

“THE WINE  
SHOULD LINGER  
ON THE PALATE  
OF YOUR  
GRANDSON”

CAPE  
MENTELLE  
MARGARET RIVER

MENTELLE NOTES OCTOBER 2012

# RAMBLINGS FROM THE WINEMAKER



“THE WINE SHOULD LINGER ON THE PALATE OF YOUR GRANDSON”

– Warren Winiarski, Founder – Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars

Warren’s quote from the late 1960’s, was presented to a group of international wine producers at a recent symposium on Cabernet Sauvignon in the Napa Valley which I attended. This was his vision for the cabernet sauvignon based red wines he produced from the now famous Stags Leap sub-region and it showed great foresight. I am not sure if the Hohnen family, who established Cape Mentelle around the same time, understood the potential longevity of the wines they were about to make but many of these early wines remain today great examples, particularly the Cabernet.

The evolution of wine styles at Cape Mentelle is a fascinating one which has combined an innovative and evocative winemaking approach with various trends over the last forty years. All of our wines have evolved, including our Cabernet which was the recent subject of colour, tannin and analytical analysis performed by the AWRI (Australian Wine Research Institute) on 3 decades of Cape Mentelle Cabernet.

Although the differences were varied and could be explained by a combination

of many factors including the season, viticultural practices, harvest timing, the use of oak in winemaking, etc., perhaps the most obvious point of difference was the alcohol percentage. Cape Mentelle Cabernet in the late 1980’s averaged 12.7% alcohol, in the early 2000’s 14.6% and more recently (as with the current release) 13.4% alcohol. If we simply measured the alcohol across all of our wines we would see a similar trend and yes, this includes our Zinfandel. Last month we were busy tasting, topping and re-corking the Cabernet wines in our cellar, dating back to the first wine produced from our vineyard in 1974 up until the 1989 vintage and missing only the 1975 (the cows ate the crop). All of these wines were characterised by modest alcohol levels generally below 13% and all were still in great condition, if you exclude the 40% of bottles rejected due to the deleterious impact of the cork through oxidation and taint.

Through a concerted effort in the vineyard we have managed with the current release wines to achieve flavour and tannin maturity at lower sugar levels. These efforts, combined with berry-by-berry

sorting to eliminate any green flavours, have seen the achievement of what I refer to as ‘the sweet spot’ where the balance between all the components of the wine and its alcohol produces the most harmonious expression. If the alcohol is too high the wines can taste full but hot and short. If the alcohol is too low the wines can lack body and ripe fruit flavours and tannin. Getting the balance right is the key to any good wine and is a defining component of a winemaker’s particular style.

It will be up to you to see if you can hold out long enough for your grandchildren to enjoy the wines but to help we have included a cellaring guide of the last 10 vintages of three of our wines. With vintage variation and distinct differences between the alcohol content, finding the natural sweet spot for alcohol is key to defining the style, approachability and longevity of every wine we make.

Robert Mann  
Senior Winemaker & Estate Director  
Cape Mentelle Vineyards

# TO FILTER OR NOT TO FILTER

To filter or not to filter, is the question that many winemakers and wine professionals have been debating for years. The common argument is that when a wine is filtered it is never as good as it was before. For some, the belief is that filtration removes items out of the wine apart from the particles it is intended to remove. That is, filtration can bring about a loss in colour, aroma, flavour, tannin and other compounds that contribute to mouthfeel. Or, in other words the filtration process 'strips' the wine of its goodies.

Filtering wine is not just about clarity, filtration can remove unwanted yeast and bacteria. The concern with unfiltered wine is that it might still contain live yeast, which may cause re-fermentation in the bottle. Unfiltered red wine also brings about the risk of an increase in *brettanomyces* and other undesirable microbial growths, which can end up seriously spoiling the product.

American winemakers have been big proponents of unfiltered wine, probably coming from popular wine critic Robert Parker's crusade against filtration some years ago. At Cape Mentelle, we believe in continually challenging our winemaking beliefs and techniques in an ongoing commitment to delivering the best possible wine in the glass. With our aim to create wines full of varietal character and with long aging potential, we feel it is vital to filter.

