

MENTELLE NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF CLOUDY BAY AND CAPE MENTELLE

Seeing Angels

Morris Gleitzman has a celestial experience. He came back to earth to file this report.

When I walked into that tasting room I thought I'd died and gone to heaven. Fifty-odd metres of table. Two thousand plus glasses. Nineteen of the world's top pinots. Tubs of really high quality sawdust, the stuff made from real timber instead of the plastic woodgrain from car dashboards.

OK, I'm exaggerating a bit. It wasn't actually heaven. It couldn't have been because Kevin Judd and James Healy were there. But it was the next best thing and almost as celestial – the Pinot at Cloudy Bay Tasting.

Boy, was I excited. I've been passionate about pinot since I was a toddler. The single greatest sadness of my student years was that pinot didn't come in cardboard casks. Since then I've drunk pinot at every opportunity, limited only by cost and the family's stubborn preference for food and school shoes.

So to be invited to taste 19 of the world's finest examples, selected from legendary vineyards around the globe by the pinot pixies at Cloudy Bay, was a thrill beyond compare. My legs were trembling so much as we took our places at the table that I made all 2660 glasses rattle.

It wasn't just excitement. Now, from the safety of hindsight, I can admit it was also anxiety. I'd never been to a big important tasting before. Not one with 140 tasters and separate glasses for everyone. The other tasters all looked very experienced. I was the only one wearing white. With red splotches down the front. And socks embossed with the words 'pinot slut.'

Even worse, many of those present were wine industry professionals. I've always felt very nervous in the presence of wine critics, ever since I dated one as a young man and then saw the notes she made after our only night together. ('Two minutes skin contact, soft entry, not much length, poor mouthfeel, sappy.')



A beatific Morris Gleitzman first on left...

As Kevin Judd invited us to start tasting, I tried to look as nonchalant and experienced as I could. My one hope was to watch those around me closely and do as they did.

'Ahead of me were another eighteen glasses of heaven. The pinots of the gods.'

To my right was an eminent wine writer. When he pursed his lips, I pursed my lips. When he sucked air through his teeth, I sucked air through my teeth. When he grimaced and clenched his eyes shut, I did the same, desperately hoping I was looking like a pro. Unfortunately I wasn't. When I opened my eyes I saw I was standing on his foot.

To cover my embarrassment I took a slug of the first wine. And found I was in heaven after all.

At this point my strategy of imitation went out the window. Most of the tasters around me were standing deep in thought, sniffing, swishing, frowning occasionally, making notes. Very few, if any, were on their knees hugging their tasting glass and whispering proposals of marriage to the contents.

After a while I stood up and tried to pull myself together. I was facing a very serious problem.

The reason I'd been invited to this celestial slurp-fest was to give a talk at the post-tasting lunch. I'd been working on my speech for days and had hit on the perfect theme – the sensitive temperamental nature of the pinot noir grape as a metaphor for the frailty of human existence. The idea had been inspired by a husband and wife winemaking couple I knew who'd been so stressed by the ordeal of trying to make decent pinot that they'd seriously considered divorce, but had decided to stay together for the grapes.

I was confident my talk would go over well, but only if I remained sober. At a previous wine gathering I'd tried to do a talk after a few too many glasses and it had been a disaster. I lost my notes and tried to adlib a speech from the back label of a bottle ('Carbonic Maceration Ameliorating Malolactic Acid and Alluvial Schist') but I couldn't even pronounce the title. I vowed then that if I ever had to talk at a tasting again I'd spit out every drop, including those little reservoirs you get when your teeth cavities fill up.

But this wasn't just any tasting. Ahead of me were another 18 glasses of heaven. The pinots of the gods. I didn't want to spit out an aromatically intense and gustatory opulent molecule of the stuff. I wanted my throat in pinot paradise along with my mouth. Plus my stomach and my small intestine. I wanted my bladder to experience nirvana too.

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**NEW
RELEASES**

MAKING HAY

We all know the old adage of taking advantage when the good times roll... which is what astute wine buyers will do if they read the weather maps. Perusal of the 2002 charts points to a couple of lapses on Mother Nature's part.

That's when she dished up widespread frost. More recently she deluged the North Island and Picton, but not Marlborough. Which is why forward thinkers should be looking closely at these three splendid new releases on which Mother Nature shined.

Cloudy Bay Te Koko 2001

'Released as a matured wine, Te Koko is a deliciously aromatic, richly textured, alternative style of sauvignon blanc. Bright gold with green hues and laden with lush pink grapefruit, sandalwood and a balmy eucalypt character; the 2001 Cloudy Bay Te Koko is elegantly structured with a succulent yet restrained palate of citrus and roasted hazelnuts, leading into a generous and lingering finish.'

Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 2002

'Lifted aromas of plump red cherries, wild sage flowers and liquorice define the intense varietal character of the Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 2002. The palate is rich and savoury with flavours reminiscent of dried herbs, toasty oak and dark red fruits layered over silky, fine-grained tannins, finishing with great length and depth of flavour.'

THE RINGS THING

No doubt the creators of the multiple Oscar-winning, nation unifying movie *Lord of the Rings* are still celebrating their unparalleled international success...and probably with more than a few cold beers.

Certainly, the bubbles were flowing at Wellington's official party to mark the world premiere of *The Return of the King*, the third film of the trilogy masterminded by director Peter Jackson. Over 2000 guests drank *Pelorus Vintage 1998* before the screening, and *Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 2003* and more *Pelorus Vintage* bubbles at the after party – Bilbo and Frodo's favourite Middle Earth tipple.

ED LEAVES

Regular readers of *Mentelle Notes* will be familiar with the occasional off-shore 'Ed Line' reports from international marketing director Edward Berry, an integral member of the Cloudy Bay and Cape Mentelle marketing team for 12 years.



Edward Berry discovers the wonders of a BBQ.

His critical role was to develop new export markets and oversee all export sales and marketing in the UK, USA and Europe.

