

MENTELLE NOTES

The newsletter of Cape Mentelle, Margaret River, Australia | ISSN: 2207-6964



'Twas all hands on deck for the 1985 Cape Mentelle harvest – recognise anyone?

Making History

It's Margaret River's 50th Anniversary, a milestone that has triggered reminiscences at Cape Mentelle.

No one talks too often about pioneers, those hard-working dreamers with vision and determination, driven by belief (or delusion) to carve lasting achievements, worthy of plaques. So it seems appropriate to look back briefly at those founding years, and their challenges.

Cape Mentelle isn't yet officially worthy of the golden 50-year-old sash – just an aspiring youngster headed towards the 48th vintage season, with spring in its step. But we weren't far behind the region's first vigneron. They were mostly doctors led by cardiologist Tom Cullity who planted the first vines in the ground at Vasse Felix in 1967.

Next came Moss Wood (1969) – and then in 1970 the Hohnen family dug the first post-holes on the original Wallcliffe Vineyard, where they later built the winery. It was a father and three sons project, supported by lots of local labour and laughter.

Their optimism was spurred by the early viticultural research of Californian professor Harold Olmo and Australia's Dr John Gladstones who both decided that WA's South

West coastal peninsula showed great promise as a wine region. They honed (sic) in on the maritime location, lack of frosts, clear skies and moderate temperature summations.

Gladstones highlighted the district's *'equable climate for higher-yielding good quality varieties, such as shiraz and semillon'*.

So Cape Mentelle assigned three acres (1.2h) of their original Margaret River land holdings, a tractor and two Hohnen brothers to plant cabernet sauvignon and shiraz vines. The next variety into the gravelly sandy loam soil was riesling, then semillon. Later came that cheeky red rogue – zinfandel – a first for Australia and the legacy of founder David Hohnen's winemaking studies at Fresno University, California.

Those early days were tough going – and the main market for Margaret River reds far away across the Nullarbor. But the fates turned in 1983 when Cape Mentelle won the coveted Jimmy Watson Trophy for a one-year-old Cab Sav. The same honour was bestowed again a year later, a running double that put CMV firmly on the Australian wine map.

Perhaps Professor Olmo was onto something after all.

The ensuing years saw the establishment of Margaret River vineyards that have since become icon brands and ambassadors. Names like Clairault, Cullen, Happs, Leeuwin Estate, Moss Wood, Pierro, Vasse Felix, Willespie and Woodlands, all early pioneers who deserve sustained applause and recognition for their passion and persistence.

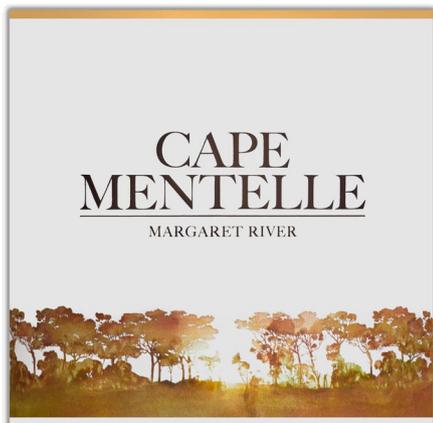
So too do Cape Mentelle's founders David and Mark Hohnen, who in 2000 oversaw the pivotal global partnership with French Champagne house Veuve Clicquot (now Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton).

'To this day I see Cape Mentelle's acquisition by a respected French wine company as one of the most significant milestones in the history of Margaret River,' says David Hohnen, now proprietor of local smallgoods producer, The Farmhouse.

'Their investment is a magnificent endorsement of the region and its wines. It also affords Cape Mentelle powerful global brand exposure, that in turn underpins the international reputation of our wines'.

So celebrate 50 roller-coaster exciting years, and raise a glass of Margaret River's finest in honour of the pioneers – and latter day visionaries!

New Releases



This issue of *Mentelle Notes* celebrates the golden years of Margaret River, a pivotal milestone that highlights the reputations of Cape Mentelle and fellow producers. While we look back, we are also proud to introduce the latest releases to the portfolio. These are available to members of the **Cape Mentelle Wine Club** – and at the Cellar Door. If you have any queries about these wines, please contact the knowledgeable Cape Mentelle cellar staff.

