

# MENTELLE NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF CLOUDY BAY AND CAPE MENTELLE

## Beyond Boundaries

*Robert Joseph, influential English wine writer, ponders the vexing issue of origin and authenticity, the pros and cons of appellation and the role of flying winemakers.*

A decade or so ago, life for a British-based wine lover was pretty straightforward. The Dark Ages when drinkable wine only seemed to come from a limited range of familiar European regions were over; the winemakers of California, Australia and New Zealand had arrived on the scene, bringing with them an extraordinary arsenal of flavoursome reds and whites, many of which bore only a passing resemblance to the often dull, fruitless traditional stuff they replaced.

For want of a better expression, these – to use an Australian term – “fruit-driven” wines were soon being collectively described as “New World.”

For a while, the definition made convenient sense; in blind tastings, it was all too easy to spot the clean, ripe-flavoured wines from the earthier fare that European traditionalists credibly liked to claim had the “*gout de terroir*” – the taste of the soil.

Today, however, the concept of New and Old Worlds is becoming a geographical nonsense. With the help and encouragement of (usually Antipodean) “flying winemakers,” producers from such diverse regions as Southern France, Sicily and Navarra in Spain, are all making ripe, fruity, oaky wines that compete head on with offerings from McLaren Vale and Marlborough.

Now, New and Old World thinking is more a matter of philosophy. When approaching the harvest, New World winemakers take the view that “God helps those who help themselves,” while their Old World counterparts are more likely to throw their hands up, declaring “God help us!”



Pic: Kevin Judd

*Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's Cape Mentelle flying winemakers, Mark Messenger (who went to India) and Virginia Willcock (Austria) – boundary riders from the New World.*

Of course, there are plenty of winemakers in the classic vineyards of Europe who help themselves too. I well remember when I lived in Burgundy, lending a hand to neighbours who were improving their latest vintage with a few gallons of the wine they had made the year before. The blending took place at night behind locked doors, for fear of the Appellation inspectors whose job it was to prevent any such illegality.

“The concept of New and Old Worlds is becoming a geographical nonsense...”

Blending vintages is more common (though rarely admitted) in other parts of Europe, but marriages between wines from different regions are viewed with as much sympathy as romances between blacks and whites in the days of Apartheid.

Within the next ten years, I would not be surprised to see some of those Old World rules loosen their grip under pressure from an international market that likes consistent, ripe-tasting wine.

More to the point, though, is the impact traditional Euro-thinking is likely to have on the New World, and in particular how far down the road of appellation, winemakers in Australia and New Zealand are likely to go. The creation of some kind of official regional designation by recently developed wine regions sometimes seems to be as inevitable as a national airline in newly independent nations.

Even when winemakers are not in a hurry to express their regional pride in this way, they are likely to face plenty of persuasion to do so. Like parents of newly born children who torment their friends who have yet to go forth and multiply, the representatives of Bordeaux, Barolo and Bernkastel will take extraordinary pains to foist appellations onto regions that are often barely a decade old and are defined by shire boundaries that often have little to do with wine.

*continued page 2*

NEW  
RELEASE

# Decade Dazzler

Wine man James Halliday once wished for a perfect wine world in which New Zealand would make the whites and Australia the reds. Well, Cloudy Bay makes both, but there is no doubt that the company's international reputation is founded on its white wines – Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay.

In fact it was Halliday too, who reckoned that the release, in 1988, of the first Cloudy Bay Chardonnay might well prove to be a marketing misjudgment. At the time he wrote, "The new Chardonnay stands side-by-side with the Sauvignon Blanc but this could spell disaster for the brand."

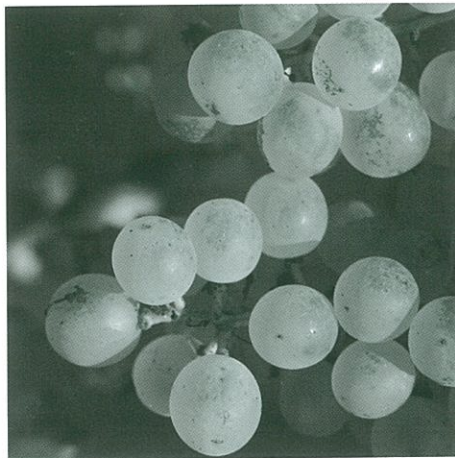
Well, luckily even the experts can sometimes be wrong! The intervening decade has not only seen Cloudy Bay Chardonnay earn a strong following but the wine has evolved from a straightforward barrel fermented, fruity style, to become far more intricate and complex.

Not only has viticulturist Ivan Sutherland fine-tuned his techniques to maximise ripeness and fruit intensity, but the winery team have gone a little 'wild.' Don't worry, they know what they're doing – just letting rogue wild yeasts and bacteria do their own thing. (See *Wine Lines*, page 4)

It took Kevin Judd a while to realise that the uncultured bugs from the vineyard only needed patience and warmth to get their act together – a process that softens and complexes young wine. So now wild yeasts and bacteria are 'let loose' on components of the chardonnay, contributing rich savoury characters to the final blend.

Certainly the style appeals to Perth wine writer Ray Jordan, who commends this 1995 10th Anniversary release. "This wine is seriously good with an aroma of ripe stone fruit and citrus. The palate has a toasty lemon butterscotch character... the finish is crisp and crunchy with super length. Above all, it is beautifully weighted."

Kevin Judd is well pleased with the evolution of the Cloudy Bay Chardonnay, a luscious and complex wine. So he blew out the candles, wished for ten more good years and penned this birthday 'portrait':



The raw product – chardonnay grapes.

## Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1995

*"The bouquet displays a range of characteristics from the fruity aromas of figs and lemon butter through to more savoury elements reminiscent of fresh hay with hints of butterscotch. The palate is substantial and rounded with toasty complexity and a lingering mealy finish. Eminently drinkable now, this wine will reward those with the patience to age it a further 3 to 4 years."*

## VINTAGE REPORT

### Marlborough

The season kicked off in late September and good weather prevailed right through to the end of December. January was cooler than normal and quite wet. It put an end to expectations of an early, trouble-free vintage and hit some anxiety buttons. February was a bit of this, that, and the other, but generally kind. March followed suit. Harvest commenced on 20 March for Pelorus and the first sauvignon blanc was picked on 15 April. It looked like being a so so vintage. But late April was an all time classic. Cold nights with UV laden days and gentle breezes, ideal conditions that allowed an almost leisurely harvest that didn't finish till May. It will be a very good and possibly, great year.

### Margaret River

The 1997 vintage commenced with bud-burst in September '96. The weather was kind during flowering and early growth; almost too kind. Heavy rain in December spurred excessive vigour which was brought to a stand-still by heatwave conditions in early January. Mild weather followed the heat in the lead-up to harvest.

Then, in late February, a second heatwave accompanied by rain and high humidity seemed to set the kybosh on a great vintage. Luckily the weather cleared and little damage occurred.

From then on it was plain sailing, the grapes ripened and were picked in mostly fine, sometimes cloudy and cool conditions. Expect very good and even great wines from 1997.



Hand-harvesting pinot noir at Cloudy Bay.

## Beyond Boundaries *continued*

Possibly the least valid of all such famous new appellations is the Napa Valley, a varied region many of whose wines have no family resemblance at all. Coonawarra makes more sense – at least in terms of its soil and climate – but the ongoing and sometimes heated discussions over where the red soil starts and stops only help to explain why it's taken the Burgundians hundreds of years to define the complicated frontier that separates Puligny Montrachet from Chassagne Montrachet.

Even when a region *can* be defined, there is the question of the grapes that work best in its soil. Is Coonawarra chardonnay really as distinctively special as the cabernet and shiraz produced there? And how, in the free-market atmosphere of Australia and California, do you prevent the marketing of wines like Napa Ridge which capitalise on the name of a well-known region without having to be made from grapes grown there?

In an ideal world – New or Old – there would be wines with recognisable styles and flavours that come from small defined regions – and wines blended from as many regions as it takes to offer the person who drinks them, good flavour and value.

Today, New Zealand and Australia are surprisingly close to that ideal, but there are worrying signs that appellation fever could take both countries away from it. Over the last few years I have begun to hear people in regions like Marlborough and Margaret River taking a distinctly frosty Old World view of the very idea of blending a drop of their wine with stuff from elsewhere.

It would be a pity if that kind of thinking caught on and drove New World wineries into the trap of letting parochialism and unnecessary legislation get in the way of what they do best: making great value, great-tasting wine.

*Robert Joseph is the publisher of WINE and a self-confessed champion of Kiwi and Aussie wines. He recently attended the Masters of Wine Conference in Perth and is now sure he can pick a Margaret River red from the rest.*

## POSTAL VOTE

Philatelists and collectors of vinous memorabilia will be aware that N.Z. Post has released the first ever Vineyard Series, six stamps commemorating our vibrant wine industry.

Six regions and wineries were selected – Waiheke (Goldwater Estate), Gisborne (Millton), Hawke's Bay (Te Mata Estate), Canterbury (Pegasus Bay), Central Otago (Rippon) – and of course, Marlborough, the \$1 stamp represented by Cloudy Bay.

Each vineyard is depicted as a watercolour painting by well-known artist, Nancy Tichborne. Collectors and CBV fans can order the stamps from N.Z. Post's Philatelic Bureau, Private Bag 3001, Wanganui.

## STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS

*The first fifty people to contact Chris Mullany PH (03) 572 8914 at the winery, will receive a FREE \$1 Cloudy Bay First Day Cover mounted on a Cloudy Bay postcard.*

# The Perfect Match

*Rules are meant to be broken, even at the dinner table. Sydney journalist Helen Greenwood examines the wisdom of certain preconceptions, and pleads the case for personal choice.*

There is a classic moment in *From Russia With Love*, admittedly not one of Sean Connery's best, when the urbane 007 tumbles to the fact that the man sent to rescue him is actually an enemy agent for the evil organisation, SPECTRE. "I should have known," Bond says dryly, "when you ordered red wine with your fish."

The old rules of red wine with red meat, white wine with fish and poultry and rosé for anything in-between seem desperately coy now, dicta as fossilised as the Cold War concepts that anchored the Bond films.

For if there is one thing Australians are famous for doing well, it's breaking the rules. And in the food and wine game, we have broken them in spectacular fashion. Time and time again, we've fused flavours that nobody previously thought to, along the way proving 'the red wine meat, white wine fish' formula archaic.

I remember a rock cod poached in a potent soy and star anise stock that Rockpool's Neil Perry concocted for a Seppelts dinner in 1991 and partnered with a 1987 cabernet. It was a shock and a revelation – in fact, Tony Bilson, another of Sydney's top chefs, disagreed with it vehemently!

But the fish's flesh was so sweet and moist, its texture so heavy and dense that even a weighty wine like the Dorrien had to put up a fight. It was like pitting Mohammed Ali against George Foreman – they went ten rounds in your mouth.

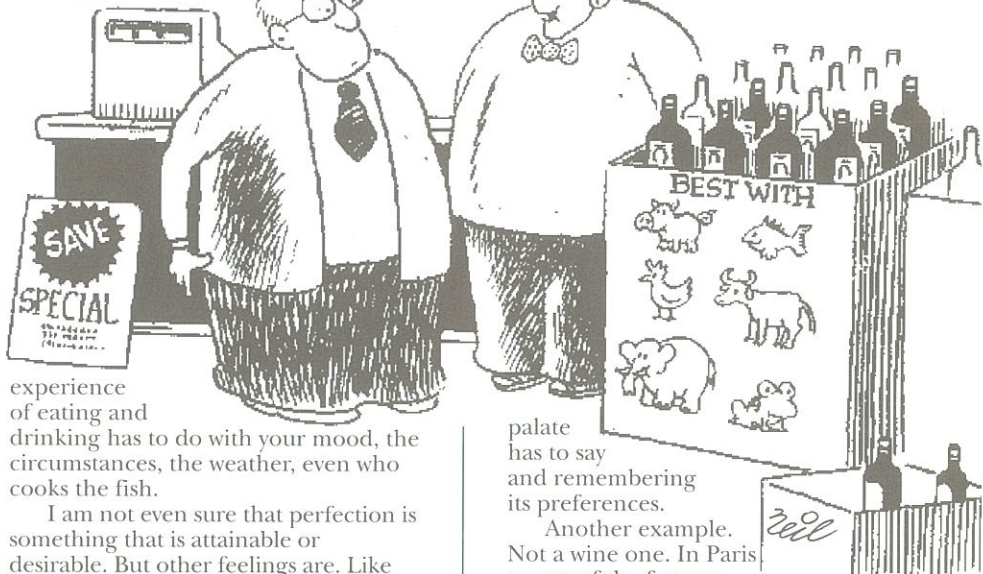
I thought it worked and it showed me just how restrictive rules could be on your imagination.