A true-blue Brit with the occasional pinstripe suit, Edward soon discovered a passion for all things Kiwi and Australian, especially wine. His expertise, good humour and bonhomie will be missed but the CBV crew wish him well in his new London-based general management role.

CLOUDY BAY



Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 2002

'The scent of grapefruit and lemon blossom is beautifully counterbalanced by smoky savoury aromatics reminiscent of roasted cashews and macadamia nuts. The palate is rich yet refined with a chalky texture supporting delicious mineral-like complexity and creaminess derived from traditional techniques. Gentle fruit handling has produced a tightly structured, elegant wine that will age gracefully over the next six to ten years.'



SEEING ANGELS continued

The next two hours were hell. Each mouthful was more sublime than the last, until I saw that sawdust tub gaping up at me, implacable and demanding. Somehow I managed to spit each time. With some of the wines, the Martinborough, the Bannockburn, the Domaine Jaques-Frédéric Mugnier Les Amoureuses, only the sheer force of gravity dragged the liquid back out of my mouth. That and the pressure of James Healy's hands around my throat.

I stayed sober and gave my talk. And as I did I learned that the human soul is just as contrary and unpredictable as the most cantankerous of pinot vines. Three minutes into my speech I made an unplanned and totally unwise reference to *The Lord of the Rings* movies and their contribution to viniculture in New Zealand. (I can't remember exactly what I said but it was something about sex with hobbits, thrush and indigenous yeast.) From the appalled expressions on the faces of Kevin and James and those in the audience with Scottish Presbyterian forebears, I knew it was exactly the sort of thing I'd have said if I'd been completely pissed.

To their credit, Kevin and James kept their composure and even bought me dinner afterwards. I flew back home after that memorable weekend feeling two emotions. One was gratitude for the kindness and hospitality I'd received. The other was deep grief.

I did have one small consolation. I managed to smuggle out the contents of my spitting bin. When I got home I gave the soggy sawdust a long, loving squeeze and caught the drops in a glass.



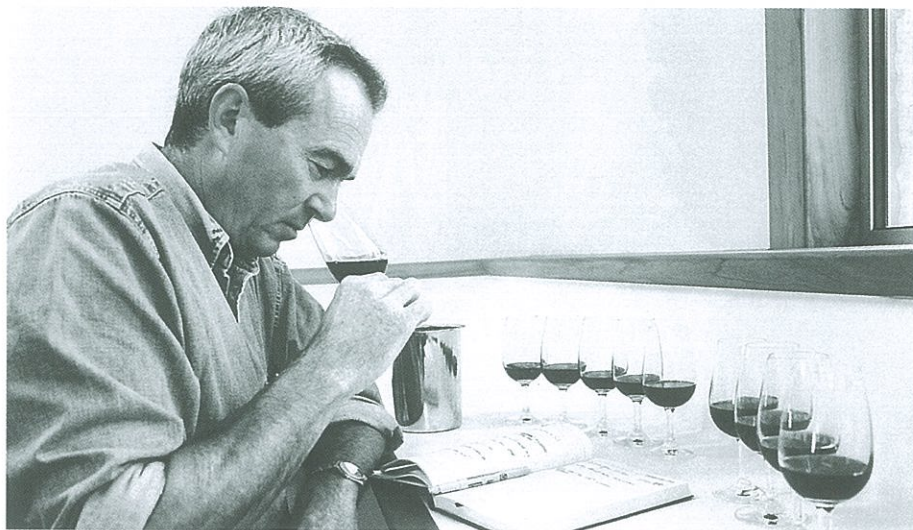
It's an unusual blend (Geelong/ Macedon Ranges/ Mornington Peninsula/ Southern Tasmania/ Gevrey-Chambertin/ Pommard/ Vosne Romanée/ Chambolle-Musigny/ Nuits-St-Georges/ Wairau Valley/ Martinborough/ Central Otago/ Canterbury/ Nelson/ California/ Oregon) and it's a bit woody for pinot, but each time I taste it and spit it back into the glass (there's so little I can't bring myself to swallow it) I feel like I'm in heaven again and I offer a little prayer of thanks to the pinot angels of Cloudy Bay.

Morris Gleitzman is a regular contributor to Mentelle Notes and a famous children's author.

Ed's Note: See page 5 for details on this year's event...

Making Pinot

Pinot noir is known to bring out obsessive traits in winemakers and wine drinkers, a complex variety with the capacity to captivate and perplex... especially those entrusted with its making. Jane Adams joined the blending team to report on creation of the 2003 Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir.



Kevin Judd ponders pinots...

Refer to the *Oxford Dictionary* and you will immediately discover there is nothing exact about the notion of blending. At its simplest the *Oxford* decrees the verb to 'blend' is to 'mix a substance with another so that they combine together as a mass.'

Doesn't sound right for the glorious grape known to Pliny in the first century AD as *vitis allobroica*. A closer semantic attempt follows – 'mix different types of the same substance together to make a product of the desired quality,' which is amplified by the notion of 'forming a harmonious combination.'

That's exactly what the Cloudy Bay blending team endeavoured to do over two consecutive days in mid-February – create a wondrous, voluptuous siren of such seductive quality that pinot noir drinkers the world over would swoon in her presence. (Pinots are indubitably feminine...)

At the outset, her component parts didn't exactly set pulses racing. Nineteen clear glass 375ml riesling bottles lined up on the lab bench, marked with batch codes rather like felons.

They ran from R50, almost but not completely consecutively, through to R69, plus a couple more, each identified by a barrel batch number. To add confusion, there was another inexplicable code, and a check list for each independently handled parcel of fruit that encompassed variety (yup they all looked a familiar garnet red), clone, vineyard locations, pH, acid and brix levels, skin contact times and that magic factor – volume.

It's soon after 9am. The first flight is poured. Ten glasses ready for their first audition. The adjudication panel – winemakers Kevin Judd, Eveline Fraser and Nick Lane, viticulturist Siobán Harnett, visitor James Healy and yours truly, the scribe – launch into silent sniffing, swirling, sucking and ultimately, spitting.