Evan Thompson  
Operations Winemaker  
Cape Mentelle Vineyards



## WINERY NEWS



'Movies in the Vineyard at Cape Mentelle' is returning to our beautiful gardens for the 2012-2013 summer with this season promising to be bigger and better than ever with a lot of exciting changes.

Firstly, we are delighted to welcome 'Lamonts' as our new food partner. The 'Lamonts' team will be serving a selection of gourmet pizzas, charcuterie and cheeses matched to our wines, from a new wine bar located in front of our historic 1977 barrel cellar.

A new 'surround sound' audio system has been installed and our lounge area has also been refurbished under a new marquee with heating for those cooler evenings.

The all-inclusive 'Mentelle Monday' package of wine, food and film is set to continue along with the introduction of bean bag chairs for hire and a fully re-designed front of house ticketing booth.

We look forward to seeing you all again this summer for evenings of wine and film under the stars, the season will start on Saturday 08 December, screening nightly throughout the summer.

We are also ready to launch our new-look website still at [www.capementelle.com.au](http://www.capementelle.com.au). Keep up-to-date with screening sessions of 'Movies in the Vineyard at Cape Mentelle' as well as our other current events, new releases, tasting notes and reviews. We'd love to hear your feedback and suggestions on our website – email: [charlotte.dowden@capementelle.com.au](mailto:charlotte.dowden@capementelle.com.au)

# CELLARING NOTES

Last month the winemaking team reviewed the previous 10 releases of three of Cape Mentelle's wines. These notes represent their frank and honest assessment based purely on the wine in the glass on the day - previous reputations and reviews upon release are not taken into consideration - we're tough markers!

Our Star System \*\*\*\*\* Outstanding \*\*\*\* Excellent \*\*\* Good \*\* Moderate \* OK

Vintage	Cabernet Sauvignon	Rating	Cellaring Term
2010	A wine with distinction and class that reflects the consistency of the vineyard. Oozing with cassis, berry fruit and graphite with a rich texture and gravelly structure.	*****	Now - 2040
2009	A youthful colour with vibrant cassis and cherry fruit. An abundance of weight with a slatey, savoury back palate and velvety tannins give a beautifully balanced mouthfeel.	*****	Now - 2040
2008	The first year of our berry-by-berry sorting showing through with seamless elegance and sophistication. A juicy and supple palate with exceptional focus and length, we love this wine!	*****	Now - 2034
2007	This vintage is all about ripe fruit and lots of it. Inviting black, dark fruit, prunes and tobacco leaf. A seductive palate with lashings of red fruit and plenty of room to develop.	**** 1/2	Now - 2038
2006	An understated, complex nose with clarity to the fruit. Pristine, pretty fruit, redcurrant, fragrant cherry and sensual clove. Tight and grippy tannins with a nice, creamy finish.	****	Now - 2032
2005	In the elegant spectrum with abundant cassis, violets and red berry fruit. Fresh, fragrant and focused with a tight mineral palate of medium body.	****	Now - 2030
2004	First vintage under screwcap and what a ripper year! Generous black and red fruit with a core of dark berries, perfumed violets and cedary oak, intense character and depth.	*****	Now - 2034
2003	Still youthful and travelling well. Subtle allspice, mocha and bitter chocolate on the nose. A savoury palate with a dusty, rich finish.	*** 1/2	Now - 2022
2002	From a very cool year in Margaret River - bitumen, mint, cigar box and aged tobacco. The palate is dark and firm with dusty, gravelly tannins.	*** 1/2	Now - 2018
2001	Classic Margaret River Cabernet and very good for its era. A touch of truffle, dark chocolate and bayleaf. The palate is plush and round with long savoury tannins.	****	Now - 2024
Vintage	'Trinders' Cabernet Merlot	Rating	Cellaring Term
2011	This new release is restrained but with underlying intensity. Plum skins, cassis and the red chunks in Rocky Road. Soft and rich with velvety, mouth-filling tannins.	*****	Now - 2040
2010	A pretty and rounder wine with lovely perfumed fruit characters of juicy mulberry, red and black berries. A mineral core and a gravelly structure, a wine for cellaring.	*****	Now - 2034
2009	A gorgeous wine. A seductive nose of mocha and a touch of violet. Rich and well constructed, the palate of redcurrant and graphite has slatey tannins which give great length.	**** 1/2	Now - 2034
2008	Refined aromatics which are cassis dominant but with mineral and fragrant cherry. Vibrant and medium bodied with restrained oak, nice poise and sophistication.	**** 1/2	Now - 2030
2007	This wine could live forever, it has barely aged at all. A depth and persistence on the palate of dark couverture, mocha and tobacco. Firm and rich with sweet fruit on the finish.	**** 1/2	Now - 2030
2006	A well-made wine maintaining its youth with bright, juicy redcurrant and cherry. Savoury, dusty tannins adding to a really nice texture and length with an elegance on the finish.	****	Now - 2026
2005	Feminine qualities to this wine of cassis, mint and fresh leather. Dried herbs on a savoury palate which has firm tannins, good structure and length.	****	Now - 2022
2004	A big wine with massive appeal. A bomb with bags of blackcurrant and uncompromising fleshy fruit. An expansive, ripe palate retaining freshness.	**** 1/2	Now - 2026
2003	A youthful nose of stewed rhubarb and plums. The rounded palate showing that classic Margaret River bayleaf character and dark chocolate - a shorter finish with good acidity.	*** 1/2	Now - 2020
2002	Our last Cabernet Merlot under cork and still a great drink. Cool fruits, red cherry, aged tobacco and dark, sweet soy.	*** 1/2	Now - 2016