T: 08 9757 0888 or

E: info@capementelle.com.au

CAPE MENTELLE SEMILLON 2016

Semillon standing solo for a change. Rich and complex showcasing the intensity, focus and uniqueness of this often under appreciated variety.

‘An intense nose full of bergamot, marzipan, white pepper intermingled with exuberant wisteria blossom. The palate is fresh, linear and mineral, while displaying a uniquely rich texture with notes of citrus, white nectarine, biscotti and cashew butter. The feeling is bold and intense and will gain further complexity with cellaring. Great ageing potential!’

CAPE MENTELLE SAUVIGNON BLANC SEMILLON 2017

A perfect painting of the Margaret River region: a patch of earth surrounded by ocean where crisp briny scents of sauvignon blanc melt with the slight earthiness of semillon.

‘Beautiful nose with whiffs of yellow peach, rock melon, lemon zest and tropical fruit combined with strong mineral notes. The palate is very fresh with good tension

complementing citrus and melon aromas. The wine is textural, leading to a long vinous and satisfying zesty finish.’

CAPE MENTELLE CHARDONNAY 2016

Introducing a wine that respects the exceptional fruit of Margaret River, carefully crafted by traditional hands-off winemaking.

‘Bright, straw yellow with hints of gold. Intense nose of candied melon, orange zest, apricot jam and frangipani with sweet, warm spices and a hint of vanilla. The unctuous and generous palate offers layers of flavour from stone fruit, rockmelon, white peach, dried apricots interlaced with caramelised breadcrumbs and toasted brioche. The long finish is rich but with spiced nut aromas lifted by preserved lemon notes.’

CAPE MENTELLE WALLCLIFFE MERLOT PETIT VERDOT 2015

Always crafted from the best and most original wine produced in a particular year, this red blend is made predominantly with merlot and petit verdot from the original Wallcliffe vineyard.

‘A whiff of heady violet flower essence; the nose immediately savoury and spicy with notes of cracked peppercorn, leather, black tea, juniper and goji berries. Blackberry and plum characters lead to intense dark toasted spices, freshly roasted coffee and tobacco leaf notes. Its precision is revealed in the long caramelised oak finish, displaying round voluminous tannins.’

Musts

MOVIES AT CAPE MENTELLE

15 DECEMBER – 2 APRIL 2018

Book your tickets now!

www.capementelle.com.au/movies/program-and-tickets

AUSTRALIA DAY TASTING

23 JANUARY 2018

Bloomsbury Square, London

Wine Australia’s annual tasting – more than 1000 wines from 80-plus exhibitors.

PROWEIN

18 – 20 MARCH 2018

Dusseldorf, Germany

www.prowein.com



Wine Club News

The Cape Mentelle Wine Club launched a year ago and has captured the interest of keen wine lovers. Membership offers terrific benefits and access to rare cellar aged vintages, otherwise unavailable. It also provides access to priority bookings for various calendar events, including the annual international Cabernet Tasting.

The **Summer 2017 Winemaker’s Selection** includes a mature *Wallcliffe Sauvignon Blanc Semillon 2003*, young *Cape Mentelle Semillon 2016*, *Cape Mentelle Shiraz 2015*, the new *Wallcliffe Merlot Petit Verdot 2015* and cellar-pick mature *Cape Mentelle Zinfandel 2009* and *Cabernet Sauvignon 2012*.

Wine Club members receive two **Winemaker’s Selection Six-Packs** a year with accompanying tasting notes, sent freight free to a nominated Australian address.

Your club credentials can be used to shop online for other limited cellar releases.

The current online offer includes four seductive Cabernet Sauvignon vintages, all from excellent years – 2006, 2011, 2012 and 2014.

