

MENTELLE NOTES

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Bird's-eye view of Cape Mentelle meeting the Indian Ocean where petrels soar and waves break.

Pic: Martine Perret

Coast Watch

The rugged Indian Ocean seacoast is integral to the wines of Cape Mentelle and the allure of the Margaret River region.

Too often we take our immediate surroundings for granted. Look out the window of the original rammed earth Cape Mentelle winery and the vineyard vista is dappled with native gums. Birds chirp. Some evenings roos saunter down to graze across the road. Head out towards Prevelly Beach, past the Omo-white St John the Theologian Greek Orthodox chapel built in the late seventies, till you hear the waves and sniff the briny breeze. It's clearly god's own country – and 50 years of viticultural history have proved Dr John Gladstone's prognosis right. Margaret River was destined to become a great wine region bound by sea.

It was the Baudin Expedition of 1801 that charted the WA coastline and gave the cape its name, Mentelle, in honour of the French Parisian brothers, Edmund and Francois-Simon Mentelle, geographer and cartographer respectively.

Since then many others have gravitated to and celebrated this southwestern corner of Australia and been beguiled by its landscape.

Botanist Georgiana Molloy was one, a feisty early settler whose early 1800's botanical foragings started out round Vasse, down the road from Cape Mentelle. Much later Cape Mentelle named a wine after this curious woman who might just have been our first-ever seed-saver.

Georgiana kept diaries that are held in the WA State Library, and catalogued many of the region's native flora – a bold adventurous

'The place comes first. If the place isn't interesting to me then I can't feel it.' TIM WINTON

early settler with a prescient sense of place.

Another West Australian shares that special gift – award-winning writer Tim Winton. He once said,

'The place comes first. If the place isn't interesting to me then I can't feel it. I can't feel any people in it. I can't feel what the people are on about or likely to get up to.'

In a way Winton is toying with terroir, citing the natural assets and people that coalesce to create a sense of place, where stories are told and histories made; where communities evolve, grapes are grown, wines mature and memories unfold.

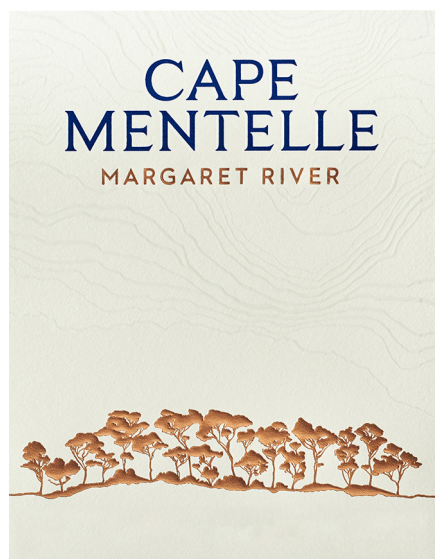
Claiming the coast is what underpins Cape Mentelle's contemporary wine ethos. It is dramatic and beautiful, isolated and pristine – Cape Mentelle's backyard – where powerful wines and memories are made.

Coastal bounty features strongly in the recent Cape Mentelle collaborations with free-roaming forager chef Sarah Glover, who is happiest when conjuring coals on beach sand to char-grill local catch West Australian marron or octopus.

Sarah's *Wild Adventure Cookbook* and

preference for outdoors feasting recently set the tone for a series of long lunches in stunning off-grid (east coast) locations, showcasing briny West Australian seafood complemented by selected Cape Mentelle wines (*see page 6*). It was certainly a gear or two up on anything the adventurous TV Leyland brothers tackled. (Remember them?)

New Releases



This issue of *Mentelle Notes* heralds five tempting new releases spanning three excellent vintages. Some are wearing the new-look Cape Mentelle label that evokes our coastal location. These wines are available to members of the Cape Mentelle Wine Club – and at the Cellar Door. If you have any queries about the selection, please contact the helpful Cape Mentelle staff.

T: 08 9757 0812 or

E: cellardoor@capementelle.com.au

CAPE MENTELLE ROSÉ 2018

Uniting. Distinctive. Evolving.

Surprisingly serious with textural depth – a rosé commanding attention.