# CAPE MENTELLE

## I N T E R N A T I O N A L C A B E R N E T T A S T I N G

### 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Cape Mentelle International Cabernet Tasting. The event was first held at the winery in Margaret River in 1982, a year which went on to be even more memorable as our 1982 Cabernet Sauvignon was awarded the Jimmy Watson trophy at the Royal Melbourne Wine Show. This was the first of two back-to-back Jimmy Watson Trophies, a remarkable achievement for both Cape Mentelle and Margaret River. Since that first event, 'cabernet-philes' have tasted consecutive vintages of Cape Mentelle Cabernet benchmarked alongside the world's finest and enjoyed this unique Cape Mentelle experience. Whether you are passionate about great cabernet or simply enjoy the finest food and wine in the company of friends, the Cape Mentelle International Cabernet Tasting is an exclusive event that is not to be missed. The tasting this year will be held at the winery on Saturday 10 November and will include wines from Bordeaux, Napa Valley and Tuscany alongside the best of Australia. Margaret River will also be well represented having experienced another stunning cabernet vintage in 2009.

For more information please contact Charlotte Dowden by email on [charlotte.dowden@capementelle.com.au](mailto:charlotte.dowden@capementelle.com.au) or call 08 9757 0888.

Vintage	Wallcliffe Sauvignon Blanc Semillon	Rating	Cellaring Term
2010	A inviting wine with a mix of lime rind and honeysuckle complemented by gun smoke and talc. There is a chalky, natural acidity textured with ginger and lemon flavours.	*****	Now - 2024
2009	Orange blossom and lime segments are in harmony with savoury almond meal. A precise acid structure reminiscent of wet slate with balanced oak provides depth and length.	****	Now - 2018
2008	The fine lineal palate features cut grass and lemon pith, with oceanic and wet stone elements beneath the fruit. A generous texture creates an evenness with a long, tight finish.	****1/2	Now - 2020
2007	Vibrant colour, a touch of beany herbaceousness and malty minerality. The smokey palate is firm with an element of richness and a clean finish.	****	Now - 2016
2006	Very cool wine! Fresh with a lovely touch of honeysuckle and bath salts. The minerally palate is complex and engaging with restrained oak.	*****	Now - 2018
2005	A sweeter, rounder style with lifted aromatics and full fruit weight. Lemon curd and sweet oak on the creamy palate.	***	Now - 2014
2004	Appearance is advanced and the wine has developed into a rich, forward style with a broad and buttery finish and savoury, drying oak.	*1/2	Drink Now
2003	The colour looks good but the palate is lacking acid - slightly buttery, tropical and ripe with vanillin oak, finishing a little short.	**	Drink Now
2002	This wine is looking great - retaining some herbaceousness, it is steely and savoury. Nice acid on the palate with slightly creamy notes, good texture and length.	****	Now - 2015
2001	This is our last vintage under cork and a great advocate for the screw cap! There is not a lot of fruit left and the palate is developed, honeyed and toasty.	1/2	Drink Now

# THE FABULOUS LADIES' WINE SOCIETY!



By Ian Parmenter

**Question:** What do Bordeaux, blossom and bath salts have in common?

**Answer:** You'll discover the answer if you read the winemaker's notes on the Cape Mentelle Sauvignon Blanc Semillon 2012.