Some wine merchants have created symbols that advise you on what wine to choose for your meal (or meal for your wine.) Each bottle is flagged with an icon or graphic image – a fish, a fowl, a butt of beef – a device that kindly does the thinking for you. And promises the perfect partnership with your meal.

For those who don't like to experiment, who don't feel confident about their sensory skills, this is a solution of sorts. But even though this latest batch of suggestions may encourage people to think about food and wine combinations, it is swapping one set of rules for another.

And it definitely comes a poor second to the thrill of discovering, by yourself or by accident, just how happy you can be with a Cloudy Bay Chardonnay and a gently pan-fried piece of Atlantic salmon.

I'm not saying that I would always marry those two flavours. Or that they would always work. So much about the



experience of eating and drinking has to do with your mood, the circumstances, the weather, even who cooks the fish.

I am not even sure that perfection is something that is attainable or desirable. But other feelings are. Like the excitement of realising that the lush, midsummer cherries I was scoffing in a friend's kitchen were a perfect foil for the gin and tonic in my hand.

*"I should have known"  
Bond says dryly,  
"when you ordered red  
wine with your fish."*

How will you ever experience the joy of discovery if everything else is predetermined?

One of my favourite moments recently was buying a Wolf Blass Rhine Riesling. I have to confess I haven't bought a Blass wine in many, many years. But this one, produced by the former Quelltaler estate in South Australia's Clare Valley, was new to me and I am on a rhine riesling trip.

Across the road I trotted to my local bistro. Glasses poured, we were greeted by an explosion of dry, flinty, sunny fruit flavours. All four of us said, oysters – this wine would be brilliant with freshly shucked oysters.

It's not hard to choose food that goes with wine or wine that suits what's on your plate. Your sense of smell is your key organ. Diane Ackerman in *A Natural History of the Senses* writes about people suffering from anosmia, the inability to smell, who can only distinguish the texture and temperature of food.

And Jancis Robinson's recent TV series showed how necessary smell is to taste, when people with pegged noses were unable to tell vanilla from vegetable water.

If you can sniff and taste, your palate is almost infallible, trained or untrained. It knows what is good, what works and doesn't. The hard part is taking the time to listen to what your

palate has to say and remembering its preferences.

Another example. Not a wine one. In Paris at one of the famous Mariage Frères tearooms... Before purchasing the tiny black packets of tea you retire to the tearoom with potted palms, a trolley laden with divine cakes and men in white coats who answer every question with serious attention.

I ordered steamed baby vegetables with a perfect mould of rice and lightly sautéed tiny mushrooms. The waiter suggested second flush Darjeeling.

Like many women, I'm not a Darjeeling fancier. I find it flat and metallic and acidic. But he was right. It was a perfect match: the green-tasting, slightly astringent tea with top notes of dry soil was perfect for the carrots, broccoli and mushrooms on my plate.

Rules are for those who like certainties in life. But I doubt that a certainty has quite the same gastronomic as stumbling over the sensational combination of say a Martinborough Pinot Noir with a creamy mess of scrambled eggs topped with truffle shavings. Give me the happy accidents any day.

*Between drinks Helen Greenwood writes on food and design for the Sydney Morning Herald. Apart from riesling and tea, her favourite tippie is apple juice.*

## MUSTS

**Marlborough  
Wine & Food Festival**  
Saturday, 14 February, 1998  
Brancott Vineyard, Blenheim  
Details: PH 3 577 8977  
FAX 3 577 8966



*Cloudy Bay and Cape Mentelle  
wines are available from  
your fine wine retailer.*

From the winemaker's desk...

# Wine Lines

## WALKING THE WILD SIDE

Every second bit of wine literature these days quotes a winemaker somewhere using wild yeast to make a more 'natural' wine, with more flavour and improved mouth-feel. But what exactly does natural mean?

In short, if you take grape juice and leave it alone, it'll eventually start to ferment all by itself, a process triggered by the presence of 'wild' yeasts. Nothing new there. Wine was made for seven millennia prior to the advent of cultured yeast.

Peer down the microscope and wild yeasts come across looking like a mixed bunch of lemons, skittles, boomerangs and lumpy sausages. They range from tiny (on a yeast scale) to huge and go by beguiling names such as *Pichia*, *Hansenula* and *Kloeckera*. These 'wild' ferments – not to be confused with the standard oval cultured *Saccharomyces* – bear little resemblance to the orderly process that occurs after an 'unnatural' inoculation.

So where do they come from?

Traditionally it was thought that a winery built up a population of yeasts that lived in vats 'n' vessels and that these beasties caused fermentation. Taken further, this notion led to the idea that natural ferments occurred more easily and rapidly in less than clean (OK, I'll say it) – filthy wineries. Not so.

Meet *Pichia* and *Hansenula*...



Recently a Yank in Italy studying the origin of naturally occurring yeasts in a variety of wineries over several vintages, discovered every fermentation in each and every winery, in each and every vintage to be unique. That is, the rogue yeasts could be from anywhere – the winery and / or the vineyard. Subsequent research indicates that the diversity of these yeasts originates in the vineyard.