We are looking for fruit quality, ripeness, overt and subtle personality traits, the impact of clone, vine age, site, oak, barrel fermentation – and the scourge of the 2003 vintage, Jack Frost. We find him lurking in Batch R58, 1800 litres that are eventually rejected.

'At the outset her component parts didn't exactly set pulses racing.'

The concentrated silence is shattered by James Healy's mobile, so new he doesn't even notice its insistent ring. Siobán sets it to vibrate and slides it back in his pocket.



The bevy of beauties lines up...

All 10 aspirants have been tasted and noted.

James volunteers a positive ranking and comment on Wine One. Its mintiness is detected. 'Like someone walking past with toothpaste,' comments Eveline. Oak is discussed in Wine Three, and Dijon clone 667 gets a unanimous thumbs up.

Kevin Judd approves the 'meaty stink' on Wine Seven, another its spicy rich palate which to me represented a bit of musculature that I reckon could provide the makings of a useful frame that underpins a curvaceous body.

We all score the wines on a three-point scale and Eveline collates the results.

A quick break and we start Flight Two. Nine more garnet girls, looking at the outset just like their predecessors. My admiration for winemakers grows by the sniff and swirl.

The olfactory concentration required for wine blending is surprisingly tiring, especially the detection of subtle aromatic and flavour nuances.

Relief comes with a vigorous discussion about sparkling and table wine pinot clones, the former copping the blame for Marlborough's slower claim to Kiwi pinot fame.

The Cloudy Bay Widow's Block which is planted to two table wine clones – six-year-old Swiss AM 10/5 and UCD5 otherwise known as the Pommard clone – is already showing excellent prospects, expected to improve with vine age.

Wine Sixteen shows a coconut character, Number Seventeen meadow hay and blackberry backed by complex barrel ferment characters.

More collation. Eveline whips out her calculator to add up batches and establish volume estimates.

While she tallies we look at a pre-blend – representing all the batches minus Jack Frost's unwelcome contribution which has the potential to reduce the 2003 projections by 200 cases.

Nothing like cold, hard numbers to focus the mind.

Two more options are poured. A blend comprising only the top-scoring batches, and the same blend including the frosted component. More contemplation. Further debate on the impact of various individual batches, and a preference emerges for the Swiss clone 10/5 from the Mustang block.

Kevin Judd decides on a break. We will reconvene tomorrow to re-examine the two primary blends as well as the six contended batches. No one demurs when he reflects that whatever the outcome, it will be as good as the 2002 vintage. After a four-hour session and serious olfactory fatigue I find that news a definite comfort.

Day Two dawns and our budding beauty parade has narrowed to the second chance, six runners-up. A good sleep, a Renwick pie lunch and they all look pretty sassy, except the shy two that have recently been sulphured.

Continued page 6

Yeast Feast

The release of the latest Cloudy Bay Te Koko brings yeast to the fore. Who better to tackle this rising topic than successful novelist Sarah-Kate Lynch.

Once upon a time, I barely gave yeast a thought. But a few years ago, standing in a field in County Cork on the stunningly rugged south-west coast of Ireland, my eyes were opened to the real and natural beauty of this most mysterious organism. And I've been a big fan ever since.

I was at Gubbeen Cheese in Schull researching my novel *Blessed Are*, which is about two crusty old Irish cheesemakers who make a mean creamy blue and foster pregnant vegetarians who milk cows to the strains of *The Sound of Music*.

Giana Ferguson, the real-life Gubbeen cheesemaker, was not at all crusty or old but rather blonde and very charming and provided every bit of true artisan passion with which I wanted to inject my fictional characters.

What Giana didn't know about cheese wasn't worth knowing. Of course, what she did know about cheese, I had trouble following. It was a bit like doing sixth form chemistry again – and I only passed the first time because so many people passed out in the exam that the rest of us were upgraded.

But the gist of what Giana was telling me was that cheesemaking is quite scientific and has a lot to do with acidity and pH and salinity and fermentation. Don't ask me for details. They are most definitely not at my fingertips. But what did get my eyes unglazed and starting to shine once more with comprehension was the post-scientific part of the process.

You see once the chemistry is over and done with, the cheese is left on its own, and that's when the real action begins. These little rounds of perfectly controlled milk and rennet simply sit back and soak up the natural yeasts from the Ferguson's rolling pastures which fly in through the window.

Those yeasts then ripen those cheeses with their orchestra of moulds and bacteria until the rinds are a brilliant orange, the taste is quite delicious, and each one fetches a pretty penny as far afield as Murray's Cheese Shop in New York.

It's in the air, Giana told me, encouraging me to give it a good sniff. That's Gubbeen, she said. That's what it's all about. You plough your field, you harrow it, you plant the perfect seed bed and then you stand back and let the yeast it produces work its magic on the cheese to make it your own.

Little wonder, having made that discovery, that my next book, *By Bread Alone*, was about a woman obsessed with sourdough, the deliciously tart and crunchy bread which is baked



Sarah-Kate pulls her sourdough...

using only the natural yeast in the air as a rising agent.

The key ingredient in sourdough is a starter: a combination of flour and water and the bacteria in your neighbourhood. You 'feed' this starter every day and when added to dough, kneaded, left to rise, knocked back and baked, it produces a loaf which has a thick, almost cheesy crust and a delightfully dense and spongy crumb.

Lacking the set-up, I had never been able to make cheese at home but sourdough I knew I could do. All I needed was flour and water and the bacteria in my neighbourhood. And, as it turned out, time.

‘An active starter should bubble like a Rotorua mudpool yet mine were all as flat as Lake Wakatipu.’

I started off with one recipe and one jar of flour and water. That didn't seem to get my starter going, so I got another recipe and another jar. That too sat grey and uninteresting so I found a third recipe and attempted a third starter. This too was as listless as all get-out so I combined it with one of the others and before I knew it I had eight bowls of flour and water perched around the kitchen in various states of decay, yet not a sign of life among them.