Other membership benefits include two complimentary tickets to a Cape Mentelle Food & Wine Pairing Experience (Value \$170) and exclusive invitations to headland events. Additional generous 15% savings apply to other Cape Mentelle purchases – wines and merchandise. The annual joining fee is \$800 (inc GST).

www.capementelle.com.au/Wine-Club

PSST! Club members also receive a special Movie Night treat, so let us know the day before your booked screening. cellardoor@capementelle.com.au

Wise Women

Global wine doyenne Jancis Robinson MW OBE was back in Margaret River recently and attended the Cape Mentelle Cabernet Tasting. She took time out for a glass of chilled Sauvignon Semillon and chat with Mentelle Notes.

Pic: Benjamin McMabon



MN: In 1986 in your book *Vines Grapes and Wines* you wrote, ‘Cabernet Sauvignon may be the world’s most fashionable red varietal...’ Is this still the case, 30-plus years later?

JR: Definitely not! Poor old Cab is now seen by many as rather old-fashioned, which is a great shame as when it’s good, it’s so very, very good. No one could be more fascinated by grape varieties than me, but we have to remember that obscurity does not equal quality, and vice versa.

MN: Bordeaux is the traditional home of cabernet. Where else do you think it performs well?

JR: Margaret River of course! And Bolgheri and northern California spring to mind.

MN: Bordeaux also claims title to semillon sauvignon blanc blends. Should Margaret River makers do more to promote this classic white style internationally?

JR: Very possibly, as it’s a distinguishing mark and sauvignon blanc is so very popular nowadays.

MN: You visited Cape Mentelle in 1988, for the 7th Cabernet Tasting. What is your abiding memory from that visit?

JR: I seem to remember writing about Margaret River very enthusiastically in the *Sunday Times*, whose wine writer I was

between 1980 and 1986. That’s when my much-quoted observation about how beautiful it is (below) stems from.

As for the 1988 tasting, I remember a participant remarking on what great fruit the wines had. I used that as the theme for the speech about cabernet I had to make, suggesting that fruit was not cabernet’s strongest suit but rather structure, longevity, and a quality that might be described as minerality – if we weren’t all scared of using that imprecise term nowadays.

MN: You once wrote ‘Margaret River is as close to paradise as I have been on my wine travels.’ What do you consider to be the region’s greatest assets?

JR: On this recent visit I was struck by how much more developed the town of Margaret River is than I remember it. But the glorious coastline, beaches and surf and the beautiful forests are unchanged. And now it’s possible to eat and drink amazingly well, close to them! And the wines are really in an excellent place at the moment – just right between skinny and fat.

MN: Do you think women have better palates than men?

JR: Scientists say so, and I have lost count of the number of times male wine professionals have confided that if they really want to know

what a wine tastes like, they ask their female partners. But I am not making a personal claim here!

MN: Who are your female wine heroes?

JR: I think Burgundy winemaker Anne-Claude Leflaive was very brave to go out on a limb with bio-dynamics and to do so many other educational things. She is much missed. Also in Burgundy, you have to take your hat off to Lalou Bize-Leroy of Domaine Leroy for her uncompromising winemaking and great tasting skills.

Madame Descaves was perhaps the greatest ‘character’ I met in wine and, praise be, managed to film. As a Bordeaux wine merchant of the old school, she had an amazing stock of old vintages and a ruthless way of (sometimes not) selling them.

MN: Your book *Wine Grapes* was a dedicated four-year project. Do you have another wine book gestating in your cellar?

JR: I’m just about to take a deep breath and start on the 8th edition of the *World Atlas of Wine*. (The 5th was my first.)

MN: What do you sip on Tuesday nights if you are home with the family?

JR: It depends what I tasted at home earlier and if I like any of the wines enough to drink one or two. From our cellar, it could be absolutely anything, though preferably something I have multiple bottles of. I don’t like to deplete stocks too dramatically.

MN: What role does the glass play in one’s appreciation of a wine?

JR: Absolutely massive. Once one has enjoyed wine from glasses as thin as Zalto’s it’s difficult to go back to thick-rimmed ones. And I really hate those little ISO tulips nowadays; they seem so mean.

MN: If you hadn’t carved a career as a global wine writer, what would you have done?

JR: I would probably have done something food-related, though I can’t imagine not writing. I really love it.

Jancis Robinson MW OBE is the wine columnist for the Financial Times.

