



CELLARING NOTES

Each year, the winemaking team reviews the past 10 releases of Cape Mentelle's red wines and these notes represent their unexpurgated frank assessment (almost!). Generally the elimination of corks in the younger wines has reduced bottle variation and consequently these wines exhibit consistently higher ratings across the different varieties.

Your favourite Cape Mentelle red may have scored a lower rating than you expect. Rest assured we do open extra bottles if a wine seems markedly less attractive than previously, but ultimately these notes are an assessment of each wine in the glass on the day. They are not based on previous reputation – meaning we're tough markers!

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

VINTAGE		RATING	CELLARING TERM
	Cabernet Merlot		
1997	Old chessterfield, tobacco and sweet soy. Fresh and juicy upfront, complex dark chocolate and sweet fruit with a balanced mouthfeel and fine tannin. Has improved since last year.	★★★	Drink Now!
1998	Very ripe style. Soft leather, plummy with a hint of truffles. A big powerful palate with rhubarb crumble sweetness. Aging gracefully but it's no wallflower and has the structure to go the distance.	★★★★	Now - 2012
1999	Stock cubes, vegemite and old furniture. A savoury wine that will not warrant further cellaring.	★	Now
2000	Amazingly youthful nose, bright red and black fruits, lifted cassis and sweet caramel. Big, succulent, mouthfilling dark fruit bomb with very supportive tannins and a long, clean finish. A pleasure to drink.	★★★★	Now - 2012
2001	Dense cassis, cedar, tobacco, dark chocolate – all the classic Margaret River cabernet goodies. The palate is all that again, powerful fruit and firm without being hard.	★★★★★	Now - 2015
2002	Bright red fruit spectrum, citrus peel, smoked meats and extra tobacco. Lattice-like ripe tannin structure with a clean long finish demanding a red meat match for double enjoyment.	★★★★	Now - 2012
2003	Plummy fruit, charry oak and BBQ beef. A Bordeaux blend with all components working together. A chewy fruitcake palate, dense and solidly structured. Early days yet.	★★★★	Now - 2015
2004	Almost pretty, florals and some mint over ripe dark blackcurrant fruit. Reflects its perfect vintage status with sweet, juicy fruit balanced by textural, supple tannins.	★★★★	Now - 2015
2005	Alluring caramel oak overlaying layers of sweet mulberry, interspersed with distinctive fresh tobacco leaf and cedar. Polished tannins and rich, lingering fruit spice. Never enjoyed as much as today.	★★★★★	Now - 2016
2006	Lovely balance of violet perfume, star anise, fresh blackcurrant and red cherry. On the palate, juicy ripe plums, blueberries and currants with subtle cedary oak and fine, elegant tannins leading to a long and well structured palate. Bright and fresh reflecting its cool origins.	★★★★★	Now - 2016
	Zinfandel		
1997	Carob coated ginger and wafts of dried sage. Not so much sweetness on the nose but the palate is still distinctively CM Zin.	★★	Now
1998	Big and rustic pizza wine to match the olive and anchovy nose. Sweet and alcohol laden although the finish is a little short.	★★	Now
1999	Sweet dark fruit and leather. Firm tannins supporting a riot of pruneey sweetness. Crying out for braised lamb shanks with star anise.	★★★	Now
2000	Cola, aniseed, raisins and spice...Must be zin! Add wild herbs and you have a zin in the prime of its life. Lovely spicy notes with massive, mouthfilling fruit extract and warming alcohol.	★★★★	Now - 2012
2001	Serious zin with complexity on the nose and palate. All the usual suspects like blood plums and prunes but with finesse. Palate has creaminess and fruitcake richness with a long balanced finish.	★★★★	Now - 2012
2002	Mace, anise, soy and Chinese five spice. Drying palate with lovely acid brightness and a long savoury mushroom finish.	★★★	Now - 2010
2003	Grand Marnier, dark chocolate and liqueur raisins. Massive sweet fruit bomb with lashings of spicy, dark chocolate and poached plums.	★★★★	Now - 2012
2004	Very consistent with the '03 nose. Rum and raisin chocolate, dark roast coffee and creamy vanilla bean oak. Long and creamy palate, rhubarb crumble and fruit paste. Beautiful poise and balance.	★★★★★	Now - 2014
2005	Lovely inviting fragrant nose with white pepper notes and acidity nicely balanced with oak. Slightly atypical and fascinating.	★★★★★	Now - 2016
2006	Fruit leather, blood plums and cardamom. Rich primary fruit with new leather oak spiciness. A lovely zin, just opening up with custard creaminess and a lively red and blackcurrant palate.	★★★★★	Now - 2016

