

“.....FALL IN LOVE WITH
THE WINE OF THE
WADANDI BOODJAR.”

CAPE
MENTELLE

MARGARET RIVER

MENTELLE NOTES MAY 2013



Robert Mann and son Arlo - the next generation.

45,000 YEARS OF TERROIR

When you consider Margaret River as a wine producing region is a little over 40 years old, in a wine producing country about 200 years old, it is not a lot of time to develop a local understanding of the piece of dirt our fruit comes from. I have always felt I needed at least 5 years of experience turning grapes into wine from a particular vineyard to begin to get the best out of it and who knows how many years to truly understand it and develop a connection with the land. The French have the term ‘terroir’ for which the English do not have a direct translation but the concept can variably be described as “a unique sense of place exhibited consistently through the nuances of smell and taste in a wine” and is borne through the complex relationships between the soil, the environment, the people and most importantly the history.

In my attempts to increase my understanding of our vineyards, the history of our local Aboriginal people makes for compelling reading and draws strong parallels to the concept of terroir. Local aboriginal culture dates back an estimated 45,000 years in the south west of Western Australia and this region is home to the Nyungar people. The Nyungar have a term for country (Boodjar) and their Boodjar was made up of a number of smaller territories with the appellation of today’s Margaret River wine region falling within the Boodjar of the Wadandi (Ocean) people.

The three critical elements essential to the Nyungar understanding of their land are Katitjin (knowledge), Boodjar (country) and Moort (people), by knowing intimately each component and the links between them a strong connection to the land is formed. Is it just me or is this a definition of terroir. In the words of the Nyungar let’s hope that from kura (a long time ago), to yeye (today) and into boordwan (the future) we can consolidate our knowledge, build on the intrinsic qualities of our wines and foster a greater insight of what it means to be a winemaker in Margaret River.

A number of Margaret River’s unofficial sub regions have traditional aboriginal names. The next step in the evolution of our region is to further define our sub regions and what better way to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land than to name them all as they have been known for millennia. In so doing we lay the groundwork for future generations of winemakers and consumers to fall in love with the wine of the Wadandi Boodjar.

*Robert Mann
Senior Winemaker and Estate Director
Cape Mentelle Vineyards*

SUSTAINABILITY FROM GROUND TO GLASS

Cape Mentelle has always worked to protect the whole environmental system within which it operates by striving to make wine that originates from eco-friendly practices from ground to glass.

In 2010, the 43 year old vineyard and winery was certified with Western Australia's first Entwine accreditation, an industry accolade reflecting a high standard of environmental practice.

Cape Mentelle's Sustainability Team members, Evan Thompson and Ashley Wood said the winery has now taken its green credentials a step further with the implementation of two new energy efficiency projects.

"We have invested over \$300,000 to install a 28 kilowatt photovoltaic solar panel system to produce base line energy for the winery and 30 of our stainless steel wine tanks have been insulated." Evan said, "The insulation of the tanks will keep the wine at a more stable temperature without the need for high-cost refrigeration.

"Cold stabilisation of white wine requires temperatures of -2 degrees so the insulation of these tanks should reduce our energy consumption by up to 70 percent."

Both projects received federal government co-funding, as part of a program awarded to only 10 West Australian wineries.

Cape Mentelle expects to make significant savings on electricity annually and aims to reduce the carbon emissions intensity of its electricity consumption by 35%.



Cape Mentelle Winery's photovoltaic solar panel system.

The winery has always taken its green reputation seriously. Current sustainable practices at the winery include the creation of organic compost from the grape skins (marc), the use of natural fertilisers and free-range guinea fowl to control weevils, as well as treating and recycling wastewater on-site through reed-bed filtering.

A revegetation project is also underway in an effort to return vineyards corridors to native bush through weed and exotic plant eradication, and re-establishment of natives.

"The revegetation project will also create a softer approach to the vineyards for people using the Rails to Trails track which runs through some of our properties and links Cowaramup to Augusta" said Ashley.

Other environmental projects under investigation include wind and hydro-generation to drive pumps in the vineyard, a biodigester for trapping methane from by-products to use as an energy source, mapping wind, off-peak power in the vineyards, the rehabilitation of Cape Mentelle's creek-line and elimination of herbicides through the use of under-vine mowing and winter grazing. Ashley said it was exciting to work in a business focussed on returning to its surrounds.



