

# MENTELLE NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF CLOUDY BAY AND CAPE MENTELLE

## Going to Extremes

*Cloudy Bay viticulturist Ivan Sutherland ponders the seasonal variability of cool climate viticulture.*

Marlborough is truly a unique place to grow grapes. This small, geographically defined region with its surrounding mountains and coastline is one of the sunniest areas in New Zealand. Add to this significant and very favourable climatic factor the availability of desirable soils and an abundant underground water source, and you begin to understand why the region can produce internationally acclaimed wines.

But life is never that simple, or predictable. Take a look at the map and you'll note New Zealand's narrow, elongated shape stretching from latitude 34°S to 47°S across oceans. It's a global location that results in prevailing maritime influences – sometimes of a widely varying nature.

Cloudy Bay's simple winemaking philosophy has always been that quality wine is made in the vineyard. Consistency of quality therefore revolves around flexible management practices (sometimes of a labour-intensive nature) that must vary according to seasonal climatic conditions.

This intricate inter-relationship between seasonal variability and cool climate viticultural management makes a fascinating study. So let's take a look back over the extremes of the past 12 years...starting with...

**1990.** Truly a great summer with warm, still days leading into the cooler nights of March/April. But with still two weeks to run before the main sauvignon blanc harvest...the unexpected! A severe cold southerly air stream carrying a -5°C frost turned the whole valley brown in 48 hours. Then it rained 25mm! The team managed to harvest all the fruit



Keeping Jack Frost at bay...

Pic: Kevin Judd

inside a couple of days, although not at preferred ripeness, but still in good condition. We avoided the prolonged rainfall two days later.

The **1992** and **1993** vintages were the coldest on record. The harvester and gondola drivers even resorted to wearing gloves – and remember we're talking tough southern men!

*‘When are we ever going to have the average year?’*

YOUNG CELLAR RAT

The sauvignon blanc harvest is normally over by 25 April. Well, in **1993** we commenced on 22 April and the crew finally finished on 20 May. The last fruit picked produced juice that was 1°C in the tank...without refrigeration! And there were tartrate crystals all over the harvester – cold stabilisation in the vineyard. As expected, bud fruitfulness was also severely affected and so subsequently **1994** was a very low cropping year. (This further substantiates the reality that the shortage of wine at CBV is not orchestrated.)

**1995.** Well what can we say...the vintage from hell! A certain winemaker on his third bottle of Steinlager

remarked at the end of February, what a great vintage it was going to be. Up till then the weather had been fantastic. He is now banned from making any kind of weather predictions. It rained and rained and rained and didn't know when to stop! Crews picking botrytis out of bunches. Half the intake was sold as bulk wine. Not a year for bean counters. However, diligent hard work still resulted in the making of perfectly acceptable wine, albeit in very short supply.

**1998.** Shorts, jandals, hats and sunscreen! The Napa of the South – the hottest year on record. Minimal leaf plucking that year. A very orderly harvest with careful attention paid to sampling and ripeness parameters. The sauvignon harvest commenced on 20 March and was all over by 16 April. The Stein fairy worked overtime!

**2001.** The driest year on record. The hills south of Blenheim were so dry rabbits took a cut lunch. Careful attention to irrigation scheduling really paid dividends, as did leaf to fruit ratios. Again, no leaf plucking.

*Continued page 2*

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**NEW  
RELEASES**

## POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Did you know that in recessionary times the sales of confectionery rise? True. It's the special small treat syndrome. Well, we might be living in uncertain times, when the world's leaders are facing their folly in the mirror, super funds and stock markets are under-performing and offshore holidays are deemed dangerous – but heck, that's no reason to be maudlin!

Forget the Cadbury's, treat yourself and your closest friends and family, to some real mood boosters – any one (or all) of these latest releases – three stalwart Cloudy Bay whites and their red compatriot, Pinot Noir.

All four wines are guaranteed to lift your mood and tickle your palate. And they all come highly commended by their naturally optimistic makers...

### Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 2001

*'Aromas of freshly baked biscotti, straight from the oven... grapefruit and lemon peel, roasted Brazil nut and dried figs. The palate is chalky in texture and the flavours deliciously refined, with hints of baked apple over flinty yeast characters, the Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 2001 is impeccably balanced and shows potential to age gracefully for at least the next five years.'*

### Cloudy Bay Te Koko 2000

*'Exotic aromas of honeysuckle and ripe mango meld with the scent of thyme and wood smoke. Hints of slow-roasted fennel on the luscious creamy palate lead into a long and savoury finish. Released as a mature wine, Cloudy Bay Te Koko 2000 is a deliciously aromatic, richly textured, alternative style of sauvignon blanc.'*

### Cloudy Bay Gewürztraminer 2001

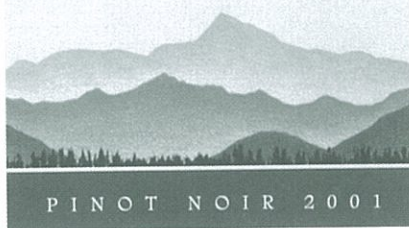
*'Perfumed with incense, Turkish delight and old-fashioned rose, the 2001 Cloudy Bay Gewürztraminer is hedonistically aromatic; the softly textured, off-dry palate redolent with eastern spices. Made in an Alsatian style to promote palate generosity, this wine is a deliciously concentrated expression of vibrant Marlborough fruit that reflects the idyllic 2001 growing season.'*



## MILLENNIUM REGATTA

*What do you give thirsty sailors to drink? Chilled Pelorus of course, named after a famous sailors' friend, the trusty dolphin. It was poured at the grand dinner of the NZ Millennium Cup Superyacht Regatta at Mansion House, Kawau Island, held between the Louis Vuitton and Americas Cup races.*

## CLOUDY BAY



### Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 2001

*'Redolent of ripe Morello cherries, violets and spice, the Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 2001 is exquisitely fragrant. The intensely varietal palate shows supple fine tannins with layers of red fruit, toasty oak and savoury earthy characters and a long seamless finish.'*

## HAMMER FALLS

Webb's inaugural One Tonne New Zealand Fine & Rare Wine Auction attracted wines from 44 wine companies including several from Marlborough. The curious event name originates from medieval times when ship sizes or tonnages were traditionally measured by their wine-carrying capacity. A tonne (abbreviated from tonneau) equals 4225 litres.