This is, of course, the classic blend of Bordeaux white wines and the notes for this new Spring release describe the nose as being a blend of jasmine blossom... and bath salts. Also featured, aromas of grapefruit, lemon pith, and white peach. As to the palate, there are notes of lime and melon. A recommendation from Rob Mann: "Enjoy it young and fresh." I couldn't agree more and as a stand-alone drink or as a companion to food, this wine from the cooler southern area of the Margaret River region certainly does the business.

With its pale straw colour, this young SBS works really well with lighter coloured foods such as fresh young cheeses, white meats, scallops, fish and spicy Asian dishes. Hence, my suggestion of a recipe with elements coming from the hotter, northern part of Western Australia: barramundi (preferably wild caught) and pawpaw, along with citrus and coconut. In the absence of barramundi any white fish fillets will do such as dhufish, snapper or cod.

An aside: the Fabulous Ladies' Wine Society (yes, there is one!) earlier this year voted the 2011 vintage of this lovely drop as their wine of the month... I'm sure they're going to swoon over this one!

## Barramundi with Pawpaw Sauce

An easy recipe suitable for any white fish fillets, such as the fabulous Australian barramundi.

Serves 4

### Ingredients

600g barramundi fillets  
250g fresh pawpaw flesh  
1 tsp ground coriander  
1/2 cup coconut milk  
1/2 tsp sesame oil  
1 tsp grated ginger root  
1 lemongrass root or a couple of lemongrass blades (optional)  
6 spring onions  
2 limes (or 1 lemon)  
2 tbsp olive oil  
1 cup chicken or fish stock

### Method

Chop the white part of the spring onion and cook gently in frying pan with the grated ginger in 1 tbsp of olive oil for a couple of minutes.

While that is cooking, remove the flesh from the pawpaw and mash with a fork. Add this to the pan and cook until it is thoroughly softened.

Stir in the chicken (or fish) stock, the coconut milk, sesame oil, and the ground coriander.

Toss in the lemongrass and leave to simmer gently while you attend to the fish.

Make sure the fillets are dry by wiping with a kitchen towel then fry them gently with the rest of the oil. Cook for 2 or 3 minutes on each side. Don't overcook. Transfer to warm plate and keep warm in low oven.

By now the sauce should be cooked. Squeeze in the juice of one lime or 1/2 lemon. Strain the sauce. Pour any juices from the fish fillets into the sauce. Stir then pour over fish.

Garnish with slices of fresh lime or lemon and fresh coriander or Vietnamese mint (similar to coriander) and plain rice.

Enjoy!

# MENTELLE AMBASSADOR



Look what Wino's packed for their holiday! Wino's Margaret River took their first break in 11 years in August, shutting their doors for 4 weeks in search of warmer weather! Travelling to destinations as far flung as Canada, America, Singapore, the Kimberley and Bali, they nevertheless found room in their luggage for the above two travelling companions and made sure to send us a photo. Their choice was reaffirmed shortly after their return on September 18th when both winemakers responsible for these hallmark wines (Robert Mann and Virginia Willcock) were nominated for the Gourmet Traveller Wine 'Winemaker of the Year' Award.

Anyone can become a Mentelle Ambassador. Next time you are in a remote or exciting location keep your eyes peeled for that unique photo opportunity – of you or someone you love, with your favourite drop of Cape Mentelle! Send that photo (high resolution please) in to our Editor. Email entries to [charlotte.dowden@capementelle.com.au](mailto:charlotte.dowden@capementelle.com.au). We will publish the best and most intriguing photo and the winning Mentelle Ambassador will receive a FREE mixed case of six bottles of Cape Mentelle wine (within Australia). All entrants will receive a limited edition leather Cape Mentelle notebook.