Paul Callaghan, Senior Winemaker Robert Mann, Ashley Wood and Evan Thompson

*"We all love living in Margaret River – so as employees of Cape Mentelle it is inspiring to cultivate such great wines while minimising our impact on our environment – we have a real attachment to the land and the feeling flows through the whole operation."
Ashley Wood*

THE EVOLUTION

“It’s fair to say that the addictive rush of seeing so many wines and wine people in a single place is the reason why I’m doing what I’m doing today.”

I have been writing about wine since 1984, so it’s fair to say that my early days watching the wine industry coincided with Cape Mentelle’s emergence as a serious player. Its current re-appearance amongst Australian’s winemaking elite three decades later is no less impressive.

I first came across Cape Mentelle and its founding winemaker, David Hohnen as an agricultural science student at Melbourne University. These were the days of the unforgettable Expovin events at the Exhibition Buildings, which captured on a scale that has not been replicated successfully in the years since the very heart and soul of Australian wine, not to mention a strong representation from around the world. At the start of a session I’d wander in with my father, each of us equipped with paté and a baguette, with the intention to stay for the duration. And we did. It’s fair to say that the addictive rush of seeing so many wines and wine people in a single place is the reason why I’m doing what I’m doing today.

Nobody could or indeed wanted to escape the excitement and energy of the Western Australian stand. It was far from the largest – with only twenty or so makers present – but that didn’t matter. For back then the wine fraternity responded towards any new release from Cullen, Cape Mentelle, Moss Wood and Vasse Felix with much the same fervour as the Y generation today greets the Australian arrival of an American daytime talk show host.

With several big early accolades and Hohnen’s particular front-man style, Cape Mentelle was quick to capture national attention, and plenty of it. Regardless of what you might think of the Jimmy Watson Trophy as a credible benchmark of wine quality, there’s no doubting its impact, especially after the Blass three-peat of the 1970s. At a time when Coonawarra cabernet was broadly rated the country’s finest, any doubt that the Margaret River would make it to the top quickly evaporated when Mentelle’s claimed back-to-back Watsons with its 1982 and 1983 vintages. Cape Mentelle was about as hot as a small Australian wine brand could be.



David Hohnen

Hohnen, never giving too much away, appeared to enjoy the journey, but on other occasions would clearly prefer away from the limelight, taking to the surf or hunting deep in a forest. Yet he seemed to know exactly what people wanted to drink. The early and ongoing success of the benchmark Sauvignon Blanc Semillon blend are testimony to that.

To a large extent Cape Mentelle’s evolution has reflected the evolution of Australian wine over the last quarter century. Well do I remember the impressively robust, statuesque reds of its early years. Like many of the wines being made in California’s mountain vineyards around the same time, these were assertive, structured and powerfully textured – if indeed also rather raw-edged – wines of natural balance but perhaps not great finesse. While young they left a lasting impression on your palate, and also the natural, if unpolished structure to develop handsomely over the decades.

“The intelligent application of more adventurous winemaking techniques in harmony with a strong technical foundation are clearly evident in Cape Mentelle’s contemporary wines”

The comparison with what California was doing at the time is no accident – Hohnen cut his teeth there as a winemaker and many comparable Californian vineyards were then taking the same evolutionary baby steps as Margaret River. Mentelle's Zin remains the only one worth drinking in Australia.

Step forward a few years with a little more vine-age and we see in Cape Mentelle taking a parallel course to the more significant trends in Australian winemaking. With vineyards now capable of producing wines of more polish, length and balance, Cape Mentelle edged its way into a more 'natural' and risk-taking winemaking regime, adopting with many other Australian makers notions like wild yeast fermentation and extended lees contact in white wines.

In step with the experiences of many other makers across the country, these processes – an essential learning phase for the industry to experience – are as much a cornerstone of modern Australian winemaking excellence as the more rigid, winemaker-driven approach taught for decades at places like Roseworthy and Wagga. The intelligent application of more adventurous winemaking techniques in harmony with a strong technical foundation are clearly evident in Cape Mentelle's contemporary wines, which are at least the equal of anything made in Margaret River today. I don't think any wine reflects this more than the Wallcliffe Sauvignon Blanc Semillon, which without losing any of its rather funky appeal, has tightened up and become a significantly smarter, cellarable and finer wine than its early vintages.

As a wine enthusiast at heart, I'm very excited by the modern generation of people and wine at Cape Mentelle. In Robbie Mann the company has the right person at the right time. During his time as chief winemaker the wines have stepped up a notch or two in finesse and balance, without losing any of the intensity and structure that Cape Mentelle built its reputation upon.