Her coveted wine commentary is catalogued at jancisrobinson.com

She is also editor of The Oxford Companion to Wine, co-author of The World Atlas of Wine and co-author of Wine Grapes, three reference books deemed to be ‘wine bibles.’

Walking Tall

Cape Mentelle commits to a coastal regeneration project.

Conservation and the environment matter, especially at Cape Mentelle, which is why the staff have 'adopted' the Cape to Cape Track, the iconic coastal 135km walk from Cape Naturaliste to Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse.

'Caring for our coastline is part and parcel of belonging in and to our community,' explains Estate Director, Cameron Murphy. 'We are committed to helping preserve the pristine nature of our region and the staff regularly join working bees to help manage the restoration of the native flora along this major Australian walk.'



Regeneration in action.

The project is headed by the Friends of the Cape To Cape Track, a group formed in 1998 to assist the WA Parks & Wildlife Department with track maintenance. Cape Mentelle became a 'Friend' and during winter the winery staff headed out to Kilcarnup Beach on a working bee, organised by local botanist and avid bushwalker, Jane Scott.

Brandishing hedge trimmers they cut back growth, removed rubbish, replaced posts and signs – and planted over 250 native plants on the area actually designated Cape Mentelle.

History buffs may know that the cape and winery both owe their name to the French explorer Baudin who in 1801 charted the coast and named the spot after French brothers – Edmund (geographer) and Francois-Simon Mentelle (cartographer).

The Cape Mentelle coast crew think these adventurous Parisians would be proud of our efforts in restoring native vegetation.

If you plan to walk the track be sure to prepare carefully. The complete trek is rated a 'challenging' walk – but very rewarding. If you would like to become a Cape to Cape Friend check out:

www.capetocapetrack.com.au

'My sense of direction leads me one way: to the beach.' ANON



Fine Vines

Meet Vineyard Manager David Moulton.



If you are at the Gracetown boat ramp when the sun comes up you might bump into keen fisherman David Moulton, the man responsible for Cape Mentelle's 135-hectares of vines. He's likely to be heading out to check his cray pots. What better match for a *Cape Mentelle Chardonnay*?

Since 2014 David has nurtured the estate vineyards, most recently overseeing the renovation of the original Wallcliffe cabernet vineyard. Vines have been pulled, new clones planted on tighter spacing and rows reoriented to north/south.

'Cabernet is the variety I lose most sleep over,' confesses David. 'It's high maintenance, from pruning through to hand harvesting. We bunch position prior veraison, and do a great deal of meticulous canopy training. We do everything possible to grow world-class cabernet.'

David's viticultural career was probably destined from his childhood on a stone fruit orchard in Balingup, eventually sold by his father. Those inherited green thumbs were trained at Curtin University, and later in the wider wine world. David worked previously in Rutherglen and Great Western, Victoria, and at Vasse Felix.

He sees Margaret River's strengths as its climate and typical long, slow-ripening season that delivers great flavour accumulation. Also its remoteness and associated low disease risk.

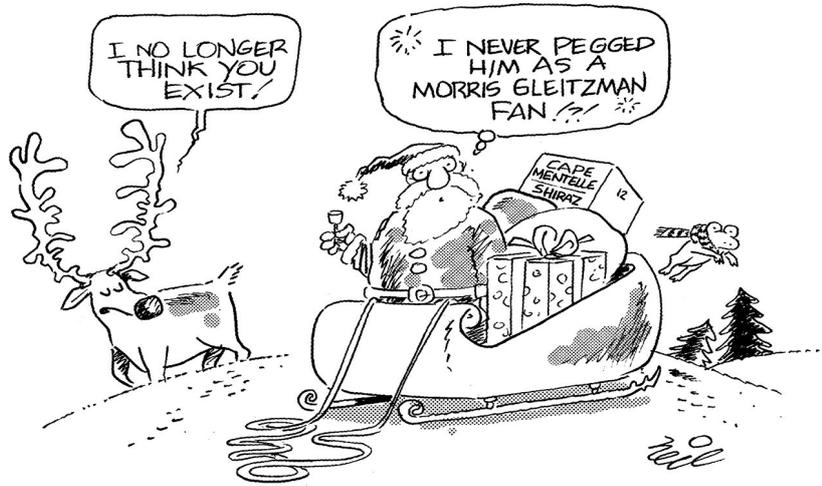
'Combined, this means we can nurture grapes with the purest and most intense flavours. And we need to do that to keep the winemakers happy.'

