

MENTELLE NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF CLOUDY BAY AND CAPE MENTELLE

Pleasure Measure

Wine writer Keith Stewart ponders some palpable facts and the 'p' word.

This is the age of faux science, when everything must have some rational explanation, no matter how tentative. Yet in the midst of all this 'reason', how do we explain pleasure, or the other tools of arousal that wine carries? And if we can't, how can we honestly evaluate wine?

That is a big question, especially for wine writers who get paid to tell people what to drink, yet it is not one you will find canvassed in a great deal of wine magazines, a publishing phenomenon of the late 20th century.

Writers and publishers alike employ all sorts of artifice, from percentage scores to aroma wheels, and sometimes even language, to express themselves on wine quality, yet they are surprisingly dumb when it comes to conveying the capacity of wine to deliver pleasure.

It's very strange, as pleasure is unquestionably wine's defining feature. It is the reason we drink it, the reason we pay more for it, and for many of us, the reason we write about it. Yet the overwhelming drift of wine commentary is towards those components or characteristics of wine which are ostensibly measurable, which eliminate such loose terms as 'delicious' from the wine commentator's vocabulary, and consequently from the language of wine.

Yet delicious is a very palpable experience, and one extremely difficult for any winemaker to abandon just because it cannot be chemically codified. To ignore it is to deny the principal experience of wine, even in analysis, and therefore to remove wine from its principal function, just at the moment when it should be confirmed.

This is a recurring paradox in a culture which assumes science has answered all the questions, and delivered all the judgements, at least those by which we organise our lives.



Practising forbidden pinot pleasures...

To acknowledge that we live by standards which are as loose as delicious, is to admit to being less than modern, to being un-cool.

—
‘No wonder pinot is the stuff of myth.’
 —

But, dammit, wine is delicious. It is even unreasonably, irrationally delicious: it is delicious when it's five-star wine and when it's three-star wine, a characteristic which further undermines the empirical aspiration of wine judges.

Considered in relation to standards such as varietal precision and structure, delicious is decidedly subversive, but then, what should we expect, what do we expect from the juice of Dionysus, the God of

natural urges and disorder, infinitely opposed to the reason of Apollo.

The point of wine is its pleasure, whether it be in the doses required to drive its drinkers into complete abandon, as happened in the Dionysian orgies of Greek legend, or in the more restrained quantities that most of us take.

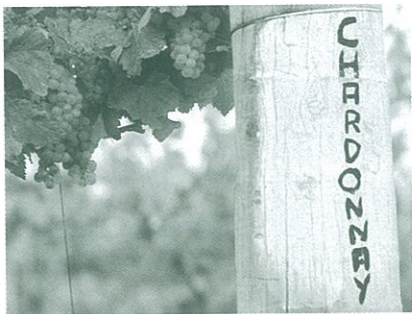
That mouthful or so at the end of the day that gives us a glimpse of pleasure, momentarily releasing us from the toil of life. Then the next mouthful and so on until equilibrium is restored, but not so far that we can't make it back to work next morning.

This process confirms that it is not the alcohol we seek, although it does come in handy to ease everyday pressures. Wine offers more than that simple relief, more of the things which engage us in our most human places – our senses of smell, taste, feel, and most particularly those areas of our conscious selves which reach into the dim but thrilling world of our animal roots.

continued page 6

**NEW
RELEASES**

TWO FOR COMPANY



Keith Stewart's plea for the sheer unadulterated hedonistic pleasures of wine drinking will undoubtedly appeal to many MN readers. Certainly, the sensualist's approach has credibility with Cloudy Bay winemakers Kevin Judd and James Healy, both advocates of natural, low-intervention winemaking.

This philosophy spills over into the marketing of their endeavours, Cloudy Bay preferring its wines to stand on merit, another way of prompting less measure and more pleasure.

Point-driven assessments and adhesive golden medals may bring smiles to retailers' eyes, but consumer loyalty is far more likely to derive from happy memories of delectable bottles shared over convivial dining tables (or under snuggle-down duvets).

Wherever you choose to imbibe these new releases, MN hopes they bring you real enjoyment. Both wines reflect the fact that in 1997 the gods smiled on Marlborough – a memorable year for Burgundian varieties.

Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1997

'With aromas of grilled nuts and ripe figs the Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1997 bears the hallmarks of an excellent vintage. Still youthfully pale with hints of green straw, this well-balanced wine has ripe, vibrant aromas and a creamy finish. A mouth-filling style, it can be enjoyed now but will reward those with the patience to age it a further 3 to 4 years.'

Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 1997

'Dark ruby in colour, the Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 1997 is bursting with the aromas of dark plums and spices. Toasted oak characters reminiscent of smoked bacon add savoury complexity to the wine's rich aromatics. The palate shows concentrated sweet fruit, excellent balance and a characteristic varietal softness.'

**Cloudy Bay and
Cape Mentelle wines
are available from your
fine wine retailer.**

TURKISH DELIGHT

It was probably inevitable that the Cloudy Bay range would one day include a Gewürztraminer, a lusty, spicy, aromatic cool climate variety normally associated with the Alsace.

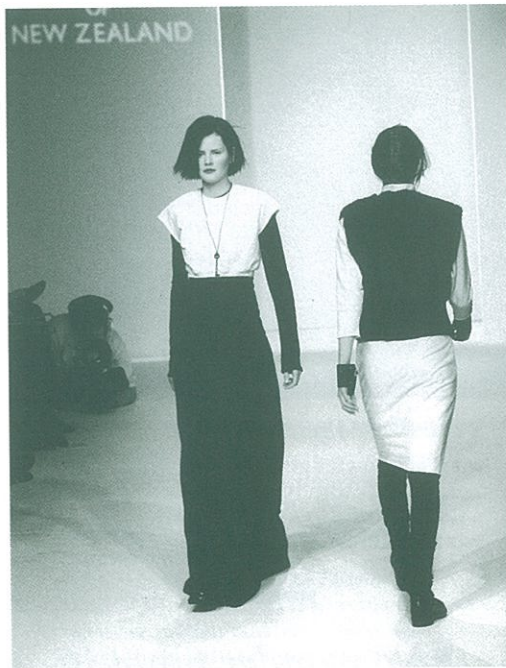
Kevin Judd became familiar with it while at South Australia's Chateau Reynella in the 80s and was sure it would enjoy Marlborough's terroir.