Cloudy Bay did not submit quite that much wine – but did offer 20 magnums of Chardonnay 1994, 16 Te Koko 1998 magnums (the only vintage ever put in 1500lt format) and five cases of Sauvignon Blanc 1996. All sold for impressive prices to the keen online and live audience in New Zealand and abroad.

## MAGNUM OFFER

Who says big isn't beautiful? This *Mentelle Notes* offers magnum bottles of *Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1994* the first-ever wine to be put into large format bottles. Magnums age more slowly and this wine has only now reached its peak.

Tasted in the middle of a harvest meeting, it drew comments like... 'Whoah'... 'It's looking great'... 'Really fresh... grapefruit citrus and hints of straw, with aromas of vanilla custard and roasted cashews. Think warm buttered Vogel's toast with lashings of streaky bacon. The palate is flavoursome and luscious, but still quite tight with layers of oatmeal and dried figs. A cleansing dash of acidity flows through to a chalky, soft finish. Mmmm ... this is Cloudy Bay Chardonnay at its hedonistic best.'

Consecutive vintages will also be released when the winemaking team reckons it's tap-dancing time. Previously, magnums have only been available at cellar door, selected wine stockists and the occasional charity auction.

## GOING to EXTREMES cont.

A small makeshift reservoir was constructed on one grower's block and water was trucked in to supplement the water supply, ensuring quality was not compromised.

Careful readers will note that I have omitted 1991, 1996, 1997, 1999 and 2000 – they were all hassle-free years exhibiting weather conditions that were pretty much in line with the Marlborough region average.

Looking back over the past 12 years one soon realises there is nothing predictable about Mother Nature. The progressive collection of statistical weather data, such as growing degree days, rainfall and temperature ranges and their relation to budburst, flowering, veraison and subsequent harvest dates provides increasingly more useful information for viticulturists, and helps establish long-term averages, particularly important for making critical risk management decisions.

Nevertheless, the team at Cloudy Bay is case hardened to vintage challenges, which is just as well because 2003 has been another of those years. Unseasonable severe frosts in October and November 2002 resulted in significant frost damage which affected the fruit set. It's still too early to be exact, but this year's yield could be down as much, or more, than 30 per cent. Mother Nature can deal a cruel hand when she chooses.

*Ivan Sutherland has been in charge of every vintage since 1986.*

## RESEARCH CENTRE

As New Zealand's largest grape growing region it is fitting that Marlborough has been chosen as the home of the new Wine Research Centre of Excellence, due to be constructed later this year.

Over \$3 million has been secured to build the centre and launch various research projects, largely funded by the wine industry. Wine companies have committed \$300,000 per annum for five years to facilitate the research programs and tertiary level courses in oenology and viticulture.

Cloudy Bay is a major financial contributor and Ivan Sutherland has been appointed chairman of the Wine Research Board.

## FROM THE WEST

Winter is just the time to pull corks on warming Aussie reds, wines guaranteed to put colour in your cheeks. Cabernets, shiraz, and blends of both plus velvety merlots can all raise the temperature, especially if they come from some of Australia's finest makers.

Choose one (or three) that suit you at the forthcoming Negotiants 'Our Friends To the West' Wine Tour scheduled for Auckland and Wellington 26-30 May. Cape Mentelle will be along for the ride, as will Henschke, Yalumba, and Peter Lehmann. Details: Caroline Henty (09) 366 2082.

By Morris Gleitzman.

# Liquid Assets

*I opened a bottle of Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon at dinner the other night and, boy, did it cause some comment.*

'Fifty-seven dollars?' squeaked a young member of the family, staring at the bottle and its price tag in amazement. 'You paid fifty-seven dollars for one bottle of wine and it hasn't even got a false bottom packed with cocaine and pirate video games?'

'Yes,' I replied defiantly. 'That's right. Does anybody have a problem with that?'

Everybody had a problem with that.

'For fifty-seven dollars,' roared an elderly member of the family, 'I can buy a pensioner ticket on the train, lunch at the pub, a rechargeable power drill and two pairs of elastic stockings.'

Everybody was looking at me as though I had brain damage. True, when I'd pulled the cork out I'd done it with a big flourish and hit myself in the head with the corkscrew, but it was only a glancing blow. Plus I'd bought the wine hours earlier when I was in full possession of all my faculties. Except perhaps eyesight.

It was a bottle shop mishap that could have happened to anyone. I simply opened a bottle of tonic water to sniff it for freshness and the bubbles rushed up my nose causing me to stagger back into an in-store Irish Cream promotion.

I apologised, knocked the dents out of the plastic leprechauns and tried to lick the Irish Cream off my glasses. But they must still have been smeared because as I was being frog-marched to the front of the shop I grabbed a bottle of dinner plonk and completely misread the price.

'Fifty-seven dollars?' I gasped when the cash register revealed the shocking truth. 'I thought it was five dollars seventy.'

The bottle shop owner gave me a long and derisive look. Though to be fair to him I did have quite a lot of polystyrene peat sticking to my head.