Of course, when they share the love, they will tell you that all good wines are made in the vineyard – under David's watchful gaze.

www.capementelle.com.au/Wines/Our-range

Seasons Greetings

By Morris Gleitzman



Dear Santa,
Thank you. A lifetime of wine-drinking pleasure and it was you who got me started. So this note is to express my gratitude, though I'd rather do it in person. Any chance of popping round to my place this Christmas? With a few Cape Mentelle reds?

Only joking. Which is what I thought Garth Prescott was doing all those decades ago when I bailed him up in the playground and begged him to tell me his secret. About how he got such good Christmas presents. Foxy boots and complete sets of encyclopedias and fishing rods with live fish attached. At our place we mostly got socks and toast.

'I always leave Santa a glass of port,' said Garth.

I stared at him. Why would Santa want a glass of water that's had big rusty ships floating in it?

'What's port?' I asked, in case I'd got that wrong.

'Fortified wine,' said Garth. 'Produced from a plethora of sanctioned grape varieties in the Douro Valley of northern Portugal.'

I was impressed. Google hadn't been invented then, and neither had those little hand-written cards that enthusiastic bottle-shop employees stick on their shelves. But I was also deflated. A plethora sounded expensive.

So I went for the next best thing. The following Christmas I snuck down to the docks, filled a glass with bilge water and added some sugar. Garth had explained port was sweet, unless it was very old vintage port, in which case it tasted more like caramelized

leather. I couldn't stretch to that. Our lounge suite was vinyl.

On Christmas Eve I put the glass next to where the two-bar heater used to be before my brother broke it. I dreamt of a life full of sunlight and joy and wonderful presents that smelled faintly of reindeer.

Next morning I was woken by beams of golden light pouring through the window. The ones from the iron smelter next door. I peered at the glass and my heart sank. It was still full. Santa clearly hadn't been. On the end of my bed was a Christmas card and a sock. On my brother's, was another Christmas card and the other sock.

'Then he gave me a half-empty bottle of red wine from the drink-holder in his Porsche.'

In the years that followed I was angry with you, Santa. I swore bitterly at men with white beards. David Stratton, who lived nearby, moved.

Why, I wondered, did you choose some kids and not others? Was the rumour true that you stayed away from naughty children who didn't eat their toast? Or was the other story true? That you didn't exist. That you were invented by an advertising agency doing too many drugs.

I started to suspect the latter. But I didn't stop believing in you entirely. And years later, years filled with disappointment and ankle problems, I decided to give you another chance to bring me something that would make me happy.

Port, I'd learned from watching the blokes down at the docks who drank it from glass flacons, wasn't always the most alluring thing to offer a guest. Fine red wine I'd read in a magazine in my probation officer's waiting room, was the go.

I needed help with this. On Christmas Eve I went to ask Garth Prescott for some advice. Like me, Garth had just left school. Unlike me, he was working as a futures trader in a large investment bank.

'You don't still believe in Santa?' he said with an amused sneer. I thought about hitting him. Then he gave me a half-empty bottle of red wine from the drink-holder in his Porsche.

At home I placed the bottle carefully in front of the fireplace. I slept fitfully, dreaming about a life with a bit of happiness in it, and possibly even a girl.

Next morning I was woken by a housemate vomiting. Had Santa been and left him 18 slabs of beer? No, he'd bought them himself. My wine bottle was untouched. By him or anyone else. Once again, Santa, you'd forsaken me.

I slumped onto the floor and took a swig to dull the disappointment. I sat up, stunned. I'd never tasted anything like it. Liquid joy, coursing through my body. I stared at the bottle. I don't remember now which wine it was, but given which magazine has kindly agreed to publish this, let's say it was *Cape Mentelle Trinders Cabernet Merlot*.