End of story? Not quite. Closer study of yeast populations shows that the bugs that kick-start the ferment are different to the ones that finish it. These 'starter' yeasts are unable to tolerate much alcohol and die off by the time the fermentation is a quarter complete. The alcohol tolerant *Saccharomyces*, present all along with the wild bunch, builds up and finishes the job.

At least that's what we winemakers hope will happen. In fact, often by the time the wild ones have finished eating there aren't enough goodies left, apart from sugar for *Saccharomyces* to grow, which is why cultured yeasts were developed in the first place.

So why turn back the wheel of science now? The truth is, many winemakers never deserted tradition, maintaining that naturally occurring yeasts produce wines that more truly reflect the winery, the area and the vintage than any introduced species ever could. Well-handled, these rogue organisms add complexity and a creamy sweetness to wine that simply can't be obtained any other way. Poorly managed, they can make wines akin to coarse sweet vinegar matured in a septic tank.

Wild or tamed, that is the question – and the answer lies on the palate of the beholder.

James Healy, Oenologist, Cloudy Bay

“A glass without wine is just catching dust.”

GEORG RIEDEL

## HAT TRICK

According to *Cuisine*, New Zealand's leading food and wine magazine, rugby star Jonah Lomu and New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc have one thing in common – they are both world leaders.

This claim introduces *Cuisine*'s 1996 Sauvignon Blanc Tasting, conducted by wine editor Bob Campbell MW and his panel of top palates, who sipped and spat their way through 129 Kiwi sauvignons to find the best.

1996 was a good year and the best wines showed a return to form (after a difficult 1995 vintage) and a seductive concentration of pungent tropical fruit flavours. The judges' pick of the crop, for the third year running, was the *Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1996*.

Campbell: “This wine must rank as one of the best ever releases from Cloudy Bay and possibly one of the best examples of Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc ever made.” He gave it 96 points out of the possible century. The tasting note read: “Lovely gooseberry flavours with hints of passionfruit and red pepper. Concentrated vibrant flavours with wonderful richness that is atypical of this normally light-bodied regional style. Certainly the most complex 1996 Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc in the tasting.”

This same wine also caught the attention of James Halliday who granted it “gold plate” status and described it as a “Staggeringly beautiful wine with glorious passionfruit and herb aromas and a palate structure that caresses the mouth.”



## CLOUDY BAY WATCH

Trust the Poms to come up with a new consumer price index called the Cloudy Baywatch! It's the initiative of Douglas Wregg, wine contributor to the *Evening Standard's 1997 London Restaurant Guide*, compiled by the very perspicacious palate, Fay Maschler.

Wregg believes that “London is potentially the most exciting city in the world to drink modishly” and is on a mission to alert his readers to wine list rip-offs. He offers such useful tips as the £415 saving on a bottle of Petrus 1979, if you drink it at Coast and not The Dorchester.

He named his index after the “buxom charms of New Zealand's finest Sauvignon” because he claims Cloudy Bay “arouses the most primitive rapacious instincts in restaurateurs.” To substantiate this claim, he set his sleuths loose and found one bottle of Sauvignon Blanc at Ransome's Dock for a respectable £17.95 rising to a dramatically elevated £42.50 – again at The Dorchester. That's about a tenth the price of the Petrus, but MN still concurs with Wregg's sentiments. Greed is not good.

Evening Standard

## MASTERCLASS

Over the years *Decanter's* London Masterclasses have featured the thoroughbreds of the world of wine, and attracted participants from as far afield as Singapore, Sweden and San Francisco. Those lucky enough to share in these serious annual sipping sessions speak with enthusiasm about the experience.

Last November, on a frosty autumn day, it was Cloudy Bay's and Cape Mentelle's turn to take to the stage at the luxurious Landmark Hotel, in a class led by export director, Edward Berry. About 100 enthusiasts lined up for four vintages of Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc including the still very alive 1987; a comparative view of Cape Mentelle Cabernet which featured the Jimmy Watson-winning 1983, and an introduction to that beguiling red beauty, Zinfandel. By all accounts the duo from Down Under made their mark.



Cloudy Bay by a nose... at *Decanter's* London Masterclass.

# A Zinful Tale



California's Kelley's Creek immigrant zin vine stretches out in Margaret River.

Pic: Kevin Judd

**Zin drinkers may not know it but this outstretched vine and April 1997 mark an important milestone at Cape Mentelle. David Hohnen tells the story.**

1963. The year of Domino theories, E.J Holden cars and famine in China; the year the very first zinfandel vine reached Australia, Western Australia to be precise. It was imported on the initiative of the then government viticulturist, Bill Jamieson who believed zin's reputation for drought tolerance and ability to retain acidity in hot climates, would make it an ideal variety for the Swan Valley near Perth.

The vine that Jamieson imported was selected from the University of California at Davis. It came from a vineyard in Lodi in the delta area of California's fertile Central Valley, an area equivalent to Australia's Langhorne Creek. Hindsight indicates this emigrant vine was in fact selected more for its ability to produce big crops rather than exceptional quality wine.

The first significant planting was by John Roe at Sandalford's Swan Valley vineyard. Zin's less redeeming habits – a tendency to over-crop and propensity for bunch rot – soon became apparent and Roe quickly became disenchanted with the variety. Within a few years the Sandalford vines were uprooted, but they didn't disappear.

In 1973, before those Californian vines were pulled, cuttings were taken for a four acre planting at Cape Mentelle.

The Lodi zin took to Margaret River's gravel soils with great zest and grew like Jack's Beanstalk. In the second year there was enough fruit for a small crush and by the third year we too knew all about bunch rot.

And talk about big bunches! Clusters as big as buckets, jam-packed with berries so tight they would pop like spat cherry pips and land three feet away. It was awesome.

For many years we struggled to subdue that lusty Lodi zin. And in most years it was a struggle to achieve ripeness without rot, but some great wines were made, notably in 1981, '83, '84 and 1988.