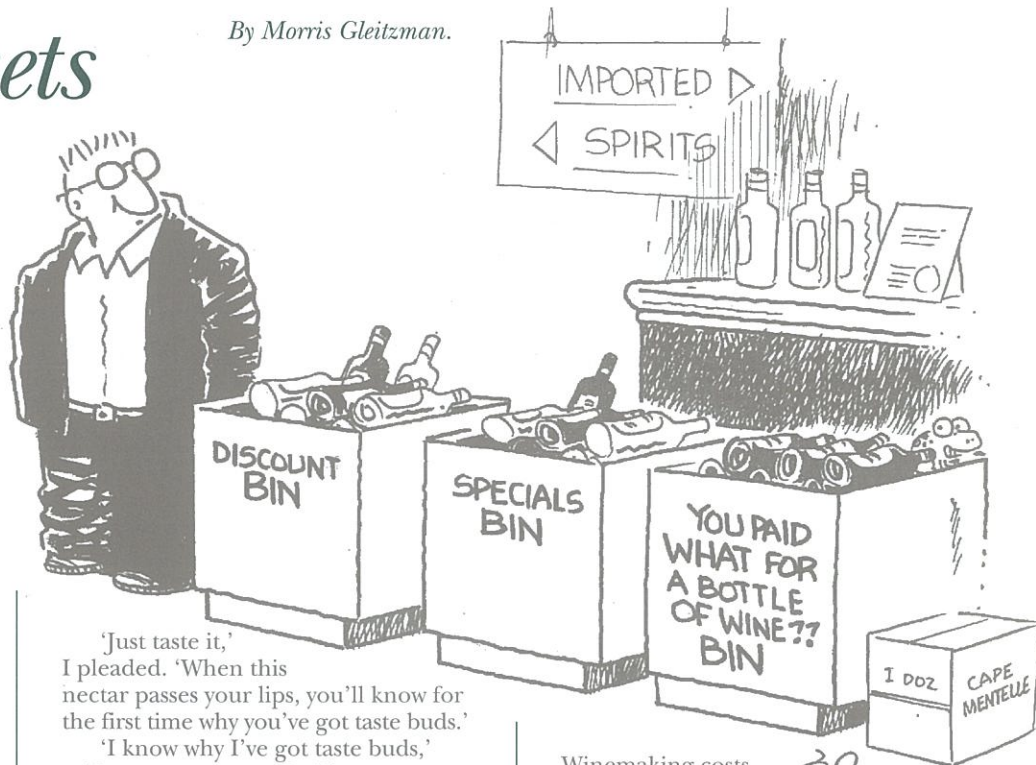
Then he looked at me more closely. 'I know you,' he said. 'You're the bloke who only buys from the five ninety-nine discount bin.'

I pulled myself up to my full height and corrected him. 'And the five seventy discount bin,' I said. 'When there is one.'

The bottle shop owner leaned over the counter and pushed the bottle of Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon into my hands. 'Life is short,' he said, eyes misting over. 'True pleasure is rare. Everybody should taste real wine at least once before they die.'

Then he snatched my credit card and rang up fifty-seven dollars.

Three hours later I found myself at the dinner table with several members of the family in tears and a couple more looking up electric shock therapy in the Yellow Pages.



'Just taste it,' I pleaded. 'When this nectar passes your lips, you'll know for the first time why you've got taste buds.'

'I know why I've got taste buds,' said my partner wearily. 'I've got taste buds to enjoy chocolate, of which, for fifty-seven dollars, I can buy eight kilos.'

'Nine,' said a young member of the family. 'If it's in the discount bin.'

I was in trouble and I knew it. There was only one way out. Philosophy. 'Price,' I said, 'is relative. There are a lot of times in life when fifty-seven dollars gets you bugger-all.'

To prove my premise I bundled the whole family into the car and drove them round the block. Halfway down our street I eased the car up to fifty-one kilometres an hour just as we were passing a speed camera.

'There you go,' I said. 'That just cost us over a hundred bucks. For fifty-seven dollars you don't even get an extra one 'k' an hour.'

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*'True pleasure is rare. Everybody should taste real wine at least once before they die.'*

—

The family seemed unconvinced, so when we reached our place I backed into the neighbour's car. Not hard, just enough to make a small dent.

'That'll cost at least five hundred and seventy dollars to fix,' I said. 'Do I make my point?'

Nobody replied. Several pairs of hands grabbed me and dragged me inside. I sensed that this philosophical exercise was about to turn violent. One clue was that someone had just picked up the corkscrew and the bottle on the table was already open.

'Wait,' I said. 'Look at it this way. Fifty-seven dollars might seem a lot for a bottle of wine today, but in years to come it'll feel like a bargain.'

Winemaking costs are going up all the time. The price of quality grapes is going through the roof thanks to the drought and the new practice of wrapping them individually.

When the equipment is brought in from France the import duties are crippling and there are only so many crusher cogs a winery manager can hide in his bodily orifices. And the fees top winemakers can command are astronomical now that women's health centres have discovered they know how to control yeast. In 20 years, this bottle of cab sav will probably cost two hundred dollars.'

A hush fell over the room. The family gazed at the bottle with new interest and respect.

'So,' said the family as one, 'this bottle of wine isn't an extravagance, it's an investment?'

I wasn't quite sure what they meant, but I said yes. Anything to keep them happy so I could pour myself a glass and experience fifty-seven dollars worth of sublime flavours dancing across my palate.

'Wait,' they yelled, snatching the bottle from my hand. 'You're not drinking this. It's an investment.'

Before I could protest, they screwed the cork back into the bottle with the spark plug spanner attachment on grandma's power drill. Then they locked the bottle in a cool, dark place for what they sternly informed me would be at least 20 years.

Oh well, at least when it reappears, and I drop it into the auction room on my way to pick up a bottle of dinner plonk from the \$49.99 discount bin, I'll be travelling on a pensioner ticket.

*Morris Gleitzman is a regular correspondent currently seeking a higher wordage rate for his future wine investments. His next children's book to be released in May is titled Teacher's Pet (Penguin.)*

# Fair Weather

*Margaret River's stable climate is no accident. Australian scientist Tim Flannery explains why.*

David Hohnen has lived in Margaret River since 1976 which, by the standards of some of the patrons at the Margaret River Social Club, makes him no more than a barely tolerated interloper.

Nevertheless, in 27 years of residence he has observed that Margaret River seems isolated from the vagaries of climate that affect the agricultural regions that host the bulk of Australia's wine plantings.

Some years back, on a plane between New Zealand and Western Australia you can bet, he read Tim Flannery's *Future Eaters* and therein found an explanation for his observation.

So we asked Tim Flannery to expand on the topic and he kindly agreed.

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Over 4000 species of plants grow in Australia's southwestern corner, making it one of the globe's biodiversity hot spots and home to one of the greatest natural flower shows on earth. Those plants evolved over millions of years, and they have thrived because exceptional environmental conditions have prevailed in the region – conditions that are rare or unknown elsewhere in Australia.