‘Brimming with fresh strawberries, white peach and watermelon, plus pronounced minerality. The complex layered palate defines the Cape Mentelle style, amplified by nuances of rose petal, lilac, red currants, cassis and jasmine topped with a dash of whipped cream and peppercorns.’

CAPE MENTELLE WALLCLIFFE CABERNET FRANC 2016

Audacious. Unexpected. Adventurous.

An exceptional parcel of cabernet franc that demanded its own exclusive bottling.

‘Opens with a cavalcade of cherries supported by spicy oak and hints of clove, cinnamon, toffee and toasted brioche plus violet and lavender floral notes. Round and ripe voluminous palate echoing forest berries, mid-weight with nuances of cherry, cigar box and vanilla. In a word – delicious!’

CAPE MENTELLE ZINFANDEL 2017

Bold. Vibrant. Generous.

Australia’s leading example, a compelling wine from more than 40-year-old, low-yielding bush vines. Zin fans be quick – this bestseller won’t languish in the CM cellar for long!

‘Think Christmas spice, lifted rose petals and hints of candied ginger, marmalade and plum over macerated raisins; or just think plum pudding. More festive flavours on the palate plus cherry, dark chocolate, figs and dates heightened by exotic spices. Warming, rich, framed by firm fine-grained tannins. Savoury and enticing.’

CAPE MENTELLE TWO VINEYARDS SHIRAZ 2017

Seductive. Rare. Profound.

New creation icon shiraz only made in exemplary years and expressive of the finest estate shiraz. An exceptional terroir wine – bottled under cork! (The first since 2004.)

‘Initial hint of dark plum with heady floral notes mingled with aromatic spices and vanilla bean. Mouth-watering palate opens with satsuma plums, salted chocolate and licorice evolving to a seamless mid-palate resonating charcuterie, flint and tea leaf. Expansive finish and a long life awaits!’

CAPE MENTELLE SHIRAZ CABERNET 2017

Balanced. Expressive. Intense.

The second vintage, this is a fitting union of Margaret River’s premier red varieties.

‘A regal blend (shiraz 60%, cabernet sauvignon 40%) offering aromas of dark berries, cherry, blackcurrant, citrus and jasmine flower hints. Add charcuterie, cigar box and leather sprinkled with souk spice. These aromas echo on the palate that hums with plum, mixed berries, plus truffle, licorice and peppercorns. Silky round tannins shape this wine’s elegance, stature and length.’

Shop Online

The **Cape Mentelle Online Wine Shop** is now just a click away for all your wine orders.

All purchases of 12 bottles or more receive a **10% SAVING** and **FREE FREIGHT** in Australia. And now we can send wine to Hong Kong or Singapore at very competitive freight rates! Please contact us:

www.capementelle.com.au/Wines/Buy-Wine

Wine Club

You might be a member of the golf club, gym or a book club but have you ever thought of joining a wine club? Membership won’t necessarily keep you fit but you won’t ever need to speed-read or pound the treadmill. The **Cape Mentelle Wine Club** offers two exclusive tiers of membership that will guarantee access to pre-releases and rare cellar reserve wines, plus other benefits.

The current **Mentelle Explorer Pack** showcases three stand out *Cape Mentelle Zinfandel* vintages (2014 – 2016) along with two other reds – *Cape Mentelle Shiraz 2016* (Rated 95 Points by *Winefront*) and a preview *Cape Mentelle Wallcliffe Cabernet Franc 2016*, plus a pre-release *Cape Mentelle Wallcliffe Sauvignon Blanc Semillon 2016*.

Mentelle Explorer members receive two Six-Packs per year with accompanying tasting notes, sent freight free to an Australian address. The annual **Mentelle Explorers** membership subscription is \$600. Members’ credentials can be used to shop online for other limited cellar releases. Eligible Wine Club saving is 15%.

Membership of the top-drawer **Mentelle Collection** is limited to 100 wine lovers, an exclusive opportunity to experience Cape Mentelle’s finest wines. The annual subscription is \$800. The current **Mentelle Collection** includes:

- *Cape Mentelle Shiraz 2010*
97 POINTS, Ray Jordan
- *Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon 2010*
98 POINTS, Ray Jordan
- *Cape Mentelle Zinfandel 2017*
(Preview Release)
- *Cape Mentelle Wallcliffe Sauvignon Blanc Semillon 2016*
(Preview Release)
- *Cape Mentelle Single Vineyard Shiraz 2015*
98 POINTS, James Halliday
- *Cape Mentelle Shiraz 2016*
95 POINTS, Campbell Mattinson

Details:

www.capementelle.com.au/Wine-Club

or contact:

cellardoor@capementelle.com.au



No Coco, it's Cabernet!

