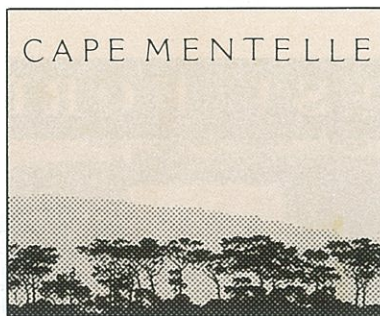


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# MENTELLE NOTES

MAY • 1990

The newsletter of Cape Mentelle Vineyards Limited

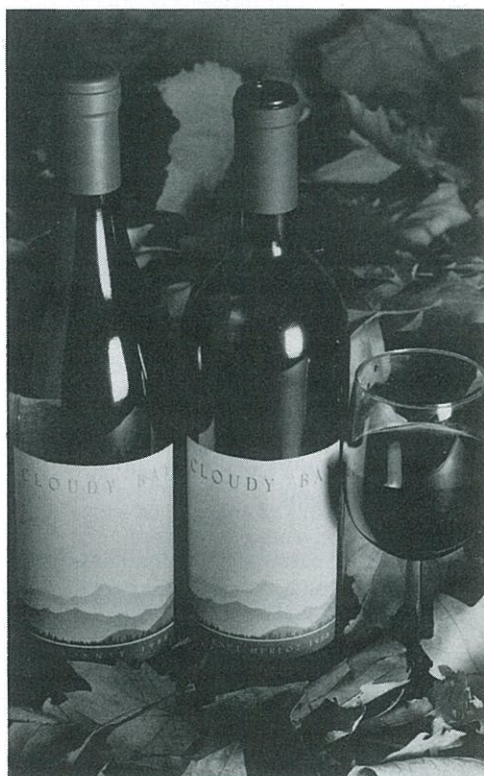
## Two of a kind

### Technology and Tradition Combine...

To bring you two of Cloudy Bay's most exciting wines yet released - the 1988 Chardonnay and Cabernet Merlot, a couple of little Wairau bottlers. Already these two wines have attracted the attention of some of the more perspicacious Kiwi palates. Jock Graham of the NZ Herald was wont to muse recently that the Chardonnay was "one of the most satisfying made in New Zealand" and Michael Brett of the Auckland Star describes it as "elegant, complex and beautifully balanced."

Almost overnight Marlborough has won worldwide recognition (and Royal attentions), not just for its superior sauvignon blanc, but also for its chardonnay. The region's future is assured and come another vintage or two, *Mentelle Notes* predicts you will see Marlborough reds take their rightful place alongside the whites. Exciting times and good news for wine drinkers everywhere!

But success isn't always incidental. The Cloudy Bay philosophy (yes, we occasionally sit with furrowed brows and think between drinks) has always been to draw the best from both worlds - the old and traditional, and the shiny new and ever so slightly scientific. So vinification follows the tried and true lessons learned since Bacchus first put lip to goblet, the old wine wisdoms of secondary fermentations, yeast autolysis and oak barrel maturation, while viticulture and production tend to rely on the high



tech trellising solutions of people like grapey Richard Smart (centrefold in the previous MN issue), precise harvesting and kid glove processing. And, it seems, the combination works.

### Cloudy Bay 1988 Chardonnay

The Cloudy Bay 1988 Chardonnay is a blend of fruit from four vineyards and the product of careful vinification that has produced an exceptional dry white, indeed the best of both worlds. It is further proof of Marlborough's capacity to deliver top notch varieties. Sauvignon Blanc put Marlborough on the map, chardonnay could well rewrite wine atlases. (See 'Foreign Fame' overleaf)

Kevin Judd, very much a product of the new world (with a healthy respect for the old), describes the wine as follows:

*"The complex aromas of the Cloudy Bay 1988 Chardonnay depict the techniques used in its making. Lemon and fig fruit characters integrate with the fresh bread aromas induced by barrel fermentation and subsequent yeast lees contact. Malolactic fermentation of a portion has added a mealy quality to the nose and a creamy fullness to the palate. With patient cellaring this wine will blossom and unfold myriad complex nuances."*