An active starter should bubble like a Rotorua mudpool yet mine were all as flat as Lake Wakatipu.

What am I doing wrong? I eventually caved in and asked a local baker.

You're not cheating, was his reply. Apparently the air in Queenstown is so lacking in humidity and bacteria, every other sourdough in town has a pinch of commercial yeast or six to help it on its way.

But cheating was not an option – where's the romance in that? – and besides with my vast knowledge of cheesemaking I should have known that I could not produce a starter from a recipe in a book.

Your yeast is different from that down the road or up the island or across the ocean. That's what makes it special. It's a product of the sun, the rain and whatever you're having yourself, as the Irish might say. And nothing you make with your yeast will taste the same as anyone else's. It will be better. Much better.

I fermented the juice of three Central Otago apples, mixed all my flour concoctions together, threw away all but 400g and two years later my starter is still alive and kicking and making the best bread money can't buy.

Sarah-Kate Lynch is the author of three novels and a regular columnist in the New Zealand Woman's Weekly. Her recommendations for this autumn are a good book (preferably one of hers), a slice of homemade sourdough, a wedge of washed-rind cheese, and a glass of Cloudy Bay Te Koko 2001.



A yeasty loaf.

The Wild Child

Winemaker Eveline Fraser reflects on childhood and non-interventionist winemaking.

As I lie in my hammock gazing out past red pohutukawa trees at a teal blue sea, I contemplate my glass of Sauvignon Blanc and watch the children playing on the beach in front of me.

They are all from the same family and gene pool but their physical differences never cease to amaze me. Not just the endless variation of skin and eye colour, delicate, pale, factor-30 skin contrasting to deep olive complexions. But also the fascinating mixture of personality and temperament, despite the fact that all the kids are subject to the same parenting and environment, the same household rules, the same beliefs and cultural identity, the same neighbourhood and school.

Why, I wonder, does one child naturally fall into the role of the sandcastle designer – deciding moat layout and bossily supervising earthworks – while her siblings are content to gather shells and feathers, to decorate and finish rather than engineer. And why is there always one who won't play along – the destructor who will, given half a chance, jump on the whole creation while the others are diverted by a beached starfish? The one who dares to be different...

Which is where my reverie reverts to that glass of Sauvignon Blanc – not just any old SB – but Cloudy Bay Te Koko – that heady mixture of wild dried herbs, lemongrass, honeysuckle and melons. A non-conformist with a creamy, succulent, long palate that keeps me leafing through my recipe book for flavours to do it justice – if we haven't finished the whole bottle before dinner...

Another vintage looms ever closer and I try and imagine what this next Te Koko wild child, a precarious mix of nature and nurture, will be like. No matter how much we winemakers nurture, the nature of each season seems to have a far greater influence over the personality of this fascinating, alluring, elusive wine.

Irrespective of the vintage there are some notable similarities between the wines created to date. They are best characterised by a family trait of creaminess, texture, and depth of flavour, recognisable attributes which derive from vineyard heritage, soil profiles, latitude and canopy management, factors which all play a part like the genetic make-up of children.

Then comes the nurture. We select older barrels, and pursue a wild yeast fermentation process that includes a full malolactic fermentation.



Eveline Fraser and her 'wild child.'

Careful grooming ensures the wine is 'bottle ready', a process of fine-tuning undertaken by we the 'wine parents' to set our offspring off on a responsible path...

Why then does Te Koko feel so unpredictable? Have we produced a truly 'wild child'? One moment displaying all the bright bloom of youth – a flash of a smile, tanned legs racing down the beach and sun shining, and all is well. Then suddenly, we are confronted by a sulky teenager, an unpredictable and moody adolescent banging on a drum set behind the closed doors of the barrel hall. Who is this kid?

‘That heady mixture of wild dried herbs, lemongrass, honeysuckle and melons...’

Like everything worthwhile, it takes time to bring up the child, Te Koko. Months of questioning, even doubting, must be suppressed while the vineyard moves through three vintages, till finally the wine is ready to face the world. Will it be like the voluptuous 2000 – full of sweet richness and weight? Will it mirror its 1999 brother – with more European flair and herbal lemonyness? Maybe two peas in a pod: the 2004 and the shy 1998, refined, well bred but never shouting?

It's all a matter of wait and see, relishing the constancy of unpredictability, never knowing what your favourite offspring will do next to surprise you – the proud, loving parent.

Eveline Fraser is the senior winemaker at Cloudy Bay.

PINOT @ CLOUDY BAY

Pinot is on the agenda again mid-year at the annual **Pinot at Cloudy Bay** tasting, a serious celebration that might, if you are as susceptible as Morris Gleitzman, send you to pinot heaven. The date for the celestial transport is **Saturday 19 June**.

This is the fifth in the series that unashamedly showcases pinot, the variety that has the capacity to bewitch many winemakers, leading them on a tantalising trail, reluctant to be harnessed.

It also impressed James Halliday who penned a note... 'Thank you a million times for what, on reflection, was the best-organised wine weekend I have ever experienced.'

Every year New Zealand's pinot noir producers appear to get a better measure of their obsessions and are making increasingly impressive wines. The country's best will join other 2001 vintage wines specially selected for the annual tasting.

Among them will be several Burgundian Grand and Premier Crus – Charmes Chambertin, Bachelet, Chambolle Musigny Les Fuées, and Vosne Romanée aux Reignots; Giaconda, Wantirna and Bass Phillip Reserve from Australia and a Kiwi quintet including Felton Road, Neudorf and the Marlborough host, Cloudy Bay.

The tasting, held in the barrel hall, will be followed by an informal lunch accompanied by all the pinots. Sample delicious local produce, savour the intriguing wines and celebrate their differences.

Seduction seekers should book early (first in best dressed) to avoid disappointment. Tickets are \$220 (tasting & lunch). Registration form enclosed. For more details call Anna Paterson PH 3 520 9140 FAX 3 520 9040. email: pinot@cloudybay.co.nz

PURE KIWI

New Zealand's clean green image was arguably the most significant contributor to the nation's tourism destination potential, at least till *The Lord of the Rings* saga socked it to the world's movie-goers. Currently, it's Middle Earth that is the lure.