Recommended Cellaring Duration *Regular Cape Mentelle cellarhands will note that the team has offered suggested 'use-by' periods. Rest assured there is no haste for some of the younger wines, which have a projected lifespan extending to 2020.*

VINTAGE		RATING	CELLARING TERM
	Cabernet Sauvignon		
1994	Mushroom risotto with red fruits and tarry smoked meat. Still travelling well with a full rich palate and robust tannins.	★★★★	Now - 2012
1995	Beautiful fruit in 1995 that has evolved to show savoury, cedary, spicy characters. The palate has enormous fruit concentration and sweetness.	★★★	Now - 2010
1996	Dark fruits, plummy and mulberry, wafts of rose petals still evident. Brighter than expected with velvet-like tannins. Reminiscent of the '86 – a classic Bordeaux, cruising well with a long life ahead.	★★★★	Now - 2012
1998	Sweet briar fruit with plums and leather. Luscious liqueur cherry dark chocolate. Masculine, almost butch palate, youthful and muscular. Bodes well for future cellaring.	★★★★	Now - 2014
1999	Monte Carlo biscuits, raspberries and cream on the nose, which follow through to the palate with a creamy texture and a sweet biscuity finish.	★★★★	Now - 2014
2000	Still lashings of primary fruit – blackberry, anise and Satsuma plums with delicate floral notes. Breathes very well and builds in the glass, showing sweetness with time.	★★★★	Now - 2016
2001	Instant gratification for Cab lovers. Intense aromatics of classic cabernet fruit, cassis and cigars. Great wine, great year. If only they could all be like this!	★★★★★	Now - 2020
2002	Cooler vintage showing mocha, red fruits and freshly ground coffee. Textbook cabernet characters – briary and crème de cassis. Clean and tight palate with a sweet, long chocolatey finish.	★★★★	Now - 2020
2003	Raspberry cream with blackberry, mulberry and blackcurrant. Sexy French oak is part of the palate with a firm, sophisticated tannin structure. Decant if you want to drink it now.	★★★★	Now - 2020
2004	A rival to the great '01. Rich blackcurrant and mulberry fruit with hints of sweet paprika, lavender, dark chocolate and subtle vanillin oak. A wine of many parts coming together beautifully, thanks to this fabulous red wine vintage.	★★★★★	Now - 2020

'I love everything that's old; old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wines.'

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

	Shiraz		
1997	Moroccan spices, blue cheese and earthy forest floor. A savoury drying palate. Time to see the light!	★★	Drink now!
1998	Stewed plums and custard, ripe prunes and rich sweet blueberry. A balance of bright fruit and savoury bottle-developed flavours with fine drying tannins.	★★★	Now - 2010
1999	Dried orange peel, olives and tarry aniseed. Sweet and sour plums on a dense palate with grippy tannins. Drink with an oxtail stew soon.	★★	Now
2000	Smoky and charry with dark cherry fruits. Awesome palate, sweet and intensely spicy, fully mature Margaret River shiraz. Great balance of sweet fruit and a long savoury finish.	★★★★	Now - 2014
2001	Anise, tar and chargrilled meats. Lacking the generosity of fruit found in the 2000 vintage that we cherish in Margaret River shiraz.	★★	Drink now!
2002	Cherry bon-bons and sweet floral violets. A vibrant palate of red liquorice and rhubarb crumble, holding well with fine grain tannins.	★★★★	Now - 2010
2003	Our last shiraz under cork. This bottle was a cracker. Dense Satsuma plum essence with creamy vanilla bean sweetness. Retains all its youthful fruit. Fresh as a daisy.	★★★★	Now - 2012
2004	Fabulous ripe fruit from a superb vintage. Aromas of blueberries and plum are complemented by couverture and toasty vanilla. Chewy fruitcake on a fresh, tight palate, this remains a youthful powerhouse of fruit and savoury tannins.	★★★★	Now - 2016
2005	A balancing act of white pepper and aniseed spiciness versus cherries, mulberries and milk chocolate. Fine and almost creamy in texture, with a lingering and sophisticated finish of fine dark chocolate.	★★★★	Now - 2016
2006	White pepper, beautiful caramelly oak and morello cherries. A focused blend of inky black fruits and ripe pluminess, overlaid with subtle savoury oak. Another 4.5 Star rater, making it four in a row – and still seeking perfection.	★★★★	Now - 2016