I guess if there's a wine that epitomises the evolution of Cape Mentelle for me, it's really the Zinfandel. The same evolution I've just described is today producing a deeply concentrated but refined and silky expression of this variety that is simply irresistible, even though I'd only rarely consider the Californian alternative. Cape Mentelle is again blazing its own trail, something I know David Hohnen remains deeply proud about.

And that's not such a bad thing.

Jeremy Oliver

The Australian Wine Annual

jeremyoliver.com

REVIEWS

Cape Mentelle Chardonnay 2012

GARY WALSH, WINE FRONT, 94 POINTS



A whisper of struck match, grapefruit/lime, cashew cream, ginger spice oak and, wow, it's a pretty cohesive delivery of flavour and finesse for such a young wine. It has presence without heaviness, feels clean and fresh in the mouth with subtle flinty textural elements, and finishes long and tangy. Sleek and modern. Great to drink now, but likely to improve further.

Cape Mentelle Zinfandel 2010

JEREMY OLIVER, 2013 AUSTRALIAN WINE ANNUAL, 96 POINTS



An outstanding wine that reflects its varietal point of difference as well as its regionality. Heady, spicy aromas of blackberries, blueberries, sweet vanilla/cedary oak and dried herbs are lifted by a scent of rose petals and briar. It's juicy, long and smooth, with a pristine, perfectly clear presence of brightly lit fruit underpinned by a fine, tight spine of crunchy tannins, finishing with length, balance and a vivacious cut of acidity.

Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon 2010

RAY JORDAN, WEST AUSTRALIAN WINE GUIDE 2013, 98 POINTS



I'm beginning to run out of points for this wine. Seems to subtly get better each year and this one is certainly right up there with the best of them. So effortlessly silky through its mid palate to that long finish. The palate displays beautifully integrated fine grained oak and superb fruit quality. It's powerful and classic yet it is so subtle. Great wine... again.

Cape Mentelle Shiraz 2011

CAMPBELL MATTINSON, WINE FRONT, 96 POINTS



This is a beauty. Roasted meats, black pepper, some smoky reduction, a plushness and yet, overwhelmingly, a spicy discipline throughout. Completely unafraid of tannin, all peppery and nutty and firm. Black, polished, gorgeous cherries. Black, red and purple notes. Immaculately clean, bossed into shape by all that dry tannin, and yet exciting to drink, smell, revisit.

Starry, Starry Shiraz

“Was it the starry, starry night? Could it have been the gentle breeze wafting through the trees? Perhaps it was the aromas of newly mown grass and the ocean?”

Or even the comedy/drama I was enjoying at Cape Mentelle as part of its openair summer movie season, the French film, *Intouchables*? Perhaps all those things played a role. However, most likely it was the Cape Mentelle Shiraz 2011 that I was sipping which brought to mind the classic Gascony dish: *cassoulet*.

A gutsy stew of meats, vegetables and herbs from the southwest of France, it is perfect partnered with the Cape Mentelle Shiraz 2011 which, with its spicy, peppery nose, its firm structure, and its savouriness, is thoroughly suited.

The name *cassoulet* comes from the word *cassole*, referring to the conical clay pot in which it was cooked in France. While the traditional dish can be time-consuming to make, involving making duck confit, this version is simpler without losing anything in the translation. Although I choose to prepare it with duck, it may also be prepared with chicken. I also include Mexican spicy sausages, or North African merguez.

Chef Ian Parmenter



Cassoulet

Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients

- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 3 duck or chicken Marylands (thigh and drumstick)
- 250 g spicy sausages cut into bite-sized pieces
- 150 g pancetta or bacon, chopped
- 1 cup onion, roughly chopped
- 3/4 cup carrot, peeled and cut into 1/2 cm pieces
- 2 cups leek, spilt, washed, trimmed and cut into 1/2 cm pieces
- 1 or 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 500 ml chicken stock
- 250 ml red wine
- 1 cup tomato pieces (fresh or canned)
- 1 bay leaf (optional)
- 2 or 3 sprigs thyme
- 2 or 3 leaves of sage
(or 1 tsp mixed herbs)
- Salt and pepper
- 1 can beans (borlotti, kidney) drained.

In a large frying pan or cast iron pot, put olive oil and brown chicken or duck. Remove.

Brown the pancetta or bacon. Remove.

Brown sausage pieces. Remove.

In the same pan, sauté onions, carrots, leek and garlic for 2 or 3 minutes.

Add chicken stock and wine, bring to a boil and reduce by a third (to a syrupy consistency).

Add duck (or chicken), pancetta (or bacon), sausage pieces, and herbs.

If using cast iron pot, put on lid, and reduce heat to simmer.