Certainly, authenticity, quality and environmental awareness has been an important plank in the development of the country's '100% Pure' advertising campaign. All of which ties in to the purefoodnz movement which was launched late last year.

Configured by a number of prominent food industry participants, it aims to preserve New Zealand's GM-free food producer status by ensuring the foods grown in NZ remain GM-free. Wine of course is a food, which is why Cloudy Bay is a signatory to the purefoodnz campaign.

Spitting Image

Ralph Kyte-Powell goes behind the scenes at a wine exhibition.

'Great to see you mate. Look, would you mind manning the stand while I shoot off to have a bite to eat,' said the frazzled-looking winemaker. He grabbed his coat, headed for the door and, before I could say a word, I was it – the sole representative of Bloggs Vineyard and Winery (names have been changed to protect the innocent). Never mind, I thought, he'll be back soon and working at a wine exhibition tasting stand can't be too hard. Can it?

The exhibition hall was full of pretty girls, great food, and as much wine as you could slurp. Everywhere there were attractions and all I had to do was hang around the tasting bench, impressing the crowd by looking clever and knowledgeable. This was going to be a soda.

Little did I know what my pal's 'bite to eat' meant. I thought perhaps he'd grab a hamburger with the lot and be back in ten. He had other ideas. Mussels marinière, braised veal shank, crème brûlée, some bubbly, a bottle of Margaret River cabernet, a glass of sweet white, espresso, dolcetti and the deep, brown eyes of a long-lost girlfriend.

After half an hour of dispensing tastes to punters I was feeling uneasy. Where was he? I'd had enough of fending off tricky questions from serious bearded men in duffle coats about pH, clonal selection, terroir, and malolactic treatment.

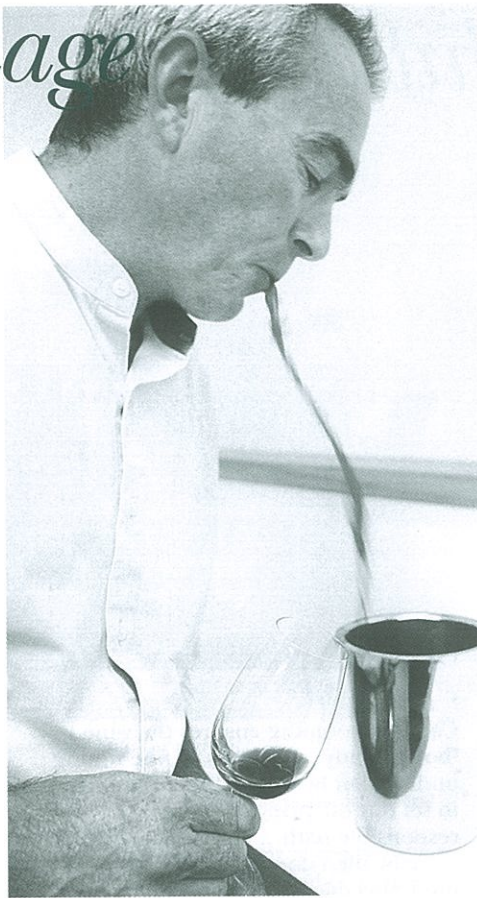
Some of these blokes' questions were like something from Mastermind and my ad hoc answers were getting increasingly sceptical looks. I couldn't ask the audience the answers, and I couldn't ring a friend without confirming their suspicions. I was out of my depth. It was dawning on me that I'd been deserted, and my anxiety was growing.

I knew after an hour that he wasn't coming back, but thankfully by then my worries were fading fast. Of course, I'd tried every bottle I'd opened: one had to guard against the evils of cork taint and oxidation, and, besides, the wines were jolly good. Soon I had a large glass of my own that I was replenishing enthusiastically and regularly.

The quantity of confidence in a bottle of good wine is astonishing. In no time I was describing winemaking methods of ridiculous complexity in intricate detail. I swirled my glass knowingly. I dribbled on my shirt. I laughed at my own hilarious winery anecdotes and leant on the counter leering at the nubile giving my best come-hither look.

My jokes were in increasingly poor taste. I shed tears of emotion as I spoke of the exquisite atmospheric beauty of sunsets behind vine-covered hillsides. I nearly fell over throwing my arms around to describe the symphony of the elements that embraced the vineyard. 'It's a rural idyll,' I said. 'You're a dill,' one of my audience said. 'You should be spitting it out,' advised another.

The next morning my head was thumping, my throat was dry,



Kevin Judd (again) spitting the mark...

and worst of all, I was cringing with embarrassment. My clever-dick mate was right; swallowing was my downfall, spitting was to become my salvation.

So listen to the voice of experience. At a tasting spit it out, especially if you're on duty (the winemaker mate who deserted me still isn't speaking to me), but make sure of the pitfalls along the way.

'Spitting was to become my salvation...'

Gentlemen should be careful about wearing ties. Women should be careful if they boast an ample bosom, and the wearing of pastel shades is not recommended. My sadly missed late colleague, Mark Shield, strongly advocated the all-black look. Not because he was a fashion leader, 'It doesn't show the drips,' he said.

You can practice spitting at home with a view to perfecting the professionals' projectile technique. This involves a thin stream of wine leaving the taster's pursed lips at high speed. It travels like a guided missile straight to the target (although I suspect you may need one of those tongues that roll into a channel to achieve this effect – something to do with a recessive gene, I believe). Once you've refined your technique you can hold your head high in wine tasting territory. Observe the etiquette, don't swallow too much...and good luck.

Ralph Kyte-Powell reckons he spits when tasting for his regular wine assessments for Cuisine and The Age.

MAKING PINOT continued

'I don't know what we were thinking yesterday,' announces Eveline. 'Wines always look better in the afternoon.' No wonder we were harsh the previous morning!