Come 1990, one of the visiting vintage 'bums' heralded a new era for CMV zin. Peter Brehm, from Albany, California runs a grape brokering business which specialises in the sourcing of small parcels of select grapes. He knows every little vineyard of old bush vines from Gilroy to Ukiah. And he knows zinfandel.

Peter reckoned it would take a couple of years to organise but promised to send cuttings from a vineyard that had a history of producing great wine.

Finally, after a thorough search he chose Harry and Amy Roger's vineyard. Twenty five acres planted some time before 1917 in a little glen drained by Kelley's Creek, a tributary of Dry Creek in the Sonoma Valley. It had heritage.

*“We were delivered two robust, healthy, pot-trained zins...”*

The Sonoma Valley lies parallel and to the west of the Napa Valley, north of San Francisco. The zins of Sonoma and Dry Creek in particular, are among California's best.

Peter and Harry selected a vine and in 1992 a few cuttings were posted to the Department of Agriculture quarantine station in South Australia. Here they faced a four-year-long trial to determine their immigrant status. Any sign of disease or virus and they would be incinerated.

To Peter's credit, the selection was a good one. Subsequently we were delivered two robust, healthy, pot-trained zins which will soon provide the progeny for a five acre planting.

In the meantime, after 24 years, the Lodi zin seems to have passed through its full-on testosterone phase and now seems set for a more temperate middle life. One to be enjoyed with minimal intervention, which we've learnt means a lot to the Lodi. So we've virtually dispensed with trellising, cane training and irrigation. The trick seems to be to just let zin do its own thing and it'll deliver the goods... in this instance the wine of the 1995 vintage. It rates as one of Cape Mentelle's best for the '90s, and among the best ever made.

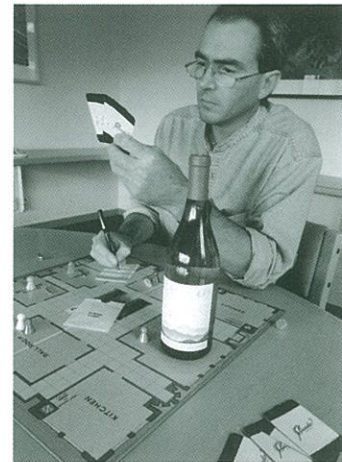
## KILLER DRINK

Avid readers of crime fiction and the *New York Times* best-seller fiction list might be aware of a new thriller titled *The Big Picture*. Set in Connecticut and down-town bizzoid Manhattan, it's a modern tale of baby boomer goes bust.

You know the scenario. Hero Ben Bradford has it all: the beautiful wife Beth, two beaut sons, the big house and bigger buck job with Wall Street law firm... But all is not what it seems, especially after American-Irish author Douglas Kennedy (erstwhile contributor to *Mentelle Notes*) has spiced up his contemporary fable.

Beth is a bit of a wine buff, so's her neighbour Gary. They share a secret and several bottles of that elusive Kiwi wine, Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc... till the plot thickens and the vinous weapon is drawn.

"It's the most sublime white wine I've ever tasted," says Kennedy, a man obviously inspired by the searingly intense 'knock-out' character of CBV sauvignon blanc. NYT's Christopher Lehmann-Haupt was also pretty hyped up about Kennedy's *Big Picture* and favourite tippie, managing to include no less than three references to Cloudy Bay in his recent review of Kennedy's book.



Professor Judd in the dining room with the Cloudy Bay.

MN knows the 1996 vintage packs a real punch, but hopes that no one would be as foolish as Ben to waste a bottle of Marlborough sunshine.

Pic: Courtesy Marlborough Express

## MAKING IT MALIBU

Margaret River is famed not just for its wines, but also for its surf. Majestic big waves that roll in from the Indian Ocean and break on the rocky Leeuwin Naturaliste coastline; the making of the annual Margaret River Surf Classic and lure for surfers from all over the world. They also inspired Malibu, the holiday house built by CMV's David and Sandy Hohnen at Prevelly Beach, a few minutes drive from the winery.

Malibu is a self-contained two storey Tuscan-style rammed limestone villa with commanding coastal views, a mere 2kms from the mouth of the Margaret River and the delightful cliff-top Gnarabup Cafe.

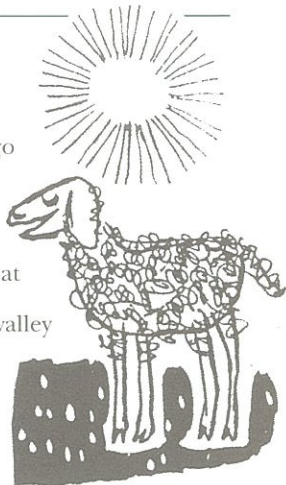
It comprises three bedrooms with en-suites; a spacious lounge with log fire which opens to a shady terrace, and a separate upstairs sitting room. Amenities include an all mod-con kitchen, video, gas BBQ and fully-equipped laundry. All linen is supplied.

If you're headed West and this sounds like your perfect retreat, contact Sandy Hohnen on PH (6197) 572397 or FAX 573233. Peak rates from A\$170 per night, off-peak from A\$130.

# Science Report

## OVER THE HILL

Some time ago Cloudy Bay acquired a new vineyard site in the Brancott, a 75 hectare block at the southern extremity of the valley that is adjacent to the Wairau, and until recently was home to a flock of woolly lawnmowers.



But since last year Ivan Sutherland's vineyard team have been hard at it, tilling and planting the first 10 hectares with chardonnay vines.

He selected Mendoza, a low cropping clone much favoured in New Zealand for making premium chardonnay. "Typically, it delivers about two and a half to three tonnes per acre; achieves high brix and good acid, low pH levels and brims with complex flavours," explained Ivan, as he surveyed his latest garden bed.

The remainder of the flat land will be planted over the next 3 years – to more chardonnay and subsequently to pinot noir vines that will be tucked up into the lee of the pine tree clad hills that shelter the site from westerly winds. And the four-legged lawnmowers will be moved to the elevated penthouse paddock with the big view over mighty Marlborough and Cook Strait.