Wine Detective Sarah Ahmed investigates the allure of Margaret River Cabernet.

Pics : Frances Andriich



Sarah Ahmed (left) and Cape Mentelle winemaker Frederique Perrin (right) along with a panel of enthusiasts seriously sipping at the 2018 Cape Mentelle International Cabernet Tasting.



Cabernet Sauvignon's perennial allure is captured in a favourite winemaker quote, "Like the little black dress à la Coco Chanel, it will always be stunning," said André van Rensburg. This blunt-speaking South African Cape winemaker is better known for courting controversy than waxing lyrical, but then who can deny cabernet sauvignon's elegant sophistication? Even if the world's noblest red grape had rather ignoble beginnings....

cabernet sauvignon has an easy-to-recognise, strong personality, whilst having inherited cabernet franc's beguiling perfume and restraint. Its small, thick-skinned grapes lend prodigious colour, fruit and (acid, tannin) structure. Fruit and tannins are typically buffed to a fine sheen by amplifying cedar-kissed French oak.

With great line, length and longevity, cabernet sauvignon has come to dominate

'Contemporary Margaret River cabernets enjoy a reputation for elegance and great drinkability.'

In 1996, DNA tests by the University of California at Davis revealed that cabernet sauvignon was the lovechild of a spontaneous fling between neighbouring cabernet franc and sauvignon blanc vines.

As they say, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Bursting with blackcurrant and dark berry fruit, like sauvignon blanc,

fine wine discourse and become synonymous with another 'l' word, luxury – especially from the variety's region of origin, Bordeaux. And especially right now, as the region's 2018 *en primeur* campaign gathers impetus.

In the week that I penned this, all five Bordeaux Left Bank first growths launched their wines *en primeur*, including Château

Mouton Rothschild at €408 per bottle (ex-Bordeaux). Small wonder Bordeaux is the inspiration for so many New World winemakers and the 150 people who clamoured to attend Cape Mentelle's 36th International Cabernet Tasting last November. The collection of twenty 2015 Vintage cabernet sauvignons, including Mouton Rothschild, extolled luxury.

That most of us cannot afford the likes of Mouton is surely part of the lure, but the Tasting's appeal also resides in the reassuring fact that, elsewhere, this most polished of varietal performers produces exceptional wines, which do remain within reach.

So how did Margaret River's eight examples compare with top wines from Bordeaux, Coonawarra, Napa Valley, Waiheke Island, Yarra Valley, Maipo Valley and Bolgheri?

Big picture, I found them to be relatively open knit, with lovely clarity of fruit and refined tannins. Too forward? I don't think so. They also had the concentration, balance and structure to last. One might say a win-win, which reflects a key regional advantage surely worth shouting from the rooftops – Australian sunlight intensity tempered by maritime influence from three sides. The location produces an enviably equable climate, which has gifted Margaret River with great vintage consistency compared with Bordeaux (and most peers). It can truly be a specialist pure cabernet region, whilst more accessible wines from Bordeaux tend to rely more heavily on merlot.

Margaret River's icons also compete very comfortably on price with California's top drops. Whilst Californian wines are still seen as rich and heady with high alcohol, contemporary Margaret River cabernets enjoy a reputation for elegance and great drinkability. Qualities that are very much on trend.

Other Southern Hemisphere regions can compete on price point with Margaret River, but what about walking the fine wine talk of track record? I suspect few could match the line-up at Cape Mentelle's Cabernet Sauvignon vertical tasting in London last year, featuring select vintages from between 1983 to 2014.