The runners-up are reassessed and all bar Number Five, which is accused of 'steminess', make it back into contention, even the sulphured batches that will need to settle down before a final verdict is reached.

The discussion moves to balance between aroma and palate, palate weight and acid levels, an issue that has obviously been on Kevin Judd's mind for a while.

Eveline puts up four final candidates. Day One's star blend (A). That blend plus samples One and Six from Day Two (B). Day One All-In minus Jack Frost (C). And Day Two Blend B plus Mustang's R52 10/5 clone batch. That makes Blend Five for Day Two...

She's a vivacious, personality-packed, fleshy but not flabby, vibrant, soft verging to rounded, well-proportioned and statuesque starlet who will need at least 12 months out of the limelight to fine-tune her entrance.

I bet you can't wait to meet her... Ms Cloudy Bay Pinot 2003.

Note: The Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 2003 is due for release this time next year.

Jane Adams is a self-confessed pinophile and Editor of Mentelle Notes who unreservedly apologises for any shattered myths.

GLOBAL GROUP

Back in 1990 Cloudy Bay and Cape Mentelle were purchased by Champagne house Veuve Clicquot, part of the global Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy group of luxury goods companies. Recent corporate realignments now see both companies as part of the global Moët Hennessy Wine Estates group that also encompasses Chandon Australia, Green Point, Mountadam, Domaine Chandon California and Newton in the USA, and South American entities – Bodegas Chandon Argentine, Terrazas, and Chandon do Brasil – a move that will enhance global distribution channels.

MUSTS

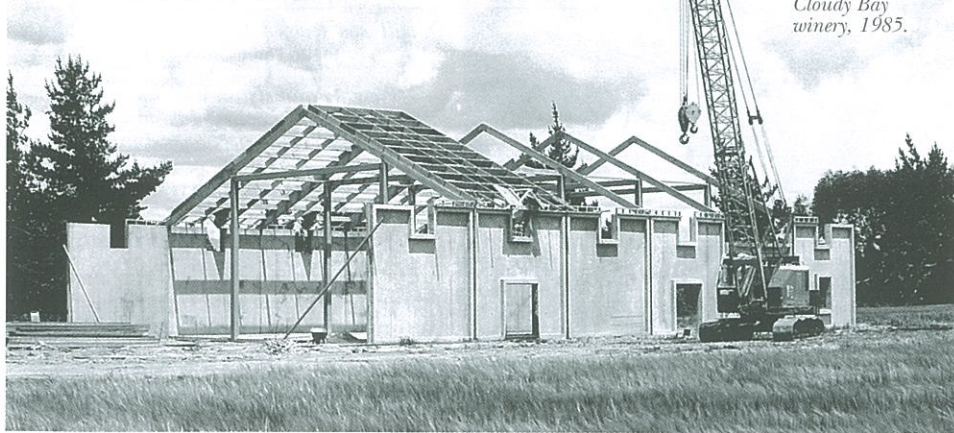
Pinot at Cloudy Bay

Saturday 19 June, 2004
Cloudy Bay Winery, Marlborough
Details: Anna Paterson
PH: (03) 520 9140
Email: pinot@cloudybay.co.nz

Our Friends to the West

21 - 25 June, 2004
Leading Australian wineries tour NZ.
Tastings and dinners in Auckland
Wellington, Christchurch & Queenstown.
Details: Caroline Henty
PH: (09) 366 2082
Email: chenty@negociants.com

Marlborough's Milestone



Erecting the Cloudy Bay winery, 1985.

It's 30 years since the first vines were planted in Marlborough, a move that has dramatically changed the course of New Zealand's wine industry. Montana were the pioneers, secretly buying 1200 hectares of farm land in 1973 under the auspices of an investment company ironically named, Cloudy Bay Properties Ltd.

The first 26 hectares of sauvignon blanc struggled in a drought year and 60% died. By 1979 irrigation had been installed and the inaugural harvest was declared.

Now the Wairau and its associated valleys boast about 7000 hectares of vines (6677 hectares in 2003), 70-plus wineries and at least 250 grape growers.

The rapid evolution of Marlborough's wine industry gives rise to some poignant observations, including one from Bob Campbell MW. 'A once sleepy sheep-farming region has become a bustling energetic wine capital. Luxurious homes and European four-by-four vehicles have replaced old weatherboard houses and battered Holdens.'

Does that mean the sheep jokes have all morphed to Merc jokes?

GROWTH PLANS

Global thirst for Marlborough's fine wines has had a significant impact on vineyard development in the Wairau and its associated valleys, with an estimated 1000 hectares planted to new vines in the past twelve months.

Cloudy Bay's latest contribution to the regions' growth begins this coming spring in the Omaka Valley, a southern tributary to the Wairau Valley that is right next door to the

third valley, the Brancott, home of Cloudy Bay's Mustang vineyard. The new 45-hectare Barracks vineyard, located on gently undulating country at the head of the Omaka valley, was selected for its aged alluvial soils, higher altitude and desirable diurnal range (that means hotter days and cooler nights). Fifteen hectares will be developed annually with close-planted Dijon pinot noir clones that are well suited to the conditions. How the garden grows ...



Harvest time at Cloudy Bay.

BUMPER KIWI YEAR

All things being equal New Zealand will turn in its biggest harvest ever this vintage. New Zealand Winegrowers estimates a harvest of 170,000 tonnes from 18,000-plus hectares of grapes across the country. That's welcome news after the 2003 frost-affected vintage that saw Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc tonnages down by 50%.

As *Mentelle Notes* goes to press the Kiwi crew are on tenterhooks hoping for good yields and quality to match. This

year will also see grapes coming on stream from two new blocks – sauvignon blanc from the Widow's Block and pinot noir from the Kegworth vineyard of contract growers, David and Val Rose.

Kevin Judd reports a warmer than average summer, with a hot dry Christmas period. Since late January things have been a bit topsy-turvy, with unsettled weather patterns delivering lots of wind and cloud interspersed with intermittent light rain and sun. But the portents are good...