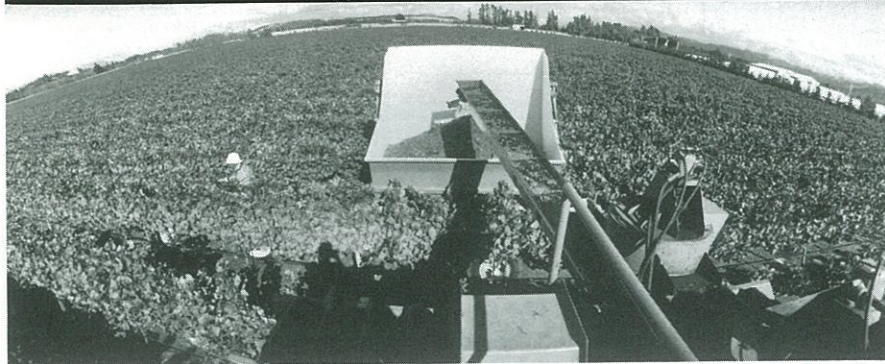
### Cloudy Bay 1988 Cabernet Merlot

The 1988 Cabernet Merlot is a wine that will surprise and please. Surprising, for it is a very approachable claret style and pleasing, for in blending there has been no compromise on depth of flavour or the potential for further bottle development. Comprising three Bordeaux varieties - 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot and 18% Cabernet Franc - it displays rounded fruit characters and a mellow softness that is derived from the latter two varieties. Quite simply, an eminently stylish, drinkable dry red.

Kevin Judd took time out from studying the vinification of Burgundian pinot to write:

*"The Cloudy Bay 1988 Cabernet Merlot exudes fresh raspberry aromas with spicy, sappy oak overtones. The palate displays soft tannins and a lingering array of ripe fruit flavours. An elegant claret style red, enjoyable now although cellaring will allow further bottle development."*

## HARVEST HORIZON



Along with MN's regular up to the grape vintage report comes a special shot of the Cloudy Bay harvest, taken between press loads by shutterbug Judd, who's never satisfied with less than the BIG picture. Watch this space for more from the wide lens of the Wairau.

## FOREIGN FAME

Regular readers will know just how much modesty counts round the editorial offices of *Mentelle Notes* (no it's not the kitchen table), so this little item will come as a surprise. But then it was to us! Germans are resolute and *richtig*, thorough burghers (take a look at David Hohnen's jutting jaw some time) and when they do things, they do them right! When they organise wine tastings they leave nary a stein unturned. Hardy Rodenstock, a flamboyant German wine collector known in Europe for his annual *Raritäten Weinprobe*, recently held a blind tasting of seventy of the world's top 1986 Chardonnays. He selected the best from France, Italy, Spain, California, South Africa and the Antipodes and amongst them, the shy Kiwi of misty mountain fame.

James Suckling of the venerable *American Wine Spectator* attended and writes, "It was one of the most impressive blind tastings I have ever attended...it is not often one has the opportunity to try 11 different Montrachets from the same vintage and compare them to other greats..." The results are, we humbly suggest, worth noting.

Only four of the top wines were French. In descending order the guernseys ran: Louis Carillon Bienvenus-Bâtard-Montrachet, Domaine Ramonet BBM, Torres Milmanda, Robert Mondavi Reserve, Domaine Comtes Lafon Montrachet, Merryvale Napa Valley, Cloudy Bay, Domaine Ramonet Montrachet, Hardy's Collection Padthaway and Au Bon Climat from Santa Barbara County.

'86 was a great global vintage. But in the Wairau '88 wasn't exactly bad. So if you've committed regrettable vinicide (and read the previous two paras with sinking heart) we recommend this latest Cloudy Bay Chardonnay release to replenish the gap in the cellar. With top Burgundian chardonnays selling anywhere between \$50 and \$100 a bottle, it's not such a bad investment.