This first vintage vindicates his passion for the grape that is said to be a descendent of the *uva Aminea* of Thessalia in northern Greece, one increasingly known simply as 'gevortz.'

Hand-made from estate grown grapes harvested from a clonal trial block near the winery, this inaugural release should perhaps be called 'the Wild One', a wine made with minimal intervention but watched carefully by oenologist, James Healy.

Different clones were picked at full ripeness and pressed separately for evaluation purposes. The juice was racked into old barrels and simply 'let rip.' After this wild yeast fermentation the barrels were topped, bunged and the wine left on lees seven months until late November. Then a little spit and polish, and hey presto – a raunchy belly-dancing wench in an alluring outfit!

ON PARADE



Karen Walker steps out...

London's fashion scene is still reeling from the Kiwi onslaught at the recent Fashion Week. Strutting their talented designs down the catwalk were the New Zealand Four – Karen Walker, Nom D, World and Zambesi, the first long white cloud designers ever to show in the UK.

Selected for their individuality, talent and reputation, the Kiwis certainly made an impact on the capacity audience that included New Zealand's High Commissioner, top chef, Peter Gordon, celebs and Europe's top fashion buyers.

CLOUDY BAY

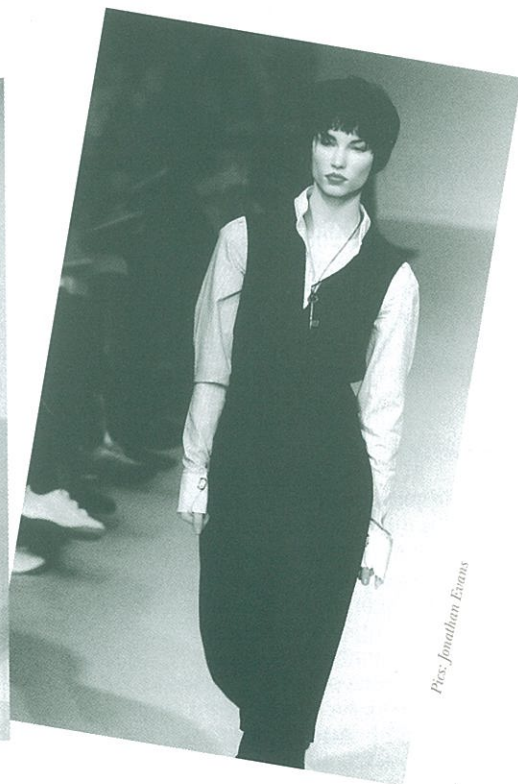


GEWÜRZTRAMINER 1997

James is smitten, but opted for this modestly perfumed prose:

Cloudy Bay Gewürztraminer 1997

'Powerful aromas of rose and lychee introduce the Cloudy Bay Gewürztraminer 1997, a full-bodied and generously flavoured aromatic style. Exotic Middle Eastern aromas, hints of Turkish Delight and spiced ripe oranges add intrigue to this wine with a delicious dry palate and lingering finish.'



Pics. Jonathan Evans

The 'coming out' parade showed outfits from the Autumn/Winter 1999 collections – Karen Walker's signature cutting-edge wool and leather outfits; Nom D's striking knitwear by Margarita Robertson; vibrant colour and texture from World's Denise L'estrangere Corbet and Francis Hooper, and sheer innovation from Zambesi.

Also spotted among the crowd – one-off NZ Four designed Cloudy Bay T-shirts on the crew serving slim-line, effervescent golden goblets of Pelorus – another great international Kiwi design.

Drinking Dangerously

Australian radio personality Philip Clark considers the therapy and thrills of wine drinking.

As I was in repose on the back deck the other day, cradling a cabernet and pondering the Pacific Ocean, a disturbing thought occurred to me – wine has lost its edge.

Nothing to do with taste or quality of course, the stuff is more magnificent than it ever was.

No, the source of my concern lay in the news item that I had just read reporting yet another study by eminent scientists who concluded that drinking wine was good for your health.

Yes, I know we've all read this before, but let's face it, there has always been a sneaking suspicion that previous studies were based on dodgy research designed to prop up the drinking habits of addled academics.

This suspicion also explained to me the enthusiasm with which newspaper sub-editors always placed such stories on the front page.

Having worked in newspapers years ago I understood keenly that many journalists are fond of a tippie, and the idea that their habits were not only approved of but, good heavens, were positively recommended by doctors, whoever they were, was too much. So on the front page it went.

But this time it seemed beyond all doubt. Professor Jean-Francois Rossi from Montpellier University was not only saying that wine was good for you but that it was a cure for cancer and that you could live for a thousand years on one glass of good shiraz.

Or something like that. I forget.

But the message was unmistakable. Wine was in the mainstream, no longer was it even faintly dashing to drink, it was damn near medically required.

Wine has now joined bran and low fat and oats and all the other stuff that medicos were recommending.

Visions came to me of patients of the future lying in Professor Rossi's hospital sobbing for a simple cup of tea as burly nurses forced them to down decanters of fine burgundy.

It was not always so. Wine drinkers have always known that wine was ambrosial, and that enjoyment was heightened by the knowledge that drinking was faintly frowned upon by clean-living types.