## HOT STUFF

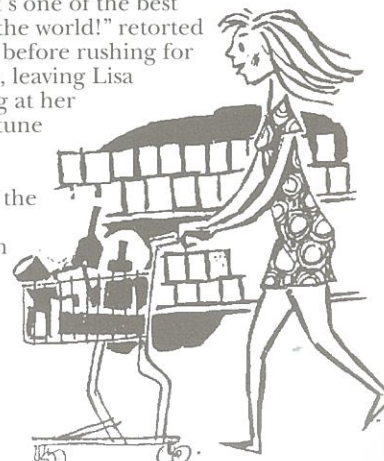
Cloudy Bay wines have the capacity to induce some remarkable responses. Take the travelling tales of Marlborough oenologist, Lisa Van der Water (sic) of Pacific Rim Oenology Services, who took a couple of bottles of Marlborough's famous tippie to a wine conference in the U.S.A.

One keen-eyed cork importer spotted the Sauvignon Blanc and promptly offered Lisa US\$100 for a bottle. She declined. He upped the bid to \$150 but still failed to secure more than a taste.

Recently Lisa jetted back to San Francisco, this time with a Cloudy Bay carry bag and just one bottle.

As she pushed her luggage cart through the airport a businessman rushed up to her. "Is that *really* Cloudy Bay? The one in Marlborough?" "Sure is," said Lisa. "I live there."

"That's one of the best wines in the world!" retorted the chap before rushing for his plane, leaving Lisa chuckling at her good fortune and the pulling power of the misty mountain label.



## Powdered Extract of Red Wine



You can take it in a line ...



...It will make you feel just fine



And reduce your chance o' dyin' ... (But of course we could be lyin')



Reproduced with kind permission Matthew Martin.

## MN's health watch has been alerted to three potentially momentous discoveries.

First up – powdered wine. Researchers at the Papworth Hospital in Cambridge, England have discovered a way of separating the good cholesterol-fighting polyphenols (found in red grape skins) from wine, and desiccating them to a powdered form.

Over several weeks they monitored the blood of three groups of men aged 35 to 65; one group drank red wine daily, one drank white and the final group swallowed capsules containing the magic powder. And the result? The pill-poppers showed benefits similar to the red wine drinkers.

MN is still pondering the long-term effects of cabernet merlot capsules; certainly the bottling line crew wouldn't be on over-time...

The second, and possibly vastly far more significant event was reported in the U.S. journal *Science*. Researchers at the University of Illinois in Chicago have been feeding resveratrol to mice, one of those polyphenols found in red grape skins, and discovered the dose reduced the rodents' skin tumours by 98%. It's a long stretch from there to human cancer prevention or indeed a

cure but the Illinois team are on the resveratrol case. Meanwhile MN suggests you keep drinking your CMV reds, or increasing your daily diet of peanuts and mulberries which also contain this seemingly remarkable compound.

However, regular wine drinkers should also note the findings of Shahid Chaudry of London's Guy's Hospital. His research, reported in the *British Dental Journal*, claims wine can erode your teeth. The case study cites the distressing experience of a 52-year-old wine merchant who'd tasted an average of 30 wines daily since 1959. His teeth were down to the metal stumps of his fillings, decay caused not by bacteria, but by acid that corrodes the enamel.

Dr Chaudry advises heavy wine sippers to brush their teeth thoroughly twice a day between drinks.

## NEWSBREAK

Just as MN went to print, another bunch of boffins, this time at Bordeaux University, announced that three to four glasses of wine daily can prevent senile dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Now where did I put that glass...

## BIG HITTERS

Time out for the English Test team! During their recent successful 2-all-draw New Zealand tour, the lads had a lay day. So they hired a plane for a quick trip to Cloudy Bay. After a vineyard tour, tasting and lunch, six of Britain's best took time out to explain the ways of the willow to winemaker Kevin Judd's young sons, Alex and Kohen, both budding cricketers.

Clockwise from rear: Chris Silverwood, Darryn Gough, Nicholas Knight, Alec Stewart, Kohen Judd, Dominic Cork, Alex Judd, Craig White.



# Vine Traditions

So dynamic is New Zealand's wine industry that it is easy to overlook the role of heritage and tradition and the importance of events such as the annual Viticultural Field Days.

This 'grapie' gathering has its origins in West Auckland, when over forty years ago some of the country's first vignerons decided that not only did they wish to trade technology and tractors, they shared a need to bring change to the then restrictive Sale of Liquor Act.

So, the paddock was traded for an event that would appeal to politicians – a tradition that is vigorously upheld to this day.

"The Field Days offer a gentle opportunity to expose politicians to the people of the industry and its future plans," explained Philip Gregan, CEO of the Wine Institute of New Zealand (WINZ).

The 1997 Viticultural Field Day lunch, the 44th, was held at Cloudy Bay, on a sunny unblemished late summer Blenheim day. Guests of honour included the Hon. Doug Kidd, Speaker of the House and MP for Marlborough; the Right Honourable Jonathan Hunt, and one of the generous godfathers of the wine industry, Terry Dunleavy, who was invested as a lifetime fellow of WINZ.

In accepting the honour, Dunleavy, never a man of few words, reminisced about the early days in Marlborough and the factors that put Marlborough on the world's wine map. He acknowledged Montana's pioneering role and the vibrant Ernie Hunter (tragically killed in a car accident), then went on...

"Our New Zealand industry owes a lot to Australia for the superb winemakers who have crossed the Tasman. David Hohnen was one of the

first, and remains one of the most influential in terms of vision and flair. Kevin Judd's winemaking and technical skills have contributed to the rise in international acceptance of New Zealand wine."

On the day, Kevin was more concerned with his reputation as overseer of the event which featured a spit-roast for 250 guests. Barbecued lamb is another vital Field Day tradition, and reports indicate the twelve chubby, lightly charcoaled Cloudy Bay carcasses were right up to scratch, and well complemented the *Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir*:

Certainly, one of the 30 odd polities present, had a good day.

Mrs Jenny Bloxham, MP, in a letter to Philip Gregan: "Upon return, I have told my New Zealand First colleagues that I am prepared to make a sacrifice on their behalf and continue to attend (upon invite, of course) this annual function."

And so traditions are upheld.



Auckland grower and BBQ lamb supremo for over 20 years, Fred Rakich and his helper, Mark Nobilo, supervise the Spit Pit at the 1996 Field Day.



Photo: Kevin Judd

## GOING DOTTY

Spot the cellar door damsels with New Zealand's top entertainer Gary McCormick and singer June Devine, whose Polka Dot Bikini concert held at the Cloudy Bay winery during the summer, was a stand-out success.

## RIPPER RIPE REDS

April marked the release of three reds from Cape Mentelle's stable – all from the hot dry 1995 vintage, a year which prompts thoughts on the real meaning of ripe.

If you hang around with wine aware folk you might already have latched onto a bracket of newish winespeak.

No longer do we talk about plain old 'ripeness' in grapes. For reds there are three distinct components of ripeness – sugar ripe, flavour ripe and tannin ripe.

The best reds will be produced from a match of cultivar and location that will in most years produce a convergence of all three ripenesses.

However, if ripening occurs too quickly, a grape can be sugar ripe but without fully developed flavours, and have green astringent tannins. Then again, flavour ripeness may precede tannin ripeness and despite attractive flavours the wine may be lean and hard.

Margaret River's 1995 vintage produced a small crop in a fairly hot dry year. A normal size crop may have stressed the vines in such a season but the '95's lesser load ripened to perfection. Sugar ripe, flavour ripe and tannin ripe.

All three CMV reds are characterised by dark intense colours, concentrated flavours and full robust tannins without a hint of astringency.

Winemaker John Durham has tried to capture the essence of these three tip-top wines:

### Cape Mentelle Cabernet Merlot 1995 'Trinders Vineyard'

"Concentrated fresh berries and ripe plums mingle with liquorice, coffee and toasty aromas. The generous palate is succulent, savoury and spicy, finishing with fine-grained tannins and rich fruit flavours. A harmonious blend of cabernet sauvignon and merlot, this wine is ready to drink now, but has at least 8 years cellaring potential."

### Cape Mentelle Shiraz 1995

"A powerhouse of ripe cherry and currant aromas overlaid with hints of freshly crushed black pepper and spicy vanillin oak. The rich, well-structured mid-palate combines succulent berry characters with powdery tannins, followed by lingering savoury, cherry flavours. Enjoy while young or cellar for up to 6 years."

### Cape Mentelle Zinfandel 1995

"Back to its usual up-front, knock-your-socks-off style, the 1995 Zinfandel packs a powerful punch of fruit and concentrated flavour. The nose is a heady mix of red currants, spices and cherry vanillin oak. But it is the palate that characterises the variety with its mouth-coating, luscious texture and soft powdery tannins. Finishes with a crescendo of warmth and berry spice flavours."

Limited stocks of these ripper reds are available now from your fine wine retailer and Cloudy Bay winery.



# Waterworld

Applications continue to flood in from all over the world for Mentelle Ambassadorships. From St Andrews in Scotland lobs Paul Kelly of Cobwebs Country House who donned a kilt to clutch his bottle of *Cape Mentelle Shiraz*. A good shot! John Pinnick of Worcester bought a bottle of *Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1992* in Singapore and drank it in Baku on the Caspian Sea with a tin of caviar. He reports the low-salt caviar slipped down harmoniously with the mellow and still zingy '92.

There are so many budding ambassadors in fact, that this issue of MN carries an entire page dedicated to their exploits. The roving rogues gallery appears on the back of the order form – and all runners-up will receive ambassadorial T-shirts.

Congratulations must go to winning couple, newly-weds Mr and Mrs Vincin from Innaloo, Western Australia, who sank to great depths off a sandy Mauritian beach clutching their bottle of Cape Mentelle.

Caroline Vincin tells us they were off for a spot of 'underwater walking' and given their gear we're sure they're telling the truth. Those tin TV helmets don't look too conducive to other more conventional romantic pursuits. After his stroll, husband Tony reckons their instant-chill bottle went down a treat with the super fresh fish!



Caroline and Tony Vincin go to great depths while honeymooning in Mauritius.

*If you too wish to be part of CBV's export effort, keep your eyes peeled. Next time you're in some far flung corner of the globe and spot a bottle of Cloudy Bay or Cape Mentelle – on a wine list in Albania, in a bistro in Belsize Park or a bar in Bhutan, buy it and take a photo. Then send it to The Editor, Mentelle Notes. (Taking the bottle with you is highly commended but ideally MN ambassadors should buy an off-shore bottle.) MN will publish the best and most alluring photos and the winning Mentelle Ambassador will receive a FREE mixed case of CBV wine. All entrants receive a CB T-shirt.*

## LONG DROPS

Cloudy Bay's Sauvignon Blanc occasionally cops the odd back-hander.

From the *Investment Adviser*, U.K. Columnist Le Nez wrote: "Cloudy Bay is a delightful Australian white wine." So an anonymous reader phoned to put him right, adding that when *he* was in Australia and ordered a bottle, a patriotic waiter said, "I'd rather drink tinned asparagus juice." Really?

From Philip White, *Adelaide Advertiser*:

"The trendiest bistro chiller, and perhaps the most sensible, is really catty sauvignon blanc. The old Cloudy Bay was the first cult example; the sort of wine every harbourside table boasted, ice-bucketed, lipsticked glasses; oh, aren't the baby squids just divine daahling... A label that everyone just had to have... Now there are oodles of dry white sauvignons which will do the same job."



From Keith Stewart of the *Listener*, come two views on the one wine:

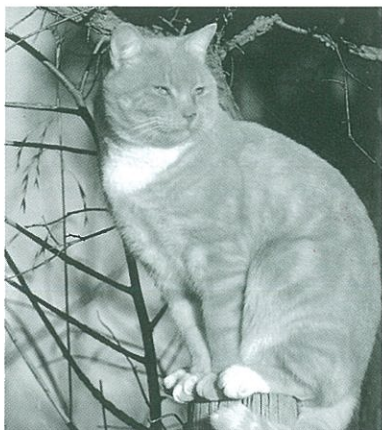
View One: 30 November, 1996.

"Every year, when winemakers and critics pore over Cloudy Bay's new releases to see if they measure up to the company's international reputation, they miss the point. Wine quality alone is not the reason for Cloudy Bay's success. Other, usually cheaper local sauvignon blancs are consistently as good, but what makes Cloudy Bay a star is its marketing."

View Two: 8 February, 1997.

"Like all very good wine, Cloudy Bay is more than just a reputation. The smartest of wine labels are those that persuade by taste, and not by hype... But Cloudy Bay is smart because it's smart wine. Year after year it tastes great..."

Now that's a sentiment most Cloudy Bay customers would agree with.



## R.I.P ROGER

*Mentelle Notes* readers who've visited the Cloudy Bay winery may recall meeting Roger, the gourmet gadabout ginger cat. Well, like all brave hedonists, Roger finally met his match – while nipping across Jacksons Road after his three course evening meal at Allan Scott's Twelve Trees restaurant. We just hope he enjoyed his last supper.

## Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1995

*"Delicious wine...good balance, quite intense fruit and concentration, and firmly structured. Shows all that's good in Marlborough chardonnay."*

Peter Saunders, SAUNDERS ON WINE

## Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1996

*"A towering tastebud-tingling monument to sauvignon blanc..."*

Jane MacQuitty, THE TIMES, U.K.

*"A modern classic... that impresses year after year. The 1996 edition is no exception. The nose is pungent with tangy tomato-leaf, citrus and tropical fruit aromas. In the mouth, it is a thrilling combination of passionfruity sweet and sour flavour with zippy acidity and a long aftertaste."*

Ralph Kyte-Powell, THE AGE, MELBOURNE

*"The white that changed the world's view of sauvignon blanc..."*

Tony Hitchin, SUNDAY HERALD SUN, MELBOURNE

*"Getting your mitts on a bottle of Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc is like discovering a free parking space in the city centre – nigh impossible."*

Bill Clapperton, EVENING NEWS, EDINBURGH

## Pelorus 1992

*"Fresh sherbert fruit and yeasty notes on the nose."*

*A rounded and complex palate with balanced acidity and good length."*

Highly Recommended, DECANTER, U.K.

*"Pelorus justifies its price tag, especially compared to many Champagne brands."*

Bob Campbell MW, CUISINE, 94 points

*"Clean fruity aromas and a superbly elegant palate structure."*

*Fine acids keep things lively through to the lingering finish."*

*This is undeniably the product of Marlborough sunshine."*

Vic Williams, EVENING POST

## Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 1994

*"The rich toasty bouquet leads into a very substantial palate crammed with complex, dark cherry, spice and French oak flavours."*

*A warm supple, savoury wine, it offers highly satisfying drinking."*

Michael Cooper, WINESTATE

## Cloudy Bay Cabernet Merlot 1994

*"Undoubtedly the most impressive yet .... it tends more towards a young Bordeaux top growth than New World style - but with an extra element of richness which makes for superb, luxurious drinking."*

Stanley Harris, N.Z. FEDERATION OF FOOD & WINE SOCIETIES

## Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon 1992

*"The extraction of colour and flavour would honour a Médoc cru classé... a wine of elegance and breeding."*

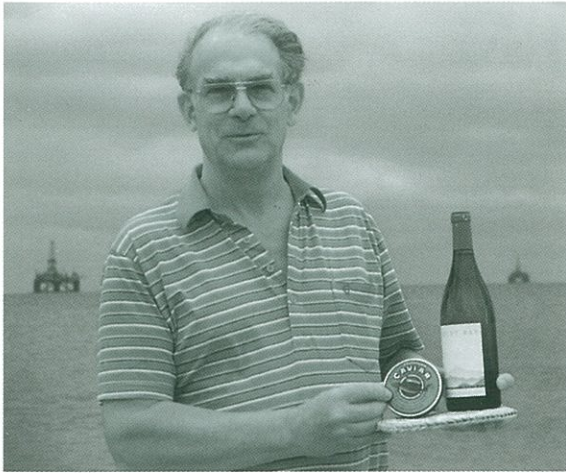
DECANTER, U.K.

## MENTELLE NOTES

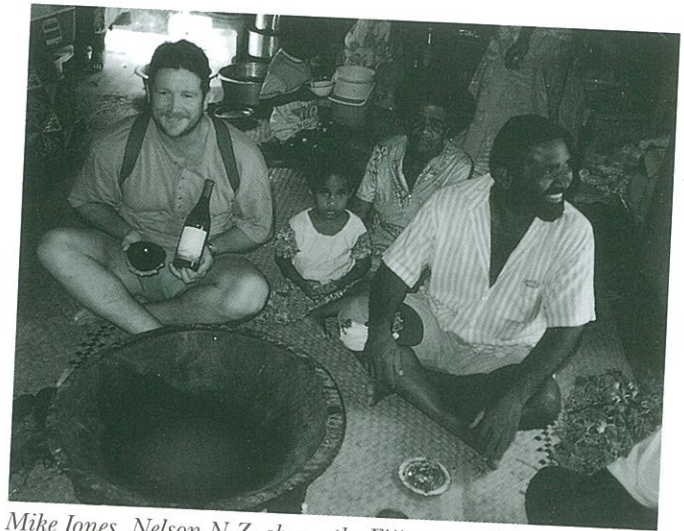
is the publication of  
CLOUDY BAY & CAPE MENTELLE VINEYARDS  
For further information please contact  
the winery PO Box 376, Blenheim.  
Tel (03) 57 28914 Fax (03) 57 28065



# Roving Mentelle Ambassadors



John Pinnick, Worcester, U.K. took his bottle of Cloudy Bay to Baku on the Caspian Sea – home of the virgin sturgeon. He says the Chardonnay paired perfectly with the local caviar.