THINK BIG

Size isn't everything...or is it? Certainly, if you are planning a celebration, or want to impress a crowd of your chardonnay-loving friends there is now a bigger bottle option – magnum bottles of *Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1998*.

Previously, these large format bottles were primarily only available to select trade customers but are now available from the winery.

Winemaker Nick Lane didn't have a party to go to but pulled the cork on one recently to provide the following tasting notes on this six-year-old wine:

'A pale golden colour, with a nose of shortbread and citrus that opens up to baked apple and pineapple with background oak-derived nuances of smoke and spiciness. A firm front palate broadens out to show some luscious bottle age, finishing cleanly with a hint of toasty apricot. Has only just started to relax, with some years of ageing potential left.'

So when's the party?

UK DROUGHT

It's nothing to do with rugby, promise. We'd rather your wine-drinking Pommie mates had ready supplies to continue to celebrate their World Cup win, but they will have to wait till November to replenish the garage fridge. That's when the new United Kingdom Cloudy Bay and Cape Mentelle distributor will have a full range of wines on-tap for Send 'Em Mentelle in the UK delivery. In the interim we regret this momentary lapse in our UK wine service.

SEA LEGS

Once upon a time, the usual recreational diversions for cruise-goers was shuffleboard, quoits and charades. But things have changed. The luxury Silversea company has committed to far more diverting activities for their guests who are encouraged to take food and wine more seriously than a series of convivial on-board meals.

The Silversea wine master Jean-Claude Terdjemane is responsible for the company's wine acquisitions and culinary and wine education program. Guests can choose from a 48-wine complimentary selection (factored into daily rates) or opt for one of the bottles from the *Silver Shadow's* 10,000-bottle floating cellar which includes Cloudy Bay.

What's more, Silversea passengers can expect to call in some unlikely ports while sailing the Pacific route – Newcastle, Geelong and Picton all feature. Why? Because they are near wine areas and Terdjemane encourages his guests to exercise their land legs and palates. A recent group called at Cloudy Bay for lunch before returning to the high seas.

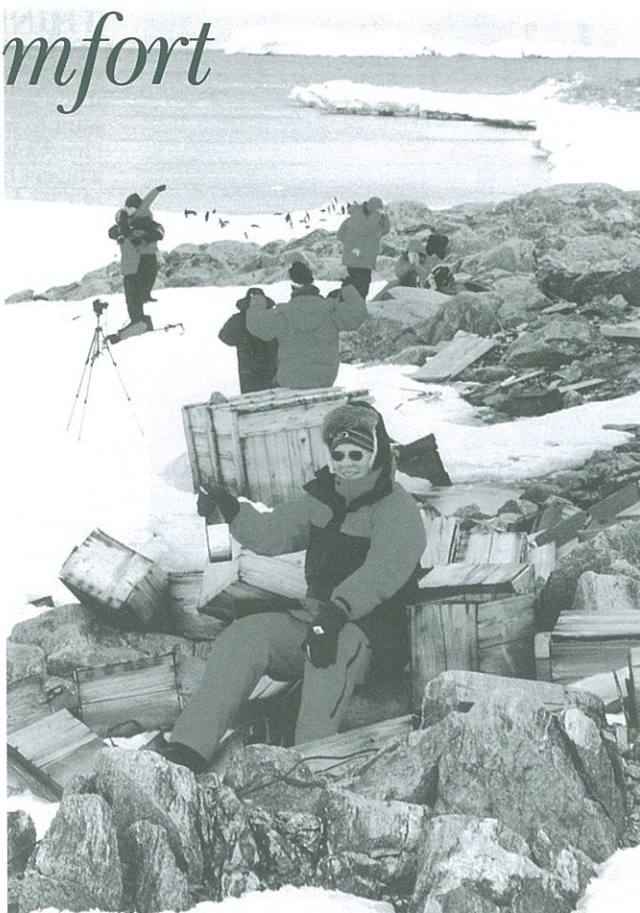


Dinner is served Silversea style...

Cold Comfort

Obviously the Antarctic has a special allure for aspirant Mentelle Ambassadors. Must be the chill factor that makes wine drinkers' thoughts turn to the best remedy for hypothermia – and what better antidote than a bottle of *Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir*? That's what Ruth Brown, Christchurch, took with her earlier this year during the Antarctic 'summer' to Mawson's Hut at Commonwealth Bay. She generously shared it with her co-expeditioners – a bunch of appreciative Aussies.

You too can be part of CBV's export effort. It's easy. Next time you're far from home and spot a bottle of Cloudy Bay – in a disco in Dubrovnik, a teppanyaki bar in Hokkaido or at a Swiss fondue bistro, 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. 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.



Ruth Brown's hypothermia deterrent...

HOME SWEET HOME

For most of us our home is our castle, a place where convivial bottles are regularly consumed with family and friends. One can only assume that the Rutishauser family who live in the San Francisco Bay area are lifetime fans of the brand that marks their abode.



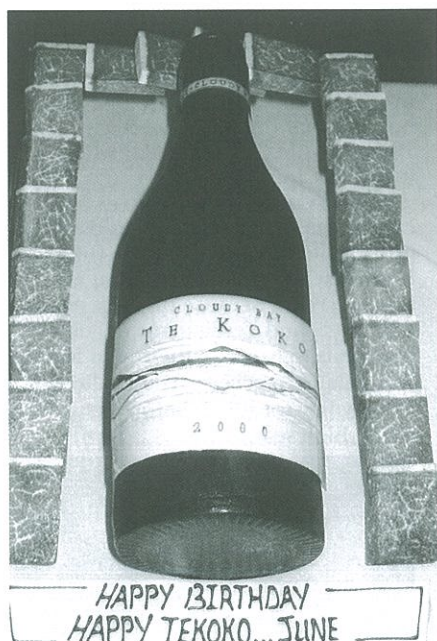
TAKES THE CAKE

You've heard of novelty birthday cakes but how about birthday bottle cakes? Well that's what Te Koko fan Muchima Aittipornkowitz commissioned for a friend's recent birthday held at the Shangri-La hotel in Bangkok – a replica of *Cloudy Bay Te Koko*, her (and the birthday girl's) all-time favourite wine. Reports tell it was washed down with the 2000 vintage of the real thing.