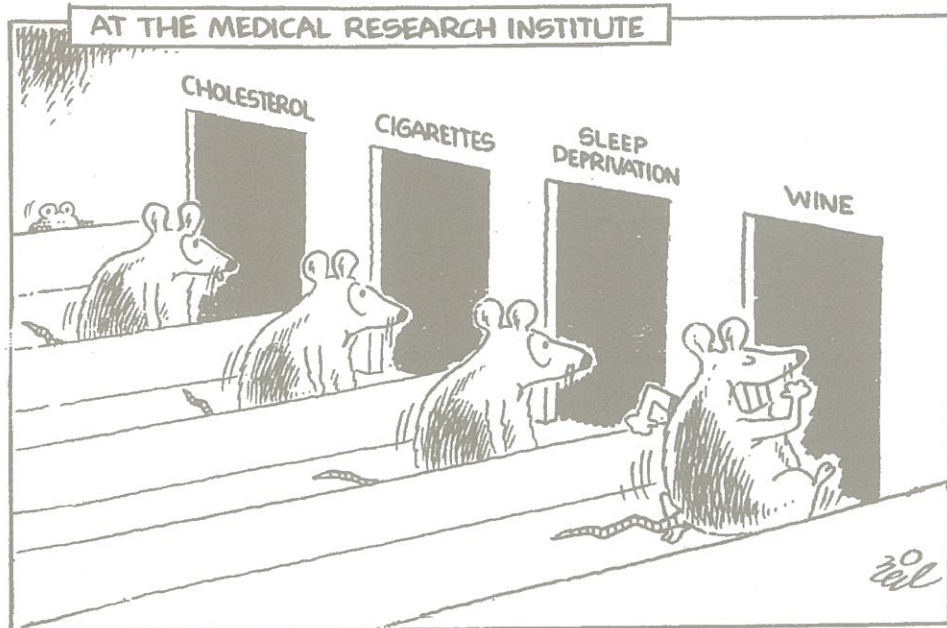
Wine drinkers are true hedonists. We drink for pleasure not for self-improvement.

But as I reflect on a life spent exploring and enjoying wine, it's clear that its racy cachet has diminished.

Thirty or forty years ago wine may well have been regarded by more sober types as the drink of polo-necked, corduroy wearing students in wine bars listening to beat poetry.

I was leafing through an advice manual for young men from the fifties recently, when I came across the section on what drinking habits to cultivate.

The advice was clear – whisky was by far the preferred drink for a gentleman.



'Beer is too common, wine faintly suspect,' intoned the author.

I think we know what he meant.

As wine drinkers we couldn't care less for such tosh. We know the magnificence of the grape, the life-enhancing glories of a great bottle. The knowledge that others frowned only made the palate more sumptuous.

Not that we haven't had our own trials and tribulations as wine drinkers.

The first wine I ever tasted was a bottle that had been given to my father who, perplexed at how to serve a drink mysteriously called claret, stuck it in the fridge. He never warmed to it.

'Wine drinkers are true hedonists.'

Years ago I visited a small family vineyard in Tasmania called Chateau Lorraine expecting some hint of the wines of France, only to discover that Lorraine was the name of the winemaker's wife.

I decided that, historically, tasting another man's wife was rarely without serious incident, and retreated.

But I digress...

Now that doctors are lowering their pince nez, tightening their lips and writing out a prescription for Cloudy Bay Cabernet Merlot as part of the treatment, it seems to me that if wine drinkers want to recover that sense of wine drinking as exotic they will have to learn to drink dangerously.

In future, chardonnay will only be taken by true aficionados while dangling from the trapeze of an 18-footer in the Bay of Islands. A fine shiraz may be enjoyed by true buffs whilst hanging upside down out the window of the Auckland Tower, ankles secured by fellow drinkers.

Riesling will only yield its true fruit character when uncorked at 10,000 feet over the Sahara by members of the Fine Wine Skydiving Club. A delicate pinot will only come into its own if consumed while standing on one leg on the back of a bicycle.

You get my drift.

Perhaps the true wine drinker's hope is another and more reasonable one.

Medical fashions come and go. Heavens above, grape varieties are no less subject than other things to such gababout whims.

In a few years and many happy cabernets perhaps we shall awake to news that the latest research has revised the earlier findings to conclude that wine is still 'faintly suspect.' Many happy returns.

Sydney broadcaster Philip Clark boasts a modest cellar and keeps only white wine in his fridge.

MUSTS

Negociants Winemakers' Tour 1999

20-24 September,

Taste the latest CBV releases...

Auckland 20th, Hyatt Hotel

Wellington 21st, The Boatshed

Dunedin 22nd, Etrusco at the Savoy

Christchurch 23rd, Venue TBC

Queenstown 24th, Rydges Hotel

Tickets \$25 Lisa Ferabend, *Negociants*

PH (09) 366 2089

New Zealand Wine Trade Fair 1999

10 - 12 October

Over 100 NZ wineries under one roof.

Consumer tastings

Sunday 10th & Monday 11th.

Bookings: Kate Kumarich,

Wine Institute PH (09) 303 3527

California Dreaming

Cloudy Bay winemaker Kevin Judd tells some travelling tales.



The winemaker and his camera.

Pic: Charles O'Rear

Leaving Australia's Roseworthy Agricultural College in 1979 (struth, time flies when you're having fun), I thought I had a pretty extensive grounding in all the disciplines required of a winemaker – and some. From soil science to tractor maintenance, from yeast selection to label design, from ebullimeter operation to moderation... (I may have slept in that day.) Certainly, I felt equipped to tackle most vinous challenges.

Well, last November I found myself sweating under the spotlight alongside nine of the most celebrated names in the international wine world – among them Count Alexandre de Lur Saluces of Château d'Yquem, Chuck Wagner of Caymus Vineyards, and Adrian Bridge of Taylor's Port.

In front of our long table lay a sea of faces, behind and either side of me, screens the size of a house displaying a close-up of my face. Needless to say, I didn't look back!

Four minutes is a long time in such exposed circumstances, which were never covered in the Roseworthy curriculum. But the chance to present the *Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1996* (ranked 7th by the *Wine Spectator* in their 1997 Top 100) to the biannual California Wine Experience was one not to be missed.

Apparently more than US\$77,000 worth of wine was poured for the



Cloudy Bay representative, Kathleen Meek, and Kimberley Judd with Larry Stone of Rubicon in San Francisco.