(Continued page 7)



CELLARING NOTES

Cape Mentelle's winemaking crew recently sat down at the lab bench for a serious retrospective review of multiple vintages of selected cellar-worthy Cape Mentelle wines. These notes represent their unexpurgated fearless assessments of four flagship Cape Mentelle wines – intended to guide your cellar management. Rest assured we open extra bottles if a wine seems not to be showing as we expect, but ultimately these notes are a true appraisal of each wine in the glass on the day. No ratings are based on prior tastings or reputation – meaning we are thorough, tough and truthful! We hope you find these Cellaring Notes useful in maintaining your cellar.

Our Star System ★★★★★ Outstanding ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★ Good ★★ Moderate ★ OK

VINTAGE		RATING	CELLARING TERM
	Wallcliffe Sauvignon Blanc Semillon		
2008	Aromas of hay, lemon juice, green apple and lemongrass. Palate a mix of string bean, buttered brioche and honey; mid-weight, creamy length. Ready to drink.	★★★	Now – 2021
2009	Notes of apple custard, lemon blossom, preserved lemon, beurre blanc. Shy palate – warm curd, toasty lifted oak. Medium intensity, ready to drink.	★★★	Now – 2020
2010	Resonates Granny Smiths, citrus blossom, baked cheesecake. Complex, mineral, well balanced; toasted brioche, medium-weight rich palate. Stand-out vintage with a future.	★★★★★	Now – 2023
2011	Intense jasmine blossom, poached apple, lime cordial. Round and rich, lime juice and toasted honey, medium weight. Ready to drink as palate broadening.	★★★★↓	Now – 2023
2012	Fresh hay, fromage blanc, lemon zest, green apple. Tightly wound, medium weight, minerally and delicate with wafts of matchstick and salinity. Expresses coastal origins.	★★★★★	Now – 2024
2014	Amalgam of lemon on flint, delicate jasmine and citrus blossom, camomile and cashew; tightly wound, gun smoke, cheese rind, warm rich, yet fresh. Needs time!	★★★★↓	Now – 2028
2015	Frangipani, orange blossom with almond and savoury curd with flint; creamy texture echoing fruit tarts, peach and nectarine, even plum with notes of lemon sorbet.	★★★★↓	Now – 2029
	Trinders Cabernet Merlot		
2008	Synergistic aromas of chocolate, earth, cardamom and Christmas cake. Mellow, good acidity with saline crunch; mocha tones find sandy tannins, mid-weight.	★★★	Drink Now
2009	More Christmas pud, baking spices, soused cherry, earthy, couverture chocolate and licorice. Complex palate with cherry notes, dusty tannins, good acid, refined length.	★★★★↓	Drink Now
2010	Aromas of salty plum, dried seaweed, seared meat, iron filings, bay leaf and eucalypt. With breathing – rich powerful and ripe, powdery tannins, savoury, full and long. Tip-top!	★★★★★	Now – 2022
2011	Mocha meets toasted almonds and dried cherries, bay leaf and eucalypt. Medium weight, dusty fine tannins and earthy, rich, savoury palate. Good length but fruit fading.	★★★	Drink Now
2012	Wafts of black forest cake, soy and tinge of spice/dried bay leaf. Savoury salty palate; fine powdery tannins, some forest floor, and fruitcake. Medium length. Appealing now.	★★★★↓	Now – 2023
2013	Umami spectrum aromas plus tarragon, salty plums, toasty cedar. Palate smacks of dusty chocolate, earthiness and firm tannins. Medium length, earthy, spicy, mocha finish.	★★★	Now – 2025
2014	Hints of potpourri, dried plum, smoked ham hock, salty chocolate leading to palate of cacao and charred cedar, dried cranberry and cherry, plus dusty fine tannins. Good length.	★★★★↓	Now – 2024
2015	Aromas of earth and spice, spearmint, touch of kalamata olive leading to complex palate of cacao, gunsmoke and flint, dried forest floor. Firm dry tannins, good medium weight and length.	★★★★★	Now – 2022
2016	Opens with red berry compote, dark plums, liqueur cherries, herbs and tobacco leaf, caramelised oak and cedar. Palate resonates sweet cherry, blackberry; silky yet structured, with peppercorns, licorice, vanilla, and black forest cake finish.	★★★★★	Now – 2025

*2013 Wallcliffe Sauvignon Blanc Semillon not released.

