyards Limited
P. O. Box 376 • Blenheim • New Zealand
Tel: (03) 572 8914 • Fax: (03) 572 8065
Email: cloudybay@xtra.co.nz