1,000 wine lovers during the tasting, which featured the Top 10 wines of the year, culled from 10,000 tasted by the *Spectator's* panel.

Consolation for the big screen anxiety levels and the week's other media rigours came in the palatable form of an extensive exploration of the Bay City's fantastic restaurants.

The kaleidoscope delivered Rubicon with proprietor Larry Stone, impressive newcomer Jardinière, Le Colonial

and the Slanted Door, a couple of delicious Vietnamese meals, and the stalwarts – Zuni Cafe and Greens. Somehow we even found time for the famous French Laundry in the Napa Valley.

Roseworthy's canteen never prepared me for the simple joys of delicious, fresh ingredients prepared with such casual flair, the hallmark of Californian cooking.

Well fed, we picked up the rental car, braved the horrors of the right lane and headed across the big, red bridge to wine country and a few days R and R among the vineyards.

Napa photographer, Charles O'Rear, reckoned the Valley had put on its best Fall colours in twenty years. Lucky I'd packed a lens or three.

The crisp autumn mornings, Calistoga mists and golden-light afternoons cast a beguiling spell over California's Napa and Sonoma valleys, home to such wine beacons as Rochioli and Saintsbury Pinot Noir, Carneros Creek, and Navarro who make a smart gewürztraminer, and major LVMH operations Simi and Scharffenberger.

I hardly touched the sides of the Californian wine industry, which is far less like Disneyland than I'd imagined. In fact, I was surprised at the visual beauty of the Sonoma and Napa valleys and the diversity of vineyard sites, micro-climates and wine styles.

In part, these insights were prompted by the convivial hospitality of Tracy Brash and Rebecca Kingsley who operate Wine Findings, a hill-top self-contained cottage retreat strategically located half-way between Napa and Sonoma at Spring Mountain. They will tailor-make a visit for all touring vinifiles. PH (707) 963 1914.

Well, 50 rolls of Fujichrome in the can later, we headed back down Highway 101 to the Bay, the United Shuttle to LA, and bingo – back to work in Marlborough. It's tough, this winemaking!

THINK PINK

Top foodie haven Harvey Nichols Fifth Floor has a wine buyer with a sense of humour. His name is Alex Ignatieff.

On 1 April he called Ken McKenzie of Cloudy Bay's distributor Paragon Vintners' with a request.

'I understand that Cloudy Bay have made a rosé style Pelorus and I want some. Actually, given our loyalty to all things Cloudy Bay I'm rather miffed we weren't offered any...'

'OK, well...I'm sure...we can... I'll get the details...'

Embarrassed and totally lost for words Ken immediately called CBV's export director, Ed Berry.

'Now, look, it's not much good me busting arse out there, doing the best for your wines if you can't be bothered to keep me up-to-date on new things.'

'What things?' asked Edward.

'Well, the Pelorus Rosé for starters.'

'What Pelorus Rosé?'

'You know, Ed, the one Cloudy Bay have made,' responded Ken.

'Where did you hear about it?'

'Alex Ignatieff at Harvey Nicks told me.'

'When?'

'Today.'

'And what's the date...?' queried the bemused Ed.

'Bugger!'

But Ken also has a pretty good sense of humour and a larrikin streak. So he told CMV boss David Hohnen the April Fool's story. As it happens, David knows Alex of old when he was a rep for Cloudy Bay's Sydney distributor.

So David called Cloudy Bay oenologist James Healy. 'Make me a sparkling rosé.'

'How much?' asked James.

'Just a bottle,' replied David.

And it was duly delivered in person by its maker – *Pelorus Rosé 1994* – specially selected for Count Alex Ignatieff of Harvey Nichols.

ED'S NOTE: There are no current plans for Pelorus to go pink.



Cloudy Bay's James Healy always delivers...even to demanding Knightsbridge wine buyers!

Cork Talk II

Australian wine columnist Paddy Kender pulls the plug on cork.

During a visit to Portugal last year courtesy of Amorim, the world's largest cork manufacturer, we encountered a team of winemakers and technicians from Robert Mondavi.

The Californians were in Oporto to talk cork in the same way that some Aussie and Kiwi winemakers visit French coopers to talk wood.

During our stay I asked the Amorim people whether many Australian winemakers visited Portuguese cork producers. Only rarely, they replied.

In fact, the last Australian who came to town for cork, they said, called for tenders and was buying on price alone. That was dangerous practice I was assured. Just as coopers may flog off ordinary or unseasoned oak, so will some cork suppliers sell dodgy cork.

Since returning, I've made a point of asking our winemakers where they get their cork. Those who can answer, invariably name an Australian-based importer but when pressed, cannot name a European manufacturer.

I'm finding this situation increasingly irritating. I know there are reputable cork suppliers in Australia who maintain rigorous quality control standards, including Cork & Seals (recently acquired by Amorim).

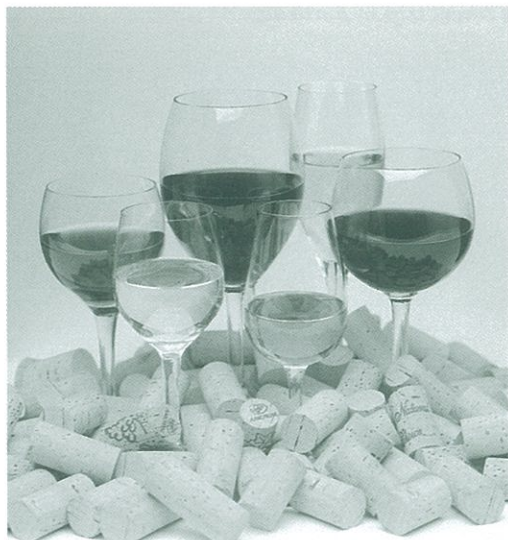
But while winemakers make a big fuss about Italian or French bottles, labels by famous graphic designers and the prestigious coopers who supplied their fancy oak barrels, why don't they know where their cork originates?