Recommended Cellaring Duration *Regular Cape Mentelle imbibers will know that these Cellar Notes offer a suggested “drinking window”. Rest assured there is no haste for some of the younger wines, which have projected long lifespans.*

VINTAGE		RATING	CELLARING TERM
	Shiraz		
2008	Complex palate amalgam of cacao, rhubarb, clove, dried rose petals, charcoal, cinnamon, raisin, charcuterie, orange peel. Refined soft tannins, smoky cedar, old leather, good length.	★★★★	Now – 2020
2009	Think umami, earthy forest floor. Shy yet complex nose – floral, pepper, black forest cake, rosemary, cedar needles. Savoury spice, berry, dried herb and mocha palate. Excellent balance, fine tannins and length.	★★★★☆	Now – 2024
2010	Aromas of potpourri, mulberry, blackcurrant, choc-dipped cherries, fennel and vanilla, all echoing on the palate, plus raspberries, pepper, fresh acid and fine-grained tannins. Great length, texture. Refined!	★★★★★	Now – 2026
2011	Opens with violets, mulberry, black pepper, licorice, and umami notes. Still a touch shy, leather, chewy tannins, yet supple and refined. Good length, plush and pleasing!	★★★★	Now – 2025
2012	Smell dried rose petals, bay leaf, tamari evolving to charcuterie, licorice, clove and cocoa, plus a savoury medium-length palate with rich firm grainy tannins. A good vintage holding well.	★★★★★	Now – 2026
2013	Think blackberry and briar, violets and salty chocolate, raisins, dried plum, even molasses. The palate is briny, smoky, with an umami frame, fine yet firm.	★★★	Now – 2022
2014	Notes of mocha chocolate, brine, ginger, Cuban cigar, leather with intense floral lift. Full sweet palate; coffee, molasses, raspberry and plum, fine long tannins, cedary oak, excellent full body. Elegant and one for the longer haul.	★★★★★	Now – 2030
2015	Aromas of earth, umami, pepper, charcuterie and dried herbs. On the full palate firm fine tannins and rich hoisin-glaze; excellent balance, refined, long; chalky fine tannins and oak integration.	★★★★☆	Now – 2025
2016	Heady amalgam of pepper, cardamom, wisteria, candied orange peel, grated coconut, cedar and cigarbox. On the palate black forest, berries and cherries, marmalade and cinnamon tamed by chewy tannins and a long finish of caramelised oak and crusty brioche. Top shelf from top year.	★★★★★	Now – 2035
2017	Opens with complex myriad aromas – floral, cherry, violet, lavender, marmalade, peppercorn, cardamom, cocoa nibs, leather, licorice and oriental spice. Rich juicy palate echoes satsumas, ripe mulberry, blackberry, charcuterie, pepper, cinnamon and clove. Spice traders delight – silky texture and chewy tannin frame.	★★★★★	Now – 2029
	Cabernet Sauvignon		
2008	Inhale mocha, toasted coconut, briar and blackcurrant echoing on the full refined palate; good acid balance, drying tannins and elegance.	★★★★★	Now – 2034
2009	Opens with dried Provençal herbs, cedar, dark chocolate, dried plum and cherry, saltbush. Palate shows fine soft tannins, more chocolate, licorice and coffee bean. Great length, balanced acid; about to peak.	★★★★★	Now – 2028
2010	Complexity rules – dark chocolate, umami, molasses, cedar, toasted muesli, dried herbs, mineral and more... Fine compact yet expansive tannins; acid balance; excellent length and power.	★★★★☆	Now – 2024
2011	Complex intense aromas – licorice chocolate, hoisin, dried bay leaf, leather and tobacco. Palate expressing Morello cherry, juniper, plum, mocha and coffee bean; well integrated, dense but supple, excellent length and power with a dukkha close.	★★★★★	Now – 2033
2012	Amalgam of bay leaf, toasted hot cross bun, mocha, cacao, sweet tobacco, forest floor leading to a rounded palate with tobacco, spice and umami hints. Fine-grained tannins, touch of charred cedar and licorice; expansive and well integrated. Classic classy Margaret River Cabernet!	★★★★☆	Now – 2037
2013	Think Christmas cake, dates, fig and old leather, soy, flint, evolving to an intense long palate with a dusty cocoa finish; chewy well-rounded dense tannins, supple with ample power.	★★★★★	Now – 2037
2014	Multiple aromas of plum pudding, mint, earth, dark chocolate, candied cherry and salty plum echoing on the palate, plus toasted cedar and expansive fine powdery tannins. Full-structured, dense and complete. Still unfurling. Elegant pedigree.	★★★★★	Now – 2038
2015	Resonates potpourri, grilled steak, rich red earth, minerals, touch of eucalypt and cocoa. Medium weight palate – dark chocolate, anise, umami, with fine dusty tannins and balanced new oak. Evolving and unfolding. One to watch.	★★★★★	Now – 2039
2016	Brooding aromas of forest fruits, black cherries, dark chocolate, flint, thyme, and orange peel. Palate swells with blackberry, bramble, mocha and vanilla spice. Compact refined tannins, velvety and supple, long finish, excellent aging potential.	★★★★★	Now – 2044