I sipped some more, and from that day my life changed. I resumed my education, graduated, and worked hard so I could

afford to buy such nectar myself. One bottle led to another, and soon I'd made friends with other people who liked fine wine, some of them girls. Gradually my life filled with happiness, not all of it in 750ml units.

I think of that Christmas morning often, Santa. It makes me smile. My housemates all claimed it proved you don't exist. I agreed with them at the time, but now I know it's more complicated than that. Because of course you don't exist, Santa, but at the same time, in a way, you do.

Morris Gleitzman is a columnist for Gourmet Traveller Wine and a popular children's author. His latest book is Maybe. Santa have you bought copies?



Eat In with Anna Gare

The best fish you will ever eat is the one you catch and cook yourself. I love brining the fish then smoking it in my camp smoker, which gives it a succulent texture and wonderful flavour. Then just toss through fresh garden salad and serve with a gorgeous big glass of *Cape Mentelle Chardonnay*.

SMOKED TROUT SALAD

Serves 4

Ingredients:

BRINE & TROUT

- 12.5g white sugar
- 12.5g salt
- 2.5 litres water
- 6-8 peppercorns
- ½ tsp fennel seeds
- 3 bay leaves, fresh or dried
- 2 fresh rainbow trout (about 30cms) cleaned and gutted

SMOKING MIX

- 1 cup hickory chips
- 2 tbs lemongrass ginger tea

GARDEN SALAD

- 1 avocado, thinly sliced
- 1 small fennel bulb, finely shaved
- 2-3 radishes, finely shaved
- 1 small continental cucumber, peeled, cut in half and thinly sliced
- bunch chives, chopped
- bunch dill (or fennel fronds)
- edible flowers from garden
- (I use coriander, fennel, chive and parsley)
- extra virgin olive oil
- lemon juice

Don't have time to fish or smoke? You can make this summery salad with delicious Holysmoke trout from Pemberton, WA.

Method:

BRINE

Combine 2 cups of water with sugar, salt and spices in a small pot. Cook over medium heat until sugar dissolves. Place brine in a non-reactive 3-litre dish. Add remaining water. Completely chill before adding trout and immerse for at least 6 hours. Remove trout from brine, pat dry and place in fridge to dry out for at least 1 hour.

SMOKING

I use a stainless steel portable fisherman's camp smoker. Fill your little burners halfway up with methylated spirits. Preheat smoker and scatter woodchips and tealeaves evenly over base of smoker. Place fish on the rack and immediately cover with lid. Smoke for 12-15 mins approx. turning fish over halfway for even cooking. Remove fish from smoker to cool. Fillet gently. Use tweezers to remove the fine bones. Place fillets in fridge until ready to serve. Keep fillets whole for individual salads as I have done or serve flaked over salad.

LABNE

If you make your own, line a fine sieve with cheesecloth; set over a medium deep bowl. Place 2 cups Greek yoghurt in sieve. Gather edges of cloth to cover. Place in refrigerator and drain overnight. Gently squeeze out any excess liquid; discard liquid in bowl. Roll yogurt into small balls.

SERVE

Combine all salad ingredients, top with trout, dress with olive oil and lemon juice when ready to serve. You can also add dollops of labne and beetroot horseradish.

Screen Scene

Film buffs are in for a feast at this year's **Cape Mentelle Movies** series that kicks off on 15 December and runs through till Easter Monday on 2 April.

On summer nights, as the sun goes down and the stars come out, Cape Mentelle's gardens will transform into an outdoor cinema amid the vines. Expect a program boasting the latest releases, art-house picks, classics and family favourites.

But that's just the beginning. Every screening features a wine bar offering glasses of Cape Mentelle's finest (and beers from Colonial brewery), or coffees and juices.

The Margaret River Burger Co. will be searing patties and toasting buns and filling them with tasty South West beef or free-range chicken. The menu also includes cheeseboards (pre-order online), a zingy tarte citron and old-fashioned movie treats – popcorn and highly lickable ice creams.

It's cinema al fresco! Settle back in comfy beanbags on the lawn with family and friends and let the good film times roll...

Advance bookings via Moshtix www.moshtix.com.au or the Margaret River Visitor Centre.