I say this in the context of the significant controversy in the whole area of wine bottle closures. The cork industry is under threat from alternative seals, principally metal and plastic. Millions of dollars are at stake.

For cork, the problem is partly image, partly substance. Of substantial importance, is the undeniable fact that some cork producers sell faulty products. These may allow premature oxidation, extraction problems or taint. Of these, taint, most often associated with the compound TCA, has achieved by far the most attention.

Some wine commentators claim that up to 10 per cent of bottled wine is to some extent tainted or 'corked'. There is no scientific evidence of this. Indeed, what research has been published indicates a far lower overall level of contamination.

The key word here is 'overall'. Certainly, some cork producers have a poor record on taint. But others have a relatively clean slate. Only by averaging the good and the bad can a figure of above 5 per cent be calculated. That's the image aspect!



Pic. Courtesy Amorim

To minimise the taint problem, winemakers should spend more time and effort establishing who are the most reliable manufacturers and deal only with them.

It's obvious isn't it? Yet many winemakers and wine writers see cork as some sort of standardised product which comes out of one huge factory somewhere in Portugal.

Apart from the fact that there are literally hundreds of cork makers in Oporto alone, corks also come from Spain, Morocco, Tunisia, Italy and France.

*'For cork,
the problem is
partly image,
partly substance.'*

So there's cork and there's cork, good cork and bad cork.

I'm not about to endorse Amorim here and now but at least this company has the confidence in its quality control and assessment to put itself on the proverbial chopping block.

Amorim is establishing a production plant in Melbourne, especially geared to making its new Twin Top corks.

If these prove unsatisfactory, then it could mean the beginning of the end: there will be no place to hide.

There's a long way to go in this whole closure controversy, including a comprehensive project about to be undertaken by the Australian Wine Research Institute.

Paddy Kender has been pulling corks for years.

OYSTER OPENER

Washington DC's famous Old Ebbitt Grill, a plush saloon right near the White House, recently hosted an International Wines for Oysters Competition. Over 480 wines were lined up for the judges, who slurped freshly shucked oysters specially harvested from select beds in Peconic Bay, Rhode Island, Maine, Prince Edward Island and Chapman Cove in Washington. Their purpose, to find the perfect wine match for these molluscs.

Remarkably, the top three wines were all Marlborough sauvignon blancs – Cloudy Bay 1997, Grove Mill 1997 and Nobilo 1998 – a result which underscores the region's international reputation for sassy sauvignon. In their wake came a clutch of Sancerres and a Chablis, alongside two more Kiwi contenders – Goldwater 1998 and Wairau River 1997 both also ranking in the top ten. If Lewis Carroll had been a Kiwi he would be pleased!

*'But four young oysters hurried up,
All eager for the treat:
Their coats were brushed, their faces washed,
Their shoes were clean and neat –
And this was odd, because you know,
They hadn't any feet.'*

LEWIS CARROLL, THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS



VINTAGE REPORT

As MN goes to press the vintage crew are just about to hang up their gumboots on a pretty good year.

Unsettled weather during flowering caused a slightly spasmodic flower set, particularly in sauvignon blanc, however bunch numbers were higher than average and the expected yields on target.

Warm, generally dry, settled weather dominated the growing season leading to an early harvest that commenced a week ahead of average. The end of the cycle was punctuated by two

heavy rain dumps that caused some concern, but the cool dry windy conditions that followed both downfalls protected the crop against disease infection.

In all, a warm, highly flavoured year with average acid levels, good sugar ripeness and a bountiful healthy crop.



Bordeaux or Bust

Winemaker Mark Messenger reports on his recent trip to Bordeaux.

I never say no to a challenge, especially when it's for the company's good, so I volunteered to take the brief – an exploratory mission to deepest Bordeaux.

It required plenty of preparation, all the sorts of things undercover agents need: contact names and codes, contact profiles, phrase books, travel documentation, even a passport. The task was so daunting I called in CMV's special London agent, Ed Berry who immediately offered his services as transport coordinator and interpreter. My Moneypenny.

On the fateful first day I found myself in Paris, the preliminary hardship posting. But Lady Luck was on my side. The local tribe had just won the World Cup and was suspiciously friendly. They said I should stay and research local culinary traditions, the knowledge gained would help my cover down south. *Zut alors!* (At least that's what the phrase book said.)

All good agents travel incognito so I caught the TGV to Bordeaux, the capital of cabernet country, and waited on a park bench for Ed, wrapped inconspicuously in a copy of *Le Figaro*.

He spotted me, and we headed off to Graves where there are some pretty serious producers making both red and white wines, a rarity in this part of the world.

The latter are based on a semillon and sauvignon blanc blend that's generally barrel fermented and aged, an interesting comparison to the Cape Mentelle style which is more fruit driven but incorporates a barrel fermented portion.

We sussed several of the district's serious producers including Chateau Carbonnieux, Domaine de Chevalier and Chateau Smith-Haut-Lafitte who take their wood so seriously they employ an in-house cooper. Investigations also revealed they make serious money from cosmetics crafted from grape seed extract and red wine lees.

Chateau Haut-Brion, the only Graves first growth, also combine high tech with tradition, reputedly the first first-growth to install computerised stainless steel tanks in place of wooden vats. But they do uphold some age-old practices, especially those involving five Frenchmen standing around in a choking cloud of sulphur and Gaulloise smoke, racking barrels by gravity and candle light.

Next day, the mission's focus was merlot and cabernet franc and the producers of St Emilion. We tasted some stunning wines from the '96 and '97 vintages of Chateau L'Angéus,



Edward Berry and Mark Messenger inspect the facilities at Chateau Pichon-Longueville-Baron.

Ausone, de Valandraud and Cheval Blanc where we discovered a fascinating counter-espionage device – a very attractive *mademoiselle*. No useful information was extracted there, not even a phone number.

One of the most interesting people we met was Jean-Luc Thunevin, proprietor of Chateau de Valandraud who makes one of the rarest and most expensive wines of the area in his garage in the heart of the beautiful old town of St Emilion. Every step is painstakingly carried out by hand, especially the fruit selection in the vineyard.