# THE VEGGIE PATCH!

Our passion for winemaking stems as much from an appreciation of the final product as it does from a love for the earth from which it comes, the vineyard and a way of life that embraces nature.

When we are not tending vines and finessing blends, we extend our passion to make the most of the beautiful surrounds in which we live and work.

Since the days when David & Sandy Hohnen lived at the vintage house a veggie garden has thrived there. Now the house is used by our annual vintage crew so we try to grow enough to provide salad at lunch time. Other times it provides seasonal veg to be shared by the staff. Current planting is garlic, broccoli, peas, beetroot, carrot and cabbage – which sounds like a perfect winter soup mix. We recently had to net the garden to exclude the 28 parrots, silvereyes, rabbits and water hens. Meanwhile, Pete's Pumpkin Patch at our Crossroads Vineyard keeps us in plentiful supply!

For the past 12 years we have got the team together around April to pick olives on the property – some to press for oil and others to preserve. Our perfected wood-fired Pizza Bianca is now pretty well home grown, cooked in our pizza oven and complemented by a glass of our favourite Cape Mentelle wine. The Estate is now also home to a very territorial Sussex cross white rooster by the name of 'Wicket' and his 9 brown hens – living and dining like royalty!



PB protecting the veggie patch!

# NEW RELEASES

With another great vintage in the bag, Margaret River and Cape Mentelle have a great deal to be pleased about. The 2012 Cape Mentelle Sauvignon Blanc Semillon blend resulted from an early and fast harvest of both varieties in late February this year and the final wine shows abundant vibrant flavours and richness of fruit balanced by natural acidity, great length and purity - the hallmarks of this classic blend.

The 2011 harvest continued the run of excellent vintages in Margaret River. The 'Trinders' Cabernet Merlot from this year is expressive and distinctive, with a small proportion of cabernet franc and petit verdot complementing the blend. 2011 will ultimately be ranked as amongst the great red vintages for the region.

The warm and dry 2010 vintage was an outstanding vintage for Cape Mentelle and especially strong for reds with tremendous depth of flavour and quality of tannin. Cape Mentelle is the first, and to date only, winery in Australia utilising the Vistalys optical berry sorting technology which allows great accuracy and efficiency and ensures we maximise the potential of every red wine we make. This is evident in our 2010 releases of Wilyabrup, Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon, wines which will age beautifully.

In addition the 2010 Wallcliffe Sauvignon Blanc Semillon is, in our opinion, the greatest vintage yet produced of this distinctive single vineyard wine. Abundant natural acidity combined with great concentration and complexity. The wines of this vineyard are at once tight and restrained yet evocative and textured with all of the characteristic individuality on show in 2010.

# REVIEWS



## Australian Wine Companion 2013

James Halliday, 96 points

### 2010 Wallcliffe Sauvignon Blanc Semillon

Bright colour, showing the hallmarks of a complex, layered and meticulously detailed blend inspired by the best the Bordelaise can muster; fragrant tropical fruits, nettle, fine toasty oak and a tightly wound palette that is both complex and refreshing; long, layered and impeccable.



## Sunday Times

David Prestipino, 95 points

### 2010 Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon

An elegant wine that's long, firm and razor-tight, but with great freshness and upfront fruit. Enjoy grandiose dusty tannins, refined cassis, eucalyptus and perfumed violet. Will age gracefully.



## West Australian

Ray Jordan, 95 points

### 2009 Cape Mentelle Wilyabrup

This is a blend of 41% cabernet sauvignon, with the rest a mix of merlot and cabernet franc, all from the Wilyabrup sub-region, Glorious lifted fragrances on the nose, while on the palate the plummy blackcurrant flavours are augmented by a lavish cedary oak. The tannin structure is outstanding and really makes the wine stand up. This an alternative take for Margaret River and works so well.



## Newcastle Herald

John Lewis, \*\*\*\*\*

### 2010 Cape Mentelle Zinfandel

Cape Mentelle has long been a dab hand at Zinfandel, a grape famous in California and fairly rare in Australia. This fine, multi-layered 2010 is garnet in the glass, entices with scents of cherries and tobacco leaf and brings powerful plum flavour to the front palate. Dark chocolate, mulberry, licorice and spicy oak characters combine on the middle palate and the finish has dusty tannins.