*Prost!*

## STICKY ALERT

Those of you with a sweet tooth take note! In the next (pre-Christmas) issue of MN we will be releasing a limited quantity of Cloudy Bay's first **Late Harvest Riesling**, the very personal creation of winemaker Kevin Judd. Juddy isn't one for fanfare but those privy to his sweet secret tell a luscious tale. Watch for a year's end treat - half bottles of Wairau nectar.

**Lady at dinner party:**

*"You mean to tell me that you never ever let water touch your lips? Then what do you use to clean your teeth?"*

**W.C.Fields:** "I find a light sauterne is quite suitable, madam".

## VINTAGE BRIEF

### Marlborough

The year started windy with occasional wets but by February the Wairau had settled into the correct weather pattern. Long sunny days and a gradual lead up to an excellent vintage. All went well until the night of 24 April when a heavy frost enveloped the entire valley. Its effect, defoliation of the vines, so from that night on the crew worked round the clock to bring in the remaining crop. Despite the night of the cold vibes it was an exceptionally good vintage and a tired but happy crew are very optimistic about the eventual quality.

### Margaret River

A mild summer and fairly dry. A big crop set in all varieties and ripened at an easy pace. Cyclone Vincent caused some concern as did the usual mid harvest downpours. However conditions were generally ideal and the cool vintage allowed the careful selection of grapes at optimum ripeness. Still early days, but possibly a vintage to rival '82.



*Mentelle Notes* is proud to announce its very first competition. It's time all closet MN readers crawled out of the cellar and into the limelight. No you don't have to write in 25 words or less why you like Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc, or want to visit Marlborough. Nor do you have to dream up what the Widow might have said when she first learnt of the latest addition to the family.

What you DO have to do, is to compose in less than thirty words an export back label for a shipment of CB Cabernet Merlot, bound for Mitterrand's Palais canteen. Franglais will be permitted (how else does one communicate with *les grenouilles*?) but the MN editorial committee will be looking for levity, brevity and that inimitable MN *je ne sais quoi* style.

Entries should be legible and addressed as follows:

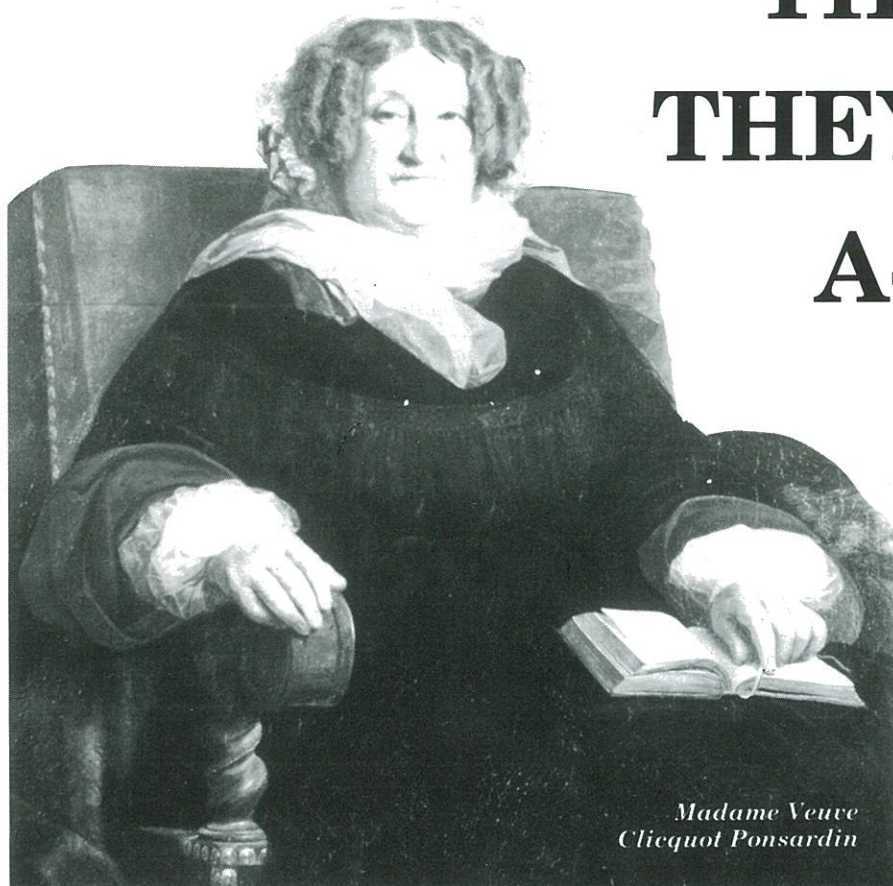
MITTERRAND & MENTELLE  
Cloudy Bay, PO Box 376, Blenheim  
or faxed to (057) 28065  
Closing date: 30 June 1990