Tanks full. Time to party with the best-dressed Cape Mentelle Vintage 2019 crew!

Vintage 2019 Report Card

In a nutshell the 2019 season was quite contrary, Mother Nature seemingly determined to assert her unpredictability. It was a cooler year than average recording both lower maximum and minimum temperatures, with markedly less winter and spring rainfall. These dry months were offset by an unusually wet January providing good soil moisture for the dry grown vines, as well as some challenges for the vineyard team responsible for canopy management. Judicious trimming reduced the risk of botrytis that comes when the unpredictable heavens open and humidity rises.

Yields were down slightly this harvest for a number of reasons ranging from rain at flowering and frustrating bird damage. The cool weather meant the marri gums flowered late, and the voracious hungry silver eyes breached nets in search of alternative food supplies. What better snack than plump juicy shiraz berries!

Lower yields but exceptional quality probably sums up Vintage 2019. Cooler seasons allow for more gradual ripening and the beneficial development of dense colour, intense flavours and mellow tannins. The clear standout varieties are chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon, Margaret River's icon grapes, while the shiraz displays attractive cool climate pepper and spice and our flagship zinfandel impresses with peerless flavour and spice. All wines display fresh fruit profiles, finely balanced acid and disarming elegance, power and balance. A demanding yet classic Margaret River vintage!

Eating Wild

Cooking outdoors is Sarah Glover's passion and she is on a mission to share the power of landscape to create memories when matched with local fresh produce and selected wine.

Sarah has worn her chef whites in Tasmania, New York and Sydney – but now prefers to cook al fresco wearing dungarees. She takes her cues from her home-state Tasmania. Its pristine beauty and landscape has inspired her use of fire and sometimes foraged ingredients to create nurturing meals with a strong sense of place.

What better way to celebrate Margaret River and its rugged surf coast than a barbecue to char succulent fat octopus tentacles served with a tangy mint dressing. And the perfect match is chilled glasses of *Cape Mentelle Sauvignon Blanc Semillon 2018*, all briny, crisp and bright.

COAL OCTOPUS

Serves 2

Ingredients

300g octopus tentacles

Extra virgin olive oil

Mint dressing

1 tbsp coarse salt

8 cloves garlic, finely minced

1 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves, finely chopped

1 cup mint leaves, finely chopped

2 tsps dried red chilli flakes, crushed

3 tsps red wine vinegar

1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

Method

MINT DRESSING: Bring 1 cup water to the boil in a small saucepan. Add salt and stir until dissolved, then remove from the heat and allow to cool. (I used ocean water because I happened to be by the ocean! If you do this, don't add the extra salt.)

COMBINE: Garlic, parsley, mint and chilli in a medium bowl.

WHISK: Vinegar, then olive oil, and finally the salt water. Transfer to a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Can be stored in the fridge for up to 2–3 weeks. Makes 2 cups.

FIRE: Light your fire and let it burn down for 1 hour until you have nice coals or use hardwood charcoal.

DRIZZLE: Octopus tentacles with a little olive oil, then place on the grill plate.

COOK: A few minutes each side or until lightly charred and the flesh turns pink. Remove tentacles from the heat and rest for a few minutes, then cut into bite-sized pieces.

SERVE: Warm with the mint dressing.



(Continued from page 3)

Museum releases could be a great charm offensive for Margaret River here in London where, said one leading sommelier, "Listing a 10-year-old or older cabernet for under £100 is like a magic potion for Brits!" Virtually everyone emptied their glass of *Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon 1996*. Q.E.D.