One of the most important elements in creating the southwest's spectacular biodiversity has been a very special climate. Most of Australia is dominated by El Niño, which brings spectacular and unpredictable climatic swings, from drought to flood and back again.

The southwest corner of the continent, in contrast, has one of the most reliable rainfall regimes in the world. The rain falls in winter, and although its volume can vary from year to year, especially along the region's drier margins, the winter rains never fail entirely, and the season of its arrival is relatively predictable.

Just as importantly, summer rainfall is rare (but not unknown) in the area, the long, summer dry spell giving weedy, potentially dominant species that might exclude others a hard time.

It's not only year-to-year variation that affects the development of biodiversity, but also changes in climate over the millions of years. Here again in the fossil record we find evidence of remarkable stability.

The Margaret River region is widely recognised for its caves as well as its wines, and it is in those caves that the evidence for long-term climatic stability is best preserved.

Federation Cave has a terrifying entry via a hole in its dome-like roof, where you must hang suspended by a rope as you slowly descend tens of metres to the floor. Below are the remains of less fortunate creatures that made the descent thousands of years ago, without the benefit of a rope!



*Tim Flannery inspects his personal solar panel.*

They include the bones of Tasmanian tigers and koalas that once roamed in the region, but the real evidence for climatic stability is found in the bones of smaller creatures with specific environmental requirements.

Some of these smaller creatures – native rats, mice and rat-kangaroos – lived during the height of the last ice age 25 -15,000 years ago. Then, most of Australia was a howling desert, the inland dominated by a shifting dunefield that occupied 40 per cent of the continent and which was centred on Ayers Rock.

*‘Just why the southwest has proved to be so resilient in the face of both short-term and long-term climate change is not really clear.’*

If you could have visited Tasmania back then you would have found creatures living there that today are found in the Tanami desert, and you would have had a hard time finding any evidence at all of trees west of the Great Dividing Range.

Not in the southwest, however, for there the ice age brought far milder change.

Margaret River might have been a little drier, and creatures typical of the Perth area at the time of European settlement were found there. Just why the southwest has proved to be so resilient in the face of both short-term and long-term climate change is not really clear.

It has been a great blessing, however, for without it the region would not have developed its extraordinary biodiversity, and its winemakers would have had a considerably harder time of it.

The reliable rainfall means that they don't need to invest as heavily as their eastern competitors in expensive irrigation equipment. Moreover, at harvest it helps knowing when it's not going to rain.

The past is not always a good guide to the future, however, for scientists are now predicting a 6°C rise in temperature over the next century. That will push global temperatures higher than they have ever been since our species evolved on earth a million years ago.

The southwest has suffered, on average, a 20 per cent decrease in rainfall for each of the past 20 years, with some attributing this to global climate change.

Renewable energy is one way that we can help limit global warming, so I tend to think that one of the best places to enjoy that special drop of Margaret River magic is under a solar panel.

So here's cheers to climatic stability and all the good things it can bring.

*Tim Flannery is a scientist and writer, and the Director of the South Australian Museum.*

## MUSTS

### SAVOUR NEW ZEALAND

*Masterclass for food & wine lovers  
2 - 4 May, 2003*

*Christchurch*

*Details and registration:*

*www.savournewzealand.com*

### OUR FRIENDS TO THE WEST

*26 - 30 May, 2003*

*Details: PH: (09) 366 2082*

*Email: chenty@negociants.com*

### CLOUDY BAY AT HAMMERHEADS

*Thursday 12 June, 2003*

*Hammerheads Seafood Restaurant,  
Auckland*

*Five course meal paired with CB wines  
Details: PH: (09) 521 4400*

*Reservations: info@hammerheads.co.nz*

# Great White Hopes

*David Hohnen introduces Margaret River's new breed white varieties – viognier, marsanne and roussanne – a mighty mongrel bunch.*

A while back there was a loose-knit association of wine nerds, worldwide, that proudly branded themselves as the ABC mob. Anything But Chardonnay. It was just a symptom of the general malaise that surrounds white wine offerings these days. There are thousands of makers and a plethora of styles but the source varieties can be numbered on one hand with a missing finger.

The shelves of any decent wine shop tell the story. More than half of everything white is chardonnay. Most of the rest of the shelf space is sauvignon blanc, semillon and riesling. The rats and mice might include chenin blanc, pinot gris, marsanne, gewürztraminer, verdelho and viognier. Try asking for roussanne, arneis or vermentino.

There was a moment in recent wine history when chardonnay could have been wobbling on its pedestal. When Penfolds awoke to the inevitability of the need for a white Grange, it was strongly rumoured that they had chosen semillon as the Great White Hope. That was certainly the impression given to a number of Barossa Valley growers with old vine semillon who were encouraged to plant more of it.

But in the end it became a blend of chardonnay, and Penfold's Yattarna stepped into the ring – proof of the wine industry's faith in the supremacy of chardonnay.