MENTELLE NOTES

is the free publication of
CLOUDY BAY & CAPE MENTELLE
VINEYARDS

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Pelorus NV

'A rich weighty and integrated wine, with a good soft texture and impressive length. This is a full-flavoured methode with plenty of character.'

Bob Campbell MW, HOME & ENTERTAINING

'An incredibly elegant, dry, chardonnay-driven bubbly...very crisp, very dry and will woo devoted Taittinger fans instantly.'

Joëlle Thomson, NZ HERALD

'Weighty and stylish with apple and lime aromas and flavours plus some fresh bread-meal characters...good interest, good length, good wine.'

Graeme Barrow, KAPITI CHRONICLE

Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 2003

'Typically fragrant with pure varietal qualities of succulent tropical fruit, lime and green herbs. The palate is fine and juicy with smooth texture and a vivacious fruit-acid balance keeping it appetising.'

Ralph Kyte-Powell, THE AGE

'A must try for those who are serious about this variety. All class'

Warren Barton, DOMINION POST

'A top vintage. I liked it a lot in spring but rate it even higher now it's had a chance to settle down. Fleshy and smooth, with intense, ripely herbaceous flavours and a very rich zingy lasting finish...keeps drawing you back for another glass.'

Michael Cooper, SUNDAY STAR TIMES

Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 2002

'Another gorgeous example of just how thrilling sauvignon blanc can be when it has such bright complexity – a riot of lime, guava and fresh celery notes that persist intensely through the long, vivid finish.'

It also has ideal balance, neither too flashy nor too sharp, bringing everything together harmoniously.'

93 points, Harvey Steiman,
WINE SPECTATOR (USA)

Cloudy Bay Te Koko 2001

'The best vintage yet...gets the balance exactly right but also has some sort of X-factor...perhaps because this wine is just impossibly cool! Maybe it's the label, the flavour, the rarity, the image, the history, the name, the mystery, the grape – everything works and works really well.'

Mathew Jukes, EXPERTWINE.COM

Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 2002

'Another fine and subtle pinot...understated...but there is an absolute varietal purity which is captivating, all sweetly floral and ripe cherries.'

GEOFF KELLY'S WINE REVIEWS

Cape Mentelle Shiraz 2002

'This is one of the purest expressions of shiraz I have tasted from Cape Mentelle. It has a slightly fleshy character with nice interwoven oak treatment. The mix of spice and ripe berry is appealing and the savoury flavours linger in the mouth. Beautiful weight and mouth-feel... one of the best in this distinguished line.'

93 points, Ray Jordan, WEST AUSTRALIAN

Cape Mentelle Cabernet Merlot 2001

'Give this wine a couple of years and it will evolve as an enchantingly delicate but classy example of the blend.'

Bill Thompson, SUNDAY TIMES (WA)

A View from the Vineyard



Eveline Fraser and Siobán Harnett oversee the wines and vines at Cloudy Bay.

Pic. Jim Tannock

‘Wine and wenches empty men’s purses.’

PROVERB

PRICE LIST & ORDER FORM



APRIL • 2004

Wine	Description	Price per Case	Price per Bottle	Amount Ordered	Cost
Pelorus NV	Ever-ready classic Marlborough bubbles to put a tingle in your knees. Savour the fine fizzy bead, creamy palate and long finish.	[Six-pack] \$197.70	\$32.95		
Cloudy Bay Te Koko 2001	Delights to be different. Deliciously aromatic and richly textured. An alternative sauvignon blanc when you feel like a change.	[Six-pack] \$195.00	\$32.50		
Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 2002	Think flowering citrus and smoky nuts in a tightly woven textured and elegant frame. Enticing...	\$376.80	\$31.40		
Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 2002	Be beguiled – by plump red cherries, fresh herbs and undertones of liquorice layered over silky tannins and a complex palate.	[Six-pack] \$223.20	\$37.20		
MARGARET RIVER MIX	2 x Cape Mentelle Cabernet Merlot 2002 2 x Cape Mentelle Shiraz 2002 2 x Cape Mentelle Zinfandel 2002	[Six-pack] \$196.40	N/A		
Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1998 [1.5L Magnum]	A thought-provoker from a fine vintage. Intense, rich and elegantly balanced.	N/A	\$76.00		
CB T-SHIRT OFFER White Black	Small Medium Large XL XXL	N/A	(inc. postage) \$28.00		
CB BLACK BIBBED APRON		N/A	(inc. postage) \$25.00		

Limit one case per order

Order 3 Cases and receive a CLOUDY BAY APRON FREE!

REMITTANCE DETAILS

I enclose a cheque made payable to CLOUDY BAY VINEYARDS

CHARGE MY CREDIT CARD

- VisaCard
- Mastercard
- American Express
- Diners Club
- Bankcard

NZ DELIVERY ADD \$7.00 PER CASE OR \$7.00 PER MAGNUM

TOTAL NZ\$
(INCLUDING GST)

EXPIRY DATE /

Signature

CONTACT & DELIVERY DETAILS

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms)
First
Surname

Postal Address

..... Postcode

Tel: () (Daytime) () (Evening)

Fax: () Email

Delivery Address and Instructions

PLEASE NOTE

1. Feel free to make up your own mixed case using the bottle prices listed.
2. All prices are G.S.T. inclusive
3. Send order with payment to Cloudy Bay Vineyards Ltd, in the Free Post envelope provided or Facsimile (03) 520 9040
4. Only persons aged 18 years or over may legally order wine.
5. Deliveries can only be made to a street address – not a PO Box or RD number.
6. Please allow 10 days for delivery.
7. Send Em Mentelle in the UK regrettably not available in this issue. (See Page 7.)



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