As for walking the fine wine talk of provenance, perhaps the most exciting aspect of the Cape Mentelle International Cabernet Tasting was not the difference between the home region's wines and cabernets from Bordeaux and elsewhere, but the diversity of expression from within Margaret River. Before the tasting, I had quizzed Steven Spurrier about how perceptions of world-class cabernet have changed since the Bordeaux vs California Judgement of Paris, which he hosted in 1976.

The king of comparative tastings (and Californian cabernet's kingmaker) told me, "World judgements have changed for all wines of high quality in that they should have a sense of place above the expression of the grape variety. Cabernet sauvignons from Margaret River are now Margaret River first and cabernet second." Or, bringing the conversation back to the designer who famously liberated women from the "corseted silhouette," Chanel asserted, "To be irreplaceable one must always be different." Go your own way(s), Margaret River.

Sarah Ahmed aka the Wine Detective once worked at a London Oddbins store. Now she is an independent wine writer with a passionate focus on Australia and Portugal. She was a guest at last year's Cape Mentelle International Cabernet Tasting (but didn't wear a little black dress). Bookings open mid-July. 2019 Cape Mentelle Cabernet Tasting



Pic: Frances Andrijič

Cane and Able

Meet Ben Cane the newly appointed winemaker in the Cape Mentelle team.

Ben Cane has only lived in Margaret River for a few months, so any biblical riffs on the return of the prodigal son don't quite apply. He did visit once as a kid and enjoyed camping out in the karri forest. Seems the big trees and big waves made an impression – so Margaret River was high on Ben's wish list when he decided to return from 12 years working in California's Sonoma Valley.

His winemaking appointments included Joseph Phelps Freestone Winery, and later Silver Oak's Twomey Cellars and Westwood Estate where he was recruited to amp up their biodynamic program and use the 'greenest possible' approach to making notable wines. That's also part of his brief on the Cape Mentelle winemaking team, as is his key role in growing Cape Mentelle's strength in the burgeoning US market.

Ben is a science and oenology graduate from the University of Adelaide and has worked previously in the Yarra Valley at

De Bortoli's and done time in the retail trade.

'In those days I sold plenty of Cape Mentelle in Adelaide,' recalls Ben, no mean feat amongst one-eyed South Australian wine drinkers. That said, he thinks his first glass of wine (poured by his parents) was probably a Barossa shiraz, rather than a Yarra Valley pinot. He does however hanker for good Burgundy and the more savoury palate of a Piedmontese Barolo.

'I'm attracted by cooler climate red wine styles that retain acidity and freshness, and for a long time I admired Cape Mentelle's legacy and potential. When I arrived I was advised to make 2019 a year of observation to absorb the Cape Mentelle tech team's meticulous approach to viticulture and winemaking,' explains Ben. 'That knowledge then becomes an integral part of my role, explaining what it takes to craft a memorable cabernet!'

Ben's other tasks include assisting with the current Cape Mentelle micro-viticulture and vinification research program and hosting long languid lunches. Ben will be reporting later in the year on his whirlwind US market trip, determined to make America wake again to the vinous marvels from Margaret River. Follow his travels on www.instagram.com/ben.cane.winemaker



Cameron Murphy & Maggie Henriquez, President of LVMH Estates & Wines.

Turning Pro

Forget beer steins, the serious action in Germany is Australian wine. And which region is punching above its weight? Yes of course, Margaret River. Cape Mentelle Estates Director Cameron Murphy who attended ProWein 2019, the largest wine expo in the world that attracted over 61,000 visitors from 142 countries, can attest to the region's popularity.

Making a lasting impression at this massive showcase attended by nearly 7000 exhibitors,

over just three days, requires both quality and visibility – and the Wine Australia stand delivered both. Bespoke tastings, video screens, an all-Australian wine bar (match) and a very busy barista all helped woo wine palates from far and wide.

'ProWein highlights how broad, complex and competitive the wine world really is. Sharing the focus with other WA benchmark producers like Howard Park, McHenry Hohnen, Stella Bella, Vasse Felix and Voyager, helped fly the Margaret River flag high,' commented Cameron. *Prost!*



Out to lunch at the 2019 Noosa Food and Wine Festival with Cape Mentelle Rosé.

Table Talk

We all enjoy the occasional long lunch, but the recent Noosa Food and Wine Festival conjured a whole new meaning to the notion – a leisurely all-afternoon meal at a very convivial and very long table stretching impressively the length of Hastings Street. In fact the Long Lunch Table sat 550-plus eager guests, nourished by eight chefs and a bevy of wait-staff exclusively pouring a selection of Cape Mentelle wines.

This culinary collaboration featured set but varied three-course local produce inspired menus by Noosa chefs led by Peter Kuruvita of Noosa Beach House. His confrères included Hastings strip dining destinations Season, Rococco, Locale, Café Le Monde, Boardwalk Bistro, Aromas and Bistro C.

Salivate at the thought of Noosa-caught spanner crab and *Cape Mentelle Rosé*, butter poached bug rolls with *Cape Mentelle Chardonnay*; Bendele Farm spatchcock or slow-roast free-range lamb shoulder with *Cape Mentelle Trinders Cabernet Merlot*. Winemaker Ben Cane was on hand to stride the street and tell winery tales to the merry cavalcade of long-lunchers relishing that oh-so relaxed Noosa vibe.

Heads up! Expect to see more Cape Mentelle Long Table events in other tempting locations soon...

Musts

BLACK GLASS TASTING @ CABIN FEVER 2019

19 & 26 JULY – CAPE MENTELLE
Put on your puffer jacket and test your tasting skills when relying purely on aroma, taste and texture... A cosy tasting in the original CMV Cellar.

[Book here](#)

JAMES SUCKLING GREAT WINES OF THE WORLD ASIA TOUR 2019

31 OCTOBER – HONG KONG
www.jamesuckling.com/event/great-wines-world-2019-asia-tour/

DECANTER SHANGHAI FINE WINE ENCOUNTER

16 NOVEMBER – RITZ-CARLTON PUDONG
<https://www.decantershanghai.com/en/>

CAPE MENTELLE INTERNATIONAL CABERNET TASTING

15 NOVEMBER – CAPE MENTELLE
Tickets on sale mid-July 2019.
Be sure to reserve early for this popular event.
Bookings: www.gourmetescape.com.au



Latest Drops

CAPE MENTELLE SAUVIGNON BLANC SEMILLON 2018

'Two rivulets of flavour run happily along the palate, one with lemon-citrus, the other with green apple and gooseberry all tied together with crunchy acidity on the finish.'

94 POINTS, James Halliday, HALLIDAY

CAPE MENTELLE CHARDONNAY 2017

'It's bold once again. In a good way... It's impressive. If you serve this, it will be noticed. Popcorn, grapefruit, peach, nougat and juicy pear. Serve it with an appropriately modest chill, and it will shine.'

94 POINTS, Campbell Mattinson WINEFRONT

CAPE MENTELLE CABERNET MERLOT 2017

'Classic cabernet aroma. Dense and complex palate with hints of mint and cassis, clever use of oak and balanced acidity. Elegant finish.'

96 POINTS, DRINKS TRADE

CAPE MENTELLE SHIRAZ 2016

'Always a leader in the Margaret River shiraz stakes. Yes. Beautiful wine. Buy with confidence. Black cherry, woody spice notes, plum and peppercorns. A swoon of oak. Feels commanding. Absolutely on song.'

95 POINTS, Campbell Mattinson WINEFRONT

CAPE MENTELLE WALLCLIFFE CABERNET SAUVIGNON / CABERNET FRANC 2016

'A more bold version of cabernet franc – does not lack ripeness, that's for sure. Blackcurrant, ripe raspberry, mint, violet and rose perfume, nutty nougat oak in support. Medium- to full-bodied...no nonsense here... Tannin is ripe and firm, and the finish is excellent. Ooh er.'

95 POINTS, Gary Walsh, WINEFRONT

CAPE MENTELLE CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2016

'Medium-bodied and elegantly crafted. A really attractive wine to drink now... fascinating already. Great intensity and palate line. It's the epitome of elegance too. A smashing wine, complex and approachable.'

97 POINTS, Huon Hooke, THE REAL REVIEW