Contributions lewd, shrewd or otherwise become the property of MN and the judges decision will be immutable. The PRIZE for the very best back label (apart from a debut in the highly respected pages of this august publication) will be a mature MIXED DOZEN of Cloudy Bay wines. Five highly commended, almost best entries, will receive a bottle of the splendid Cloudy Bay 1988 Chardonnay. Pull a cork and start scribbling!

COMPETITION  
CORNER

# THE FROGS THEY WOULD A-WOOING GO...

## *The true story*



*Madame Veuve  
Clicquot Ponsardin*

**I**t was one of those magical days that the Wairau turns on for special visitors. Cloudless, crystal clear sky, a misty heat haze on the Richmond Range rising 3000 feet high on the north side of the valley, and not a hint of the wind that can drive an otherwise sane, and occasionally surly fellow like Kevin Judd berko. The stuff of cigarette ads.

Unannounced and travelling incognito, two Frenchmen and an Englishman slid into the tasting room at Cloudy Bay and asked, "*Monsieur Judd, s'il vous plait*". By habit the production staff were testing the fastening screws on the winery roof. The screws strained as Eric Clapton pounded out across the valley, amplified to rocket lift-off levels. No, it was louder than that. The visitors didn't complain but Judd, a sensitive soul who mumbles a bit, lowered the decibels and replaced Clapton with Vivaldi's Four Seasons.

Barrel after barrel, Judd took the visitors through their paces. One of the Frenchmen, a fifth generation Champenois, was particularly struck. Holding a glass of fragrant barrel fermented sauvignon blanc he gazed through the window as the valley cast its spell. "*Sacre bleu, c'est magnifique, n'est-ce pas?*" Joseph Henriot, President and Chief Executive of Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin decided then and there that it was time the widow Clicquot stepped out, beyond the confines of her beloved Champagne and purchased a stake in the Wairau.

Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin is the second largest of the grande Cham-

pagne marques. It was founded in 1772 and in over 200 years has grown to be sold in 145 counties worldwide. A successful company, steered by skilled professionals, it is only natural that there be a desire to expand. However the Champagne region is finite, expansion limited. Faced with the inevitability of taking his company beyond Champagne's boundaries, Joseph Henriot opted for diversification. His decision was lateral and bold - Veuve Clicquot would produce fine table wine, furthermore these wines would not be sourced in France, but in the New World.

There followed an evaluation of regions in North and South America, Australia and New Zealand, including a trip to the Wairau and Cloudy Bay. Ultimately it was decided that Australia was the place to produce cabernet and New Zealand, sauvignon blanc and chardonnay. A decision that echoes the words of James Halliday, who in 1985 wrote, "In the perfect world, Australia would produce the reds and New Zealand the whites."

Perhaps the merger of Cape Mentelle and Veuve Clicquot was pre-ordained. One hundred and eighty seven years previously it was the French that named the Cape from which the parent company takes its name. Latter-day Frenchmen, brothers Dominique and Bernard Portet (of Taltarni and Clos du Val respectively) had more than a fleeting influence on David Hohnen and his early successes with Cape Mentelle cabernet and it was Dominique who introduced David Hohnen to Joseph Henriot. So, like the 17 year old son who

must inevitably prang the family saloon, this was a match that just had to happen.