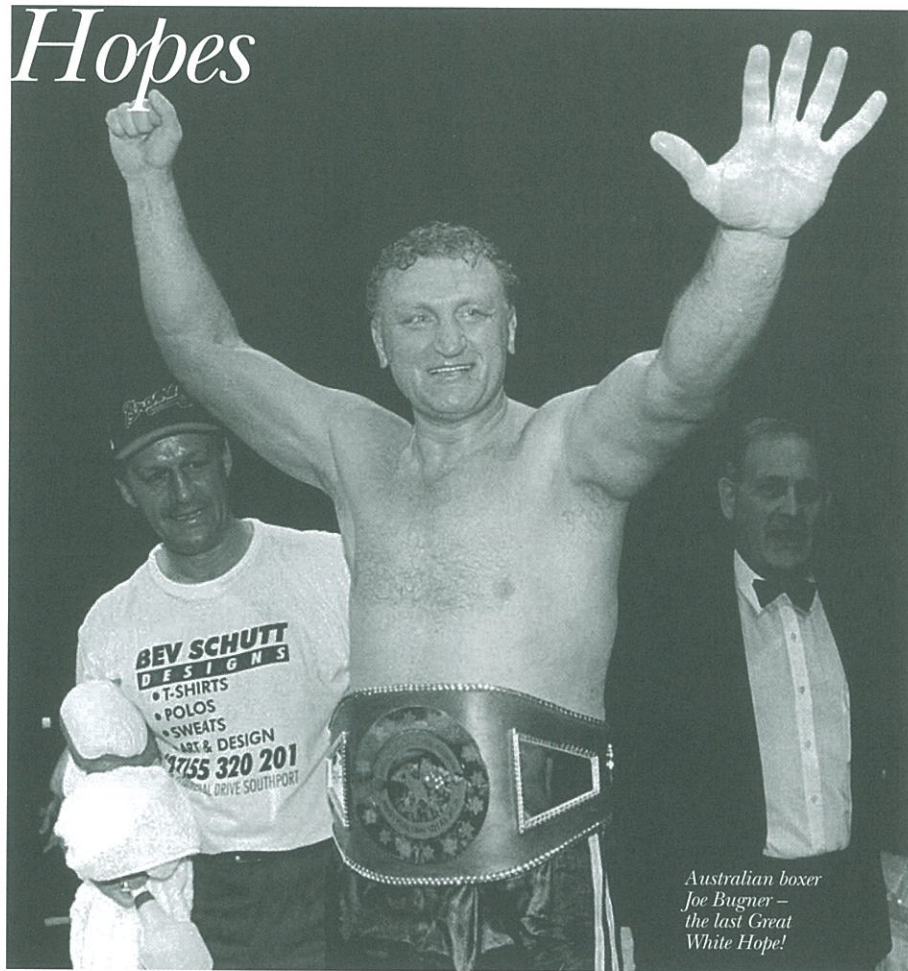
Meanwhile, back at the ranches at both Cape Mentelle and Cloudy Bay, we have been researching the options in providing added diversity in the white wine portfolios.

It is early days yet at Cloudy Bay but we are not far off making experimental wines from some Alsatian clones of pinot gris and pinot blanc, and an odd bod called arneis. At Cape Mentelle we are further down the track and this issue of *Mentelle Notes* heralds our debut.

'Making wine in the vineyard' has been the catchcry of people like me for the past 10 years. Winemakers are inclined to talk about retaining varietal flavours and aromas of fresh grapes and these characters can be predetermined by clever canopy management.

We coined a name for the style that still lingers around wine blah-blah sessions: 'fruit-driven styles.' The CM Semillon Sauvignon is an exemplary example of the style – even if I do say so myself.

At the same time we have delivered more complex wines that derive character not only from the grape but also the winemaking process – fermentation, yeast autolysis, oak resin and malolactic fermentation.



*Australian boxer Joe Bugner – the last Great White Hope!*

We have a word for this style too – these are 'textural' wines.

In the early days of our varietal selection process, decisions were made with an ambition to make wines where textural elements came before fruitiness. This dictated varieties displaying subtle fruit character. The selection process was further narrowed by the coastal location and a wish to ripen grapes late in the growing season.

*‘In the early days of our varietal selection process, decisions were made with an ambition to make wines where textural elements came before fruitiness.’*

Obvious candidates were viognier from the northern Rhône (we were doing well with red Rhône varieties, so why not whites?) – and its near neighbours to the south, marsanne and roussanne.

Viognier was until recently in decline on its home turf. A poor producer, its best expression is seen in the great and rare wines of Condrieu. It's on the strength of these wines that the variety has been exported and is now growing in popularity in the New World.

Yalumba have taken the high ground with viognier and produce some excellent examples, as do Petaluma and a hatful of others. We planted a patch in CMV's Chapman Brook vineyard in 1997, which is now ready for evaluation.

Marsanne is the pre-eminent white grape of the Rhône Valley and Chateau-Neuf-du-Pape. It has a reputation for quantity ahead of quality but in the right sites it can be very good.

Try a Hermitage Blanc from any of the better makers and you will need no convincing. The variety has been in Australia since the 1860s and today I believe Yeringberg in the Yarra Valley makes a great Aussie example.

Roussanne is classier than marsanne, an aesthete versus the athlete. It lost out for a generation because it is a shy bearer. But in a market that seeks quality ahead of quantity it is on the comeback trail. It has been in Australia since the 1870s but it is only a very recent import to WA.

Two of our growers have punted on marsanne and roussanne and while we are a couple of years off picking the latter, we have had access to marsanne for the past three years.

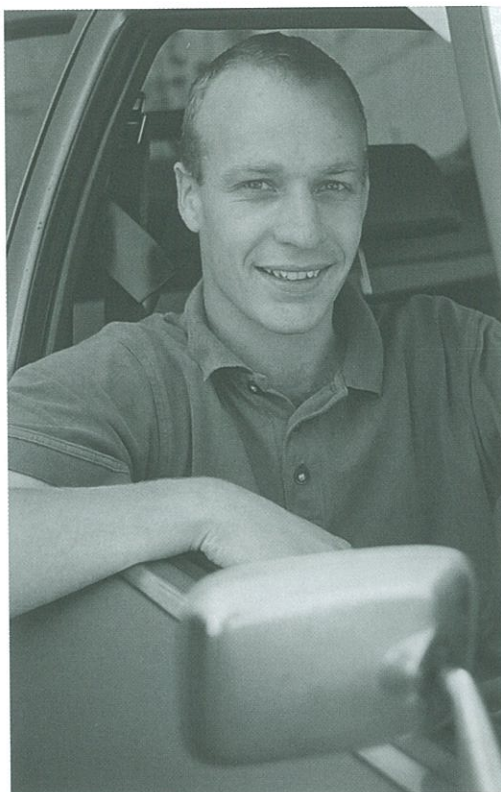
Visitors to Cape Mentelle can try two new wines this autumn and judging by the initial response at cellar door the first great white hope *Cape Mentelle Marsanne Viognier 2002*, and the companion Italian stallion *Cape Mentelle Sangiovese 2001* have already tickled numerous palates. Winemaker, John Durham, reckons they are great precursors to the World Cup.