In the winery (garage) he uses oak fermentation vats instead of stainless steel, and it's all new. He uses fresh new oak barrels for both malolactic fermentation and subsequent barrel ageing. I'm sure the CMV accountant couldn't get his head around this concept.

Jean-Luc was very open for a Frenchman and believed fervently in technology transfer lubricated by a few bottles. His philosophy laid down some challenges for my Moneypenny, but Ed somehow manoeuvred us across Bordeaux to the Medoc without once meeting a ditch, a hedge or a gendarme.

Here the focus is on cabernet sauvignon blended with varying percentages of merlot, cabernet franc, malbec and petit verdot.

'Secrets' were closely guarded on this side of the river but some useful information was obtained with my pocket camera and concealed tape recorder. So keep an eye and a nose on future Cape Mentelle Trinders Vineyard Cabernet Merlots for some subtle super-sleuth legacies.

Mark Messenger has been responsible for making CM Trinders Cab Merlot since the 1991 vintage. Soon after his return from this mission he was recruited to start up a new Margaret River winery, Juniper Estate. We wish him luck.

from page 1

PLEASURE MEASURE

The visceral side of wine is the place where pinot noir is at its best, simply because it has that wild edge which whispers to your nose, of lust.

Forest floor, prudes would call it, or even mushroom, but while the thrill of it is the same earthy note that raises passions over mushrooms, it is infinitely more profound.

No wonder the French, who have cultivated it for so long, know pinot noir to be a less than fully domesticated variety. No wonder pinot is the stuff of myth.

Wild, sexual, virile, horse shit, raunchy, seductive, passionate, limp, fecund – this is the vocabulary of wine, not the parsimonious fruit-salad language of pseudo-scientists bound to the aroma wheel.

Face it. When was the last time you were aroused by a strawberry, or French oak? When was the last time blackcurrants gave you real pleasure?

We all know that wine is more than fruit juice mixed with alcohol, and the better a wine is, the further it gets from this simplistic notion to the point where fruit and oak and structure and length are fused into the most pure expression of pleasure we know. Well almost.

Keith Stewart's regular column appears in *The Listener*. And he hopes it brings his readers unexpected vinous pleasure.

HAPPY HUKA

Treat yourself to a special night out with Cloudy Bay at Huka Lodge, on Saturday 14 August, 1999.

The short-break stay comprises a Vertical Sauvignon Blanc Tasting, dinner hosted by Kevin Judd, luxury accommodation and breakfast. Rate \$525 per person (+ GST). Bookings: PH (07) 378 5791

SIZZLING SHIRAZ

The inaugural Shiraz Australia wine auction conducted during Wine Australia certainly helped raise the international profile of Australia's leading red variety and secured some big barrels for bidders with an eye for investment potential.

Brokenwood Graveyard, Grant Burge Meschach and Eileen Hardy set the 1998 indent barrel pace, followed closely by the duo from the West, Cape Mentelle (\$33.53 per bottle) and Plantagenet.

Pre-auction tastings were held in London and LA and the response augurs well for Langton's next event, the second Great Estates of WA Auction to be held at Cape Mentelle on 2 October, 1999.

Details: PH (618) 9757 3266



Ploughman's Luck

Meet Cloudy Bay grower, Phillip Neal.

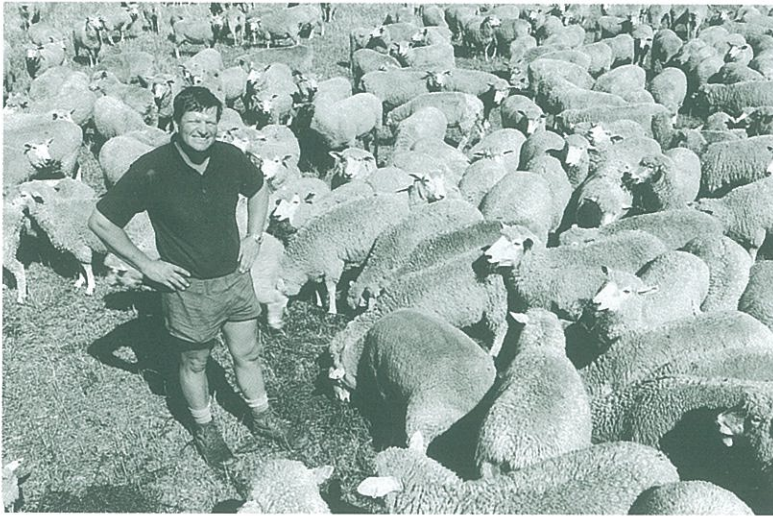
Six generations of Neals have tilled the Wairau plain since Thomas Nelson Neal settled there in 1868. He was the son of English emigrants who arrived at Nelson prior to 1845 when Thomas was born.

'We've always been sod farmers with big families, and hard workers,' says Phillip Neal, who today heads up the family enterprise. It's set on a large and fertile stretch of the plain in the Rapaura region, purchased by his father in 1962, a site ideal for mixed farming. Phillip grazes sheep and grows process crops like garlic, sweetcorn and peas, and has a feijoa orchard.

He also tends his vineyard, planted back in 1980 when Corbans contracted him to grow 20 acres of müller thurgau. He planted another 20 acres of sauvignon blanc the following year.

Cloudy Bay started purchasing the sauvignon blanc in 1986 under a sub-contract arrangement with Corbans, and today is Phillip's major client.

So why does a sod farmer turn to grape growing? The answer's pretty simple.



Phillip Neal counting his sheep.

Vines cover less than ten per cent of the Neal's land but today produce more than half the annual farm income. There is no big future for sheep on this part of the plain and prices for vegetables seem to fall every year.

Demand for grapes has seen land prices skyrocket so that vineyards now predominate where cherries, apples and apricots were once the star performers. If Phillip has a problem, it's climbing over the real estate agents who barricade his front door daily, armed with offer and acceptance forms.