From the Widow's first tentative gestures it was obvious that this was a match meant. Despite the inevitability, one wag thought it necessary to remind Hohnen of an old American Indian saying, "If you are ever unlucky enough to be chased by a Frenchman and a snake - shoot the Frenchman first!" Happily no one was shot and the partnership between the Hohnen brothers and Veuve Clicquot was forged. And so starts a new decade and a new chapter for Cape Mentelle.

Should you expect changes? Not really. The family saloon has a tank full of gas, the road is clear, the charts definitive and the drivers still the same, though we expect a bit of backseat driving from the farsighted dowager Clicquot. We will no doubt be reminded from time to time of the Widow's motto, "One quality...the very finest." And we will reassure our Champenois partners of *our* motto at CMV, "The pursuit of excellence...that is affordable."

### LATE SCOOP

The news of the Widow can't force this late item off the page. It should be known that a son now shines in the Wairau - his name - Kohen, offspring and heir of Cloudy Bay's Kevin and Kimberly Judd. He's had his first sip of '88 Cloudy Bay Chardonnay and it comes endorsed with a contented gurgle.

# PRICE LIST & ORDER FORM

WINE	DESCRIPTION	PRICE PER CASE	PRICE PER BOTTLE	AMOUNT ORDERED	COST
Cloudy Bay 1988 Chardonnay	Lemon and ripe melon complemented by toasty vanillan oak. A complex mellow beauty.	\$340.80	\$28.40		
Cloudy Bay 1988 Cabernet Merlot	Rounded ripe raspberry fruit with spicy oak overtones and soft tannins. An elegant dry red.	\$270.00	\$22.50		
Premium Mixed Dozen	6 x Cloudy Bay '88 Chardonnay 6 x Cloudy Bay '88 Cabernet Merlot	\$305.40	N/A		
ADD FREIGHT COSTS (SEE BELOW) AND PACKING CHARGE (IF APPLICABLE)					
<b>TOTAL</b>					

## DELIVERY

FREIGHT CHARGES	1ST CASE	2ND CASE
Auckland	\$7.00	\$6.00
Wellington	\$3.00	\$2.50
North Island Provincial	\$8.00	\$7.00
Christchurch	\$3.00	\$2.50
South Island Provincial	\$6.00	\$5.00

### PLEASE NOTE

- Orders must be in case lots.
- Feel free to make up your own mixed dozen using the bottle prices listed but add **\$2.50** for packing charges.
- Send order to Cape Mentelle New Zealand Limited, P.O. Box 376, Blenheim, New Zealand or Facsimile (057) 28065

### Send a friend a Mentelle Note

If you have a friend within New Zealand who would appreciate receiving a copy of Mentelle Notes add their name to our list by completing the form below

Name: (Mr/Mrs/Ms) .....  
First Surname

Address: .....

.....Postcode: .....

Tel: ( ) ..... Fax: ( ) .....

### Don't move without us

If your name or address is incorrect or you intend to change your name and address please keep us informed

Name: (Mr/Mrs Ms) .....  
First Surname

Old Address: .....

.....Postcode .....

New Name: (Mr/Mrs/Ms) .....  
First Surname

New Address: .....

.....Postcode .....

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms) .....  
First Surname

Address .....

.....Postcode .....

Tel: ( ) ..... (H) ..... (W) .....

Fax: ( ) .....

Signature .....

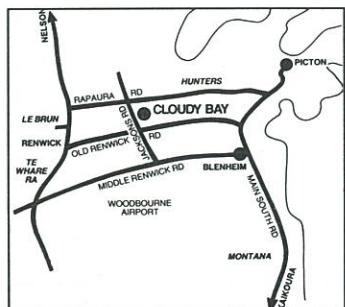
### REMITTANCE DETAILS

- Cheque       Bankcard  
 Visacard       Mastercard

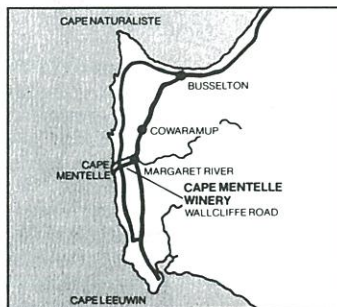
Credit Card Number

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Valid until .....



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