# Recruited

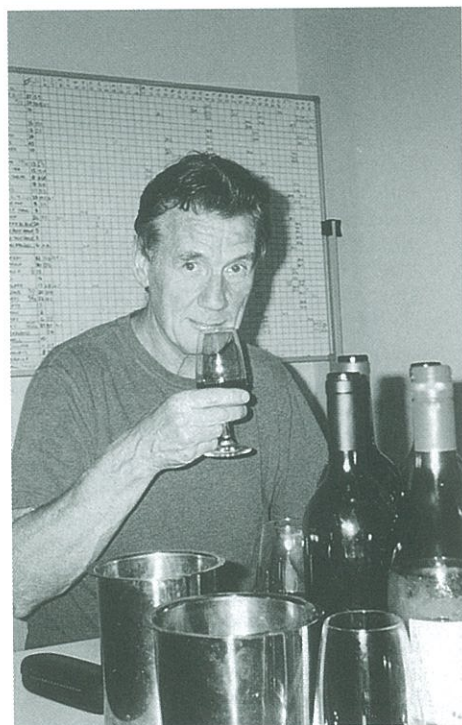
Despite the fact that Ivan Sutherland maintains wine is made in the vineyard (see page 1) winemakers are needed! They're the ones who take charge of the lovingly nurtured grapes once they reach the winery, typically unceremoniously tipped into big hoppers on their journey from fruit to wine.

Cloudy Bay's harvest has started and it will be the inaugural vintage for newly recruited winemaker Nick Lane. He joins the Cloudy Bay team – Eveline Fraser, James Healy and Kevin Judd – who are all primed for a happy harvest.

Nick, a Kiwi who reckons he'd be a train driver in India if he wasn't a winemaker, studied science at Auckland University before doing his oenology diploma in Toulouse. Subsequently, he worked in Bergerac and Burgundy. He completed the 2000 vintage at CJ Pask in Hawkes Bay and looks forward to a smooth, compliant Marlborough season.



The would-be train driver...



## SIPHONING THE...

Monty Python fans will recognise this expert taster – globetrotter Michael Palin who called in recently to Cape Mentelle to check that the team were keeping up to the mark. Reports tell he requested permission for a special detour from his book publicity tour for Sahara, (Allen & Unwin), to go and try his favourite wines. The marketing managers of both companies aren't complaining one bit!

## PINOT ON STAGE

There is one grape arguably more celebrated than any other – the wonderfully vivacious and multi-faceted king of Burgundy, pinot noir. From the famous Hospices de Beaune event to Oregon, the Mornington Peninsula and New Zealand, this beguiling grape is probed, palate tested and paraded by winemakers and wine lovers alike.

Pinot will be back on a pedestal again in 2004 when New Zealand hosts **Pinot Noir 2004**. To be held in Wellington, from **28 – 31 January 2004**, the event will comprise a series of seminars, tastings and dinners led by international pinot experts and commentators including Jasper Morris MW, Robert Joseph, Tim Atkin and a New World contingent including James Halliday, Huon Hooke and Bob Campbell MW.

The focal new feature of Pinot 2004 will be a day out across Cook Strait in Marlborough. Earlybird details: PH (04) 385 1458 or email: [contact@pinotnoir2004.co.nz](mailto:contact@pinotnoir2004.co.nz)

## PINOT @ CLOUDY BAY

Pinotphiles don't have to wait until 2004 to get their jollies...no indeed. The annual in-house pinot parade **Pinot at Cloudy Bay** is just a couple of months away – and will be held at the winery on **Saturday 21 June**.

This is the fourth in the series that unashamedly showcases pinot, the variety that Jancis Robinson MW reckons is a 'minx of a vine', the one that leads winemakers a merry dance, tantalising and unwilling to be tamed.

Well, every year New Zealand's pinot noir producers seem to get a better measure of this seductress and are making increasingly impressive wines. The country's best will join other international starlets from the 2000 vintage on stage at the annual tasting.

Among them will be several Burgundian Grand Crus – Domaine Denis Bachelet, Domaine Vougerai and Domaine Bruno Clavelier; California's Au Bon Climat, Bindi and Dromana Estate from Australia and a Kiwi quintet including Mount Difficulty (Otago), Neudorf (Nelson) and of course the Marlborough host, Cloudy Bay.

The tasting, held in the barrel hall, will be followed by an informal lunch accompanied by all the pinots – and this year, guest speaker Morris Gleitzman, a closet pinot fan with a good nose who also writes children's books. Sample delicious Marlborough produce, savour the intriguing wines and argue their bewitching merits.

Seduction seekers should book early (first in best dressed) to avoid disappointment. Tickets are \$220 (tasting & lunch). Details: Anna Griffiths PH (03) 520 9140 FAX (03) 520 9040.

email: [pinot@cloudybay.co.nz](mailto:pinot@cloudybay.co.nz)  
Registration form enclosed.

## MS GENNEX

*Sally Gudgeon continues the Field Guide to Wine Drinkers of Australia...meet Ms Gennex*

Let's get out the spy cam and see if we can catch a glimpse of a very fascinating species:

Ms Gennex has got the job you wanted in advertising that pays her squillions. She drives her black BMW convertible very, very fast. She had her first wine drinking epiphany in the back of a ute when she was 17. She hasn't touched Müller Thurgau since.

She's much more of a sauvignon blanc girl these days, particularly if it's got mountains on the label. You can spot her sipping a glass of pinot grigio over a rocket salad in St Kilda, or you can hear her drinking in a bar in Woolloomooloo.

She's the long-legged brunette wearing Prada. In between glasses of absinthe, she toys with a twenty-something poet. He's wearing black. An exclamation mark of facial hair defines his being. She's really connecting with his literary genius (ooooooooooooooooo Raoooo!!). She could be having another epiphany...

Ms Gennex lives in a minimalist apartment in the inner city. We took a peek inside her distressed stainless-steel bar fridge, and we found the following: three cans of dog food (what did happen to Boris?), a half eaten jar of Beluga caviar, an empty bottle of Pelorus (it's that fabulous dolphin thingy, it's just soooo eco), six bottles of vodka with interesting bits floating in them, and some frilly red agent-provocateur undies. Bon appetit!