If using frying pan, transfer all to casserole dish, cover and cook in 160C oven.

Allow to cook until duck or chicken is tender (about 40 minutes on stove top, 1 hour in oven)).

Season to taste.

Stir in beans and allow to warm through.

Serve with green vegetables (such as broccoli or French beans).

SILVER SCREEN SUMMER

Our movie season at Cape Mentelle wrapped up on April Fool's Day ending another extremely successful big screen celebration of great movies, balmy summer nights and fabulous food and wine. The 'Movies at Cape Mentelle' programme comprising of 61 acclaimed films saw record numbers claim a patch of lawn in the winery's picturesque gardens.

We are pleased to say that a whopping 3501 Lamont gourmet pizzas were consumed, 748 ice-creams devoured and just over 20,000 glasses of wine were quaffed (responsibly!) over our 100 night season. A big thank you to our locals and visitors alike for their continued support.

We look forward to seeing you next summer and in the meantime keep an eye out for details on our Facebook pages.

www.facebook.com/moviesatcapementelle

www.facebook.com/capementelle



MENTELLE NOTES

Our 'Behind the scenes' vineyard and winery tours are now increasingly in demand and will run five days a week in the summer and 3 days a week in the winter. We are inviting all who sign up for our newsletter and our current members to take a complimentary tour, valued at \$25 per person, next time you are visiting our Cellar Door in Margaret River, with the option of upgrading to finish with the degustation food and wine matching.

For further information and bookings please email cellardoor@capementelle.com.au.

Mentelle Ambassador

Russell and Jenny Baker have such an impressive line-up of Cape Mentelle Cabernet's in their cellar that their Ambassador status is without question! The Baker's were stationed in WA while serving in the Navy back in the 1980's when Jenny discovered our wines.

Russell contacted us recently with this impressive photo to ask which one we'd recommend for the occasion of his eldest daughter graduating from university - after 5 years and with 2 degrees. They celebrated with the 1980 which filled the room with a powerful fruity aroma when it was opened, mint condition from the original box it was purchased in!



You too can become a Mentelle Ambassador, for inspiration have a look at previous Ambassador photos on our facebook page - www.facebook.com/capementelle. 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! 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. Email entries to charlotte.dowden@capementelle.com.au.

NEW RELEASES

With vintage 2013 in full swing Senior Winemaker Rob Mann took off on a slightly different tangent with our first new release wines of the year - the Cape Mentelle trilogy of varietal wines with origins outside of Bordeaux. It has to be said he has taken the theming very seriously as he could currently be mistaken for a wookiee - sporting the traditional vintage facial hair!



The 2012 Chardonnay, much like the original Star Wars, lands during a time when people are looking for a new genre with this varietal. When a death star needs destroying you want to be flying an X wing fighter with its clean lines, electronic targeting precision and droid support out the back fine tuning every detail of its performance.

The 2011 Shiraz, being the second in the trilogy, links the two. Shiraz from Margaret River can struggle to be seen above its more illustrious peers but get it right and it can certainly surprise. Like The Empire Strikes Back our Shiraz is bold in its conception but with lighter moments throughout and with a touch of budding romance is a great expression of what a region can produce in a great year under clear direction.

The final episode is where people die, lovers unite and everything turns out for the best. Our 2011 Zinfandel has a little Ewok in it but place that small furball on a speeder bike and you are in for some great entertainment.

Zinfandel can have a power greater than the force but if used for good and if not tempted by the dark side of overt alcohol and oak, balance can be maintained and peace returned to the galaxy. If Luke could have given Anakin a glass of Zin on his death bed he may well have survived.

We have yet to work out where George Lucas would have positioned the 2012 Botrytis Viognier but rest assured Yoda would have found the force strong with this one. Exclusively available to Mentelle Notes and Cellar Door customers it is vibrant and aromatic with ripe peach, apricot and subtle orange blossom.

Both the 2011 and 2012 vintages are highly rated in Margaret River with both sharing warmer than average temperatures and below average rainfall. The results continue an excellent run of vintages stretching back to 2007 and reaffirm the regions consistency in being able to produce some of Australia's greatest wines.

CAPE
MENTELLE

INTERNATIONAL
CABERNET TASTING

SINCE 1982

Cape Mentelle's International Cabernet Tasting will now become an annual event here in Margaret River.

Join us this year on Saturday 09 November for an auspicious line up of Cabernet's from the 2010 vintage. The wines will be complemented by a delicious long table lunch crafted once again by Kate Lamont.

For more information or to register please email charlotte.dowden@capementelle.com.au