But if history is anything to go by, they're wasting their time. The Neals won't budge and Cloudy Bay can look forward to a reliable source of grapes from one of the valley's best locations, managed by folk who just love to farm.

WRITER'S BLOCK

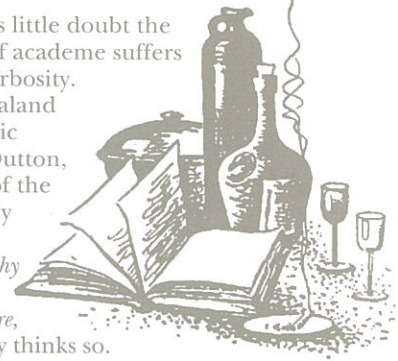
There is little doubt the world of academe suffers from verbosity.

New Zealand academic Denis Dutton, editor of the scholarly journal *Philosophy and Literature*, certainly thinks so.

He highlights the problem with his annual Bad Writing Contest, a trawl of the world's learned linguistic swamp.

Caught in his 1998 net was Chicago English scholar Homi Bhabha, awarded second place for a 55-word sentence on 'enunciatory modality'. MN will save you the pain of its repetition but commends Mr Bhabha for his retort on learning of his win.

'The only thing that could bring me more New Year's cheer is a good bottle of New Zealand's Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc.' That sounds pretty succinct.



Ava Astaire McKenzie, daughter of that famous Hollywood dancing dad, Fred, called into Cloudy Bay while recently on tour in New Zealand to promote her new cookbook, *At Home in Ireland*. Ava, who spent her youth with famous entertainers like Cole Porter, Frank Sinatra and Clark Gable, says she can't act, sing or sashay, but she does enjoy sipping chilled sauvignon blanc.

POETS' PICNIC



New Zealand's folk heroes, Sam Hunt (left) and Gary McCormick, pulled a big late-summer crowd for the exclusive Cloudy Bay Marlborough outing of 'Staying Alive in New Zealand' – an entertaining show invigorated by therapeutic doses of chilled CB.

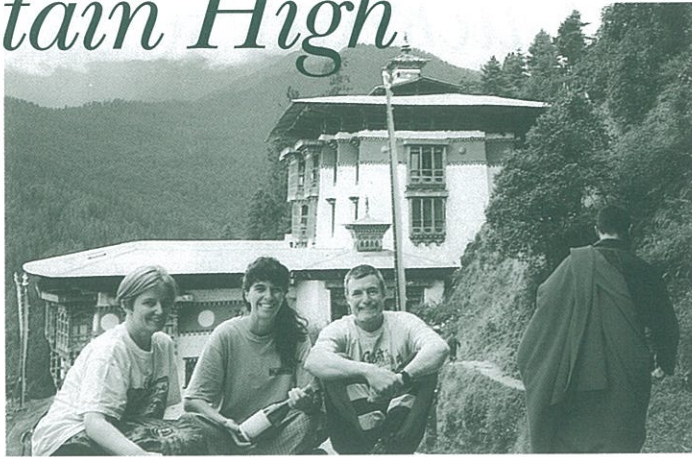
HIGH SEAS

One of the world's most glamorous ocean liners, the *QEII*, sailed into Auckland Harbour recently on a grand global voyage. There to meet her was Kevin Judd, who took the opportunity to conduct a mini-masterclass for the ship's sommeliers and wine staff – then lined them up on deck for this commemorative photograph.



Mountain High

Jenny Morton-Clark,
Thelma McMurray and
Kevin Clark preparing
for their Tango lesson.



Some Mentelle Ambassadors will go to great heights – to be specific 8000 feet in deepest Bhutan – to attract the attention of MN's editor. Meet Jenny Morton-Clark and husband Kevin of Christchurch who trekked with fellow Kiwis, Thelma (and photographer Tony) McMurray, to the 13th century Tango monastery. The Bhutanese government has strict limits on the number of visitors and in 1998 only allowed 5000 foreigners into their rugged isolated kingdom – plus one bottle of *Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc*.

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 supermarket in Sausalito, a liquor shop in Lichtenstein or wine bar in Warwickshire, buy it and take a photo. Then send it to The Editor, Mentelle Notes. 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.



Kevin 'Where do you want me to stick it?' Judd (third from left) prepares for his marathon paddle...

KEY STROKE

Even winemakers need to flex their muscles occasionally, which is how Kevin Judd came to be paddling up the River Blyth one sunny Suffolk Sunday morning not so long ago.

The expedition, a sure-fire antidote to any signs of jet-lag, had been organised by Simon Loftus, the convivial king-pin of the Adnams brewery and wine shippers.

The tide was rising as the intrepid crew set off for Blythburg, complete with tuna sandwiches in their picnic hampers.

'It was very Enid Blyton,' recalls Kevin, once an avid reader of Blyton's 'Famous Five' series. He reckons all that was missing was the dog, Timmy.

Eventually they stroked their way to a warm pint of Adnams Regatta Bitter at the White Hart, rather further than Judd is used to going for his thirst quenchers. But he vows to do it again, and next time he'll know which end of the stick to hold.

BLANC COVERAGE

Late last year Cloudy Bay released its second premium sparkling wine, *Pelorus Blanc de Blancs*, a non-vintage lees aged bubbly made entirely from chardonnay.

The response to the aspiring new member of the Pelorus stable has been extremely encouraging.

Keith Stewart of *The Listener* (and MN) was inspired to remark, 'All suave subtlety and tenderness, with a delightfully light creamy texture enhanced by long streams of tiny bubbles and a delightful twinge of citrus.'

After another glass he became quite philosophical.

'This bubbly is a very classy act indeed, although not a wine to serve to the gathered masses at Lucy's 21st. Instead, save it for a moment when there are just a few, or two, of you, when its delicacy and quiet nature are more suited to the occasion. Then it is one of the finest local fizzes around... and the sort of wine you can call elegant.'