# Good Morning Vietnam

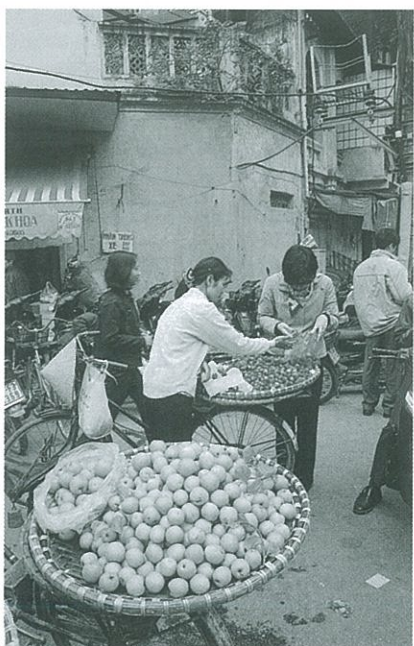
The colonial French left the Vietnamese some very important legacies – good coffee, baguettes and croissants, and an appreciation for wine. These gastronomic bequests also appeal to London-based wine communicator Robert Joseph, instigator of the International Wine Challenge.



Eating out in Hanoi.

Never one to miss a good wine opportunity, especially when the host country has fabulous wine-friendly cuisine, Robert Joseph took his Challenge concept to Vietnam. The first year went well, so in January he hosted the second International Vietnam Wine Challenge.

Over 375 wines were entered by importers representing the USA, France, Italy, Spain, New Zealand and Australia, as well as local Vietnamese producers. They were judged by a panel of 60 Vietnamese and overseas wine experts, including MN's Editor who just happened to be in Hanoi on holiday.



Market shopping in Hanoi.

The Best White and Best Red Trophies both went to American companies – Wente and Chateau St Michele, but right up there with the other 30-odd Gold Medal winners was the *Cape Mentelle Cabernet Merlot 'Trinders' 2000*. Its minty West Aussie nose stood out clearly after a rigorous all-day palate workout.

Vietnam is an emerging wine market in Asia, especially so because many older Vietnamese have traditionally had access to French wine and a tasting nomenclature. But they are not alone.

'The young Vietnamese take wine seriously and are beginning to discover white wines which match better with delicate Vietnamese food,' commented Robert Joseph.

Vietnam is developing rapidly, resorts are being built and Hanoi increasingly hosts a growing number of elegant Vietnamese restaurants in refurbished colonial houses. What's more, Vietnam is currently one of the few countries considered a safe travel destination in a world transfixed by war.

## WHITE CHALLENGER



Those who follow wine health trends will be au fait with the restorative powers of red wine –

a positive tonic! In fact, when the King of Thailand told his subjects all about his doctor's red wine 'cure', sales of imported wine skyrocketed.

A great deal of research

shows that the

active agents in red wine are polyphenols which are found in grape skins and pips. They have been shown to inhibit fatty streaks in artery walls as well as mopping up damaging free radicals. What's more, the French, who know how to enjoy and imbibe red wine, suffer lower rates of heart disease.

This so-called 'French Paradox' has always attached to red wine, not white. But now a French researcher has specially developed a chardonnay rich in those miraculous polyphenols. Does that mean we can have two glasses of red, and two white a day to keep the doctor away?

## TWISTERS TELL

Well, well, well...who would have guessed how many ardent twisters there are out there! In the previous issue we invited *Mentelle Notes* readers to let us know their deepest and most intimate thoughts about using screwcaps – the wine industry's answer to safe drinking.

Would wine imbibers be deterred from a serious relationship with their favourite tippie if it arrived at the dinner table sealed with a 'twist-top' closure?

Well, MN's penetrating market research shows growing acceptance of the screwcap solution. While not unanimous, it shows that most CB drinkers are pragmatic and willing to twist their wrists.

Pro-screw-cappers put their case:

*'If one out of every 10 sausages you bought at a supermarket was off they'd be sued and the shop closed down.'*

RHYS MATHIAS

*'The quality of the wine I have had from screw cap bottles has always been excellent.'*

SUE HARLICK

*'I'm so fed up with corked wine that I would love to be in a position to only buy bottles with screw tops...'*

NYE JOHN

*'I wholeheartedly support your move to screw caps. Some of my colleagues here say, "But what about the romance of pulling the cork? It's not the same!" To that I reply that there is no romance in keeping a fine wine for many years and then opening it to find it was tainted by a faulty cork.'*

RICHARD MITCHELL

Well there won't be any corked bottles among the 2003 Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc, which will all be bottled with screwcaps for the NZ and Australian markets. So convinced is Kevin Judd of the technology, that he is installing a screw-capper, so all screwcap bottling will in future be done in house.



The end of the line...?

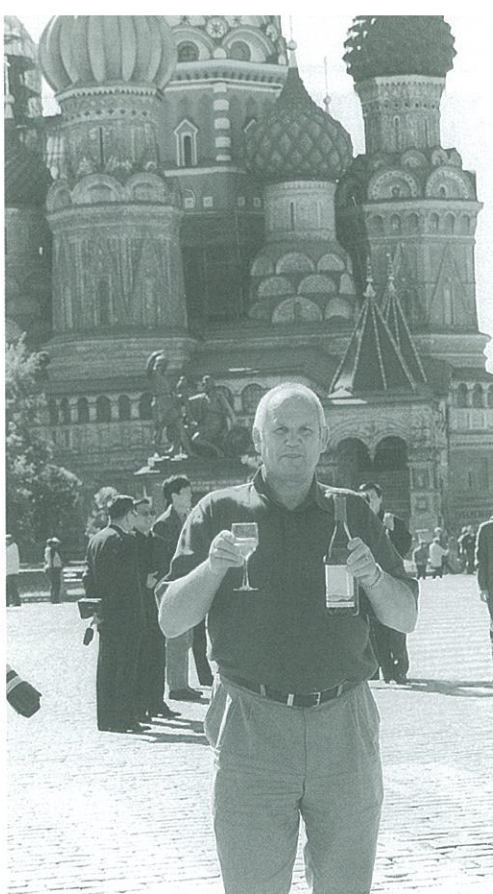
## RED DEVILS

Winter is just round the corner so what better way to warm those cockles than with a glass or three of red from the West? These two Cape Mentelle reds now in stock in New Zealand are guaranteed to stoke your fire. Both the *Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon 1999*, described modestly as a 'ball-burster' and rated 94 points by WA's Ray Jordan, and *Cape Mentelle Cabernet Merlot 'Trinders' 2001* are available from fine wine stockists and from the cellar door.