Check program here: <http://www.capementelle.com.au/Movies/Program-and-Tickets>



Pic: Frances Andrijič

Myth Buster

Tall tales and true are told in *The Way It Was*, the captivating 50-year vinous history of Margaret River recorded by Peter Forrestal and Ray Jordan (Margaret River Press). A perfect Christmas read! Out now. *Mentelle Notes* features in it – and we will run an extract in our next issue!

'A remarkable group of people from disparate backgrounds were drawn together with a common purpose...'

Cabs Line Up

The world's greatest cabernets strutted the stage at the landmark 35th Cape Mentelle International Cabernet Tasting – a true celebration of the undisputed king of grapes.



Above: Twenty-one significant cabernets were poured from the 2014 vintage. Among them – Château Cos d'Estournel, Mouton Rothschild, Pichon Longueville; Italian Ornellaia and Sassicaia; Californian Spottswoode and Newton Mount Veeder, and China's inaugural Ao Yun.

The Margaret River posse was led by Cullen, Deep Woods, Leeuwin, Moss Wood, Woodlands, Xanadu – and of course, the host Cape Mentelle.

Right: Jancis Robinson MW OBE appraises the field...carefully!

Below: Pouring world-class deep garnet Cabernet Sauvignon into 2700-plus glasses is an exercise in precision and pride. The CMV team relished the challenge.



Pics: Frances Andrijič



Above: Time check. Wine writer Nick Stock proves his punctuality to Estate Director, Cameron Murphy.

Left: Lunch was served in the original Cape Mentelle Vat Cellar (est. 1977 and specially spring-cleaned) a five-stanza menu featuring local Farmhouse charcuterie, Shark Bay whiting and Augusta snapper, prepared by WA's renowned chef, Kate Lamont.

Huon Hooke's report on the 35th International Cabernet Tasting will appear in the next edition of Mentelle Notes.

The Other Day

...I was thinking about Margaret River's 50th Anniversary and the good old days at Cape Mentelle when morning tea was the most important meeting of the day. The kettle went on, the big chipped enamel teapot was filled. So was the toaster, and its wholemeal slices smeared variously with Vegemite or peanut butter. Simple tastes. And long before Nespresso machines.

That was when you could buy a good bottle of Margaret River Red for less than a tenner. In fact, back then *Mentelle Notes* readers were on a pretty good pipeline.

Remember those CM Magnums? Dry Red. Dry White. Six to a pack and no marketing hype, no fandango, just great value easy drinking. Those big bruiser bottles inspired sterling performances at many footy team barbecues and school trivia nights.

All this reminiscing of the 'good old days' got me thinking. Life was simpler then. We were happy to sip or cellar our favourite cab savs or shiraz as long as the corks didn't leak. We didn't have varietal-tailored glassware, cellar management apps or argon gas wine preservers. We just emptied the good bottles.

Our mentors were serious wine men like Len Evans OBE and the esteemed James Halliday, now revered. Back then they didn't need 100-points to assess reputation. Some used stars, others gave shiny medals or simply relied on good prose to extol good drops.

Keen winos headed down to Margaret River with empty car boots. Their mission to check the break at Prevelly, then hit a few cellar doors. In those days the guys wearing dee-bees (desert boots) bought Zinfandel, those in boat shoes Sem Sav (or straight Savvy B). And they all snuck in a Magnum Six-Pack. No slick marketing needed.

But CMV did have a great promo plan – Mentelle Ambassadors – selfie snappers way ahead of their time. Pix were posted (aka mailed) from all over the world – sipping CM Cab on camels, chilling CM Chardy on Antarctic icebergs – the risks were high, the rewards for the most captivating Cape Mentelle adventure photo, more wine. So easy.

And guess what? Old is new again – the Ambassador scheme is back in action (see page 8). So grab your selfie stick and go! And when you get to the top of Everest or the Tower Bridge toast the pioneers!

Cheers

BRUCE LEES

BACK VINTAGE Super League



In keeping with this issue's cabernet theme, let's reminisce with Andrew Caillard MW. His cabernet coda was first published in *Mentelle Notes* June 1995:

'Cabernet Sauvignon – with cedar wood blackcurrant aromas, fine-grained tannins and compact palate – the indelible characters that give this grape variety its unique personality.

Born of wild bastard parentage, its lineage stretches past the horizon of history into

folklore and hearsay. Its legitimacy born of the gravelled loins of Bordeaux, where cabernet sauvignon long ago ascended as the king of grape varieties.

Whilst champagne may be used to close the deal, cabernet sauvignon is used to seduce and sweeten the senses. It is the boardroom accessory, a totem of power, the Masonic drinking grail of merchant bankers, lawyers, doctors and businessmen the world over. No wonder it is the 'cash cow' of wine auction markets...'

Over 20 years later little has changed. However, Andrew Caillard MW is now the Fine Wine Principal at Pinnacle Drinks, travels the wine world widely and is an avowed fan of Margaret River cabernet.

He told *Mentelle Notes* he believed that 'The original foundation marques including *Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon* continue to represent a cornerstone of Australia's collectable market. There is no question that Margaret River cabernet sauvignon and chardonnay will feature strongly in Australia's fine wine narrative for the next 100 years at least!'

And so say all of us.

Latest Drops

WALLCLIFFE SAUVIGNON BLANC SEMILLON 2015

'A superior style of sav sem with barrel fermentation adding smoky, nutty and spicy aspects to the herb citrus aromas. Great intensity...with tremendous flavour.'

93 POINTS, Huon Hooke
GOURMET TRAVELLER WINE

WALLCLIFFE SAUVIGNON BLANC SEMILLON 2014

'Revealing intense fresh herbs, cut grass, lime zest/oil and Chinese gooseberries both with its bouquet and palate and barrel ferment complexity.'

95 POINTS, Jane Faulkner
HALLIDAY WINE COMPANION 2018

'...A compellingly focused Wallcliffe of grand concentration and epic line and length.'

95 POINTS, Tyson Stelzer
WINE BUSINESS MAGAZINE

CHARDONNAY 2016

'Exceptionally intense and concentrated with all manner of stone fruits and a savoury gauze of grapefruit juice and zest...Striking.'

97 POINTS, James Halliday
TOP 100 WINES, WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN

SAUVIGNON BLANC SEMILLON 2016

'Mark this down as a 'buy'...It's a beauty.'

93 POINTS, Campbell Mattinson
WINEFRONT

ZINFANDEL 2015

'This Zinfandel is the real deal. Aromas of dark fruit, figs and chocolate. Full body, juicy tannins and a savoury finish. Hints of cream.'

94 POINTS, www.jamesuckling.com

CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2014

'Dramatic brooding aromatics followed by haunting briar, truffle and black olive flavours...sumptuous texture...Sheer class.'

95 POINTS, Peter Forrestal, DECANTER

'A powerfully built Mentelle cab...full-bodied and very concentrated... profoundly flavoured and structured...and a terrifically long finish.'

98 POINTS, Huon Hooke
GOURMET TRAVELLER WINE

Raising the Roof

There are few ceilings like it according to global wine traveller Drew Lambert, winner of this edition's *Mentelle Ambassador* photo competition. He was delighted to spot the latest vintage *Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon 2013* at Wine Australia's annual Nordic Roadshow in October, when more than 900 guests tasted over 1100 wines from 104 makers, including Cape Mentelle.



Drew lives nine months of the year in Stockholm but journeys home every summer to don his cap as an avid North Bondi Beach lifesaver.

'When I uncover wines like Cape Mentelle, I am instantly transported back to the great Margaret River beaches,' mused Drew who will be back home beachside soon.

For your chance to become a Mentelle Ambassador, all you need to do is take a photo of yourself, colleagues, family or friends enjoying Cape Mentelle wine in exotic or unusual places. Then post using #capementelle or #mentelleambassador or link directly to www.facebook.com/capementelle or email photos to: info@capementelle.com.au Please ensure your image quality is at least one megabyte.

All photos will be reviewed and a winning image chosen. The prize is a Six-Pack Selection of current Cape Mentelle releases sent via Australia Post to a nominated Australian address. Get snapping.

The gilded Cape Mentelle Cabernet label is the perfect outfit for Stockholm's very swank Grand Hotel.