Another, and its grip took hold... 'Take note of this new Pelorus, as it will be responsible for a multitude of seductions by the time we reach the next millennium.'

Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 1997

'This elegant pinot noir is marginally better than the very good 1996 vintage. A mix of black cherry and savoury plum flavours with an underlay of spicy oak with concentration, richness and an impeccable balance.'

★★★★★ 5 Stars, Bob Campbell, CUISINE

'Delicious...a milestone wine.'

Peter Saunders, SAUNDERS ON WINE

Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1997

'Has a lovely nutty nose...a deliciously powerful, complex, mouth-filling wine with plenty of structure to repay long-term cellaring.'

David Burton, EVENING POST

'Ignore Cloudy Bay's Chardonnay and Pinot Noir at your peril...this duo from the 1997 vintage is just sublime.'

The concentrated chardonnay is all about texture and complexity, while the pinot is clearly the best yet.'

Charles Gill, DAILY NEWS

Pelorus Blanc de Blancs NV

'Enormously appealing, rich, brassy, nutty and creamy with a soft mouth-filling finish...delicious by itself.'

Charmian Smith, OTAGO DAILY TIMES

Cloudy Bay

Sauvignon Blanc 1998

'Displays an impressive range of flavours – green apple, sweet pea, citrus and celery – balanced on an elegant frame, all coming together harmoniously, on the tart, silky textured finish. Delicious now.'

92 points, WINE SPECTATOR

'The archetypal Kiwi sauvignon blanc, fresh and aromatic...tangy tropical fruit and a zippy finish.'

Ralph Kyte-Powell, SUNDAY AGE, MELBOURNE

Cloudy Bay

Sauvignon Blanc 1997

'Bright and jazzy on the palate, with beautifully folded layers of quince, passionfruit and grapefruit on a surprisingly smooth, silky frame. Highly Recommended.'

91 points, WINE SPECTATOR, Top 100

'If I had to move from my seat in the garden, it would probably be to open a bottle of my favourite wine, a New Zealand tipple called Cloudy Bay.'

Michael Palin, SKYSCENE, UK

Cape Mentelle

Cabernet Sauvignon 1994

'The style is big and brusque, a powerful statuesque cabernet with lots of tannin for long ageing...Muscular but handsome...'

Huon Hooke, WINE MAGAZINE, AUSTRALIA

Cape Mentelle Shiraz 1996

'That discreet Margaret River charm comes through in spades in this delightful and complex wine. The tongue tingles to the licorice and earthy overtones. It offers another dimension to the great Aussie grape.'

Jeni Port, MELBOURNE AGE

MENTELLE NOTES

is the publication of
CLOUDY BAY &
CAPE MENTELLE VINEYARDS

For further information
please contact the winery
PO Box 376 Blenheim

Tel (03) 572 8914 • Fax (03) 572 8065
email: cloudybay@xtra.co.nz

A View from the Vineyard



Pic: Kevin Judd

“...with inimitable fragrance and soft fire...wine is bottled poetry.”

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON



PRICE LIST & ORDER FORM

MAY • 1999



Wine	Description	Price per Case	Price per Bottle	Amount Ordered	Cost
Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1997	Classic chardonnay, vibrant ripe and complex with aromas of grilled figs and toasty nuts. Serious sipping!	\$355.80	\$29.65		
Cloudy Bay (Six-pack) Gewürztraminer 1997	Power-pack of rose and lychee and a touch of Turkish Delight. Different and delicious.	\$144.90	\$24.15		
Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 1997	Bouncy ruby seductress...Dark plums, spicy smokey oak and sweet soft fruit make her totally irresistible!	\$355.80	\$29.65		
Cloudy Bay Cabernet Merlot 1996	A decade dazzler! Deep red, wild berries with cedar and charry oak.	\$289.80	\$24.15		
MIXED CASE	3 x Cloudy Bay Chardonnay '97 3 x Cloudy Bay Gewurztraminer '97 3 x Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir '97 3 x Cloudy Bay Cabernet Merlot '96	\$322.80	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 (inc. postage)		
UK DELIVERY Cloudy Bay Chardonnay '97	Please indicate your requirements below for delivery to the UK and include price in your total order.	\$405.00	N/A		
ADD FREIGHT COSTS (SEE BELOW)					
SEND THEM MENTELLE IN THE UK					TOTAL \$ (INCLUDING GST)



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 Chardonnay 1997*	\$405.00	
		Total \$

* Limited availability

Address wines to be sent in UK
(Please print)

Name

Address

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

Tel: ()

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 Viscard Mastercard American Express Diners

Credit Card Number.

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EXPIRY DATE /

DELIVERY ADDRESS & INSTRUCTIONS

Note any special delivery instructions below:

Delivery Address:

- PLEASE NOTE**
- Orders must be in full or half case lots.
 - Feel free to make up your own mixed case using the bottle prices listed.
 - All prices are G.S.T. inclusive
 - This order form valid until publication of October '99 Mentelle Notes.
 - Send order with payment to Cloudy Bay Vineyards Ltd, P.O. Box 376 Blenheim, New Zealand or Facsimile (03) 572 8065
 - Only persons aged 20 years or over may legally order wine.
 - Deliveries can only be made to a street address-not a PO Box or RD number.
 - Please allow 10 days for delivery.

FREIGHT

Freight Charges	Per Case
All national deliveries	\$6.00

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:

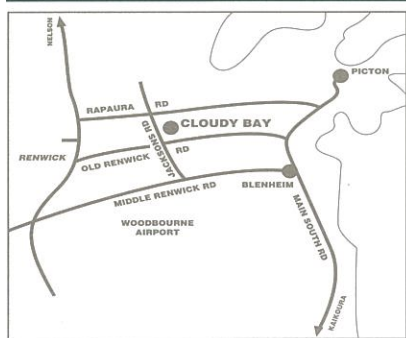
..... Postcode:

Tel: ()

Fax: ()

Wine is like sex in that few men will admit not knowing all about it.

HUGH JOHNSON



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
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