# Red Rover

Previous Mentelle Ambassadors have trekked to remote corners of the globe to qualify for ambassadorial status. North Pole, South Pole, high mountains, wide rivers – all have been conquered in pursuit of MN's recognition of extraordinary ambassadorial feats. But such intrepid adventures aren't compulsory. Certainly not. Leisurely coach tours also rank on the qualifier stakes. So meet the latest recipients – Mr & Mrs McCurdy of Christchurch, who jumped on a bus to Moscow and jumped off at St Basil's in Red Square, clutching their bottle of *Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 2001*. They didn't drink it with black bread and sausage and doubt sauvignon blanc will ever rival vodka sales north of the Volga, but next time they will take more supplies – to share generously with the other passengers.

*If you too wish to be part of CBV's export effort, keep your eyes peeled. Next time you're far from home and spot a bottle of Cloudy Bay or Cape Mentelle – in a nightclub in Nairobi, duty-free store in Dubai or your local wine store, buy it and take a photo. Then send it to The Editor, Mentelle Notes. Taking a bottle with you is also highly commended and encouraged.*



Bryan McCurdy outside St Basil's.

*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.*

## PUT WORDS IN HIS MOUTH...



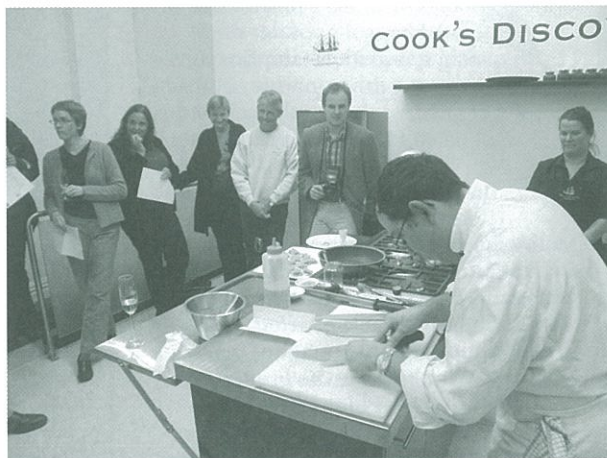
*Some people go to London to meet the Queen. Kevin Judd went to Melbourne (to present his latest releases at the recent NZ Wine Fair) and met the Prime Minister. But what did he say to her?*

*Send your one line 'bubble' caption to the Editor, Mentelle Notes, PO Box 376, Blenheim or email: [anna.griffiths@cloudybay.co.nz](mailto:anna.griffiths@cloudybay.co.nz). The best entry received before 30 April will be published in the next MN issue. All entrants will go in the lucky wine barrel draw to win a six-pack of Te Koko.*

## COOKS' TOUR

Captain Cook was one of the first visitors to Marlborough, calling in for repairs and food supplies to the sheltered bay that he ultimately named 'Cloudy'. No doubt, he'd have loaded up a few cartons of sauvignon blanc too, given half the chance. And if he'd delayed his travels for a couple of hundred years, he might even have popped down to Hotel D'Urville (named after another visiting sailor) to learn how to cook paua.

Today's visitor can do just that – at Hotel D'Urville's Cook's Discovery Cooking School. Classes run throughout the year and range from half-day sessions on the local olive industry to a two-day, men-only, sleeves-up kitchen intensive. Local Marlborough produce is featured in all classes, as of course are the region's wines. Details: PH (03) 5779945 or the website: [www.durville.com/cooksdiscovery](http://www.durville.com/cooksdiscovery)



*Marc Vaca cooks Marlborough Sounds salmon...*

## Pelorus 1998

*'Excellent yeast, elegance with great mouth-feel...and has significantly more real fruit quality than Champagnes twice its cost.'*

Don Beaven, CHRISTCHURCH STAR

*'Aficionados will find lots of flavour intensity and charm in this big, over-the-top wine.'*

Charmian Smith, OTAGO DAILY TIMES

## Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 2002

*'Generous ripely flavoured wine with excellent freshness, vigour and depth.'*

Michael Cooper, SUNDAY STAR TIMES

*'Flamboyant on the nose with more mineral and flinty notes but showing richer, stonefruit flavours in the mouth...'*

19 points, Paul Tudor,

NORTH SHORE TIMES ADVOCATE

## Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 2001

*'This elegant, multi-faceted, distinctly cool-climate wine will appeal strongly to a sophisticated international audience.'*

Michael Cooper, SUNDAY STAR TIMES

## Cloudy Bay Te Koko 2000

*'Creamy, mouth-filling wine with spicy oak, sizzled butter, yeast lees and subtle varietal fruit flavours. A rich and complex wine that offers much appeal.'*

94 points, Bob Campbell MW, CUISINE

## Cloudy Bay Gewürztraminer 2001

*'An opulent lush wine with seductive depth of citrus, pear and spice flavours and slightly earthy complexity. It offers the substantial body weight and deliciously soft texture found in the classic gewürztraminers of the Alsace.'*

Michael Cooper, SUNDAY STAR TIMES

## Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 2000

*'A good powerful nose with real mint and raspberry. Good forest berry fruits, lovely silky mid-palate and nice weight of alcohol. A good wine with excellent length. Well balanced.'*

85 points, WINE (UK)

## Cape Mentelle Semillon Sauvignon 2002

*'One of the most reliable examples year in year out. The complex herb and spice fruit of the bouquet is followed by intense and powerful flavours of herb, citrus and gooseberry, the oak subtle throughout. Gold plated.'*

Top 100, James Halliday, WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN

## Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon 1999

*'A top vintage for this celebrated cabernet, showing crushed-leaf, cedar and blackberry flavours and some animal hints and a serve of dark chocolate. Serious tannin structure and great length complete the picture. Starting to drink well but better if cellared.'*

Huon Hooke, SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

## MENTELLE NOTES

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CLOUDY BAY & CAPE MENTELLE  
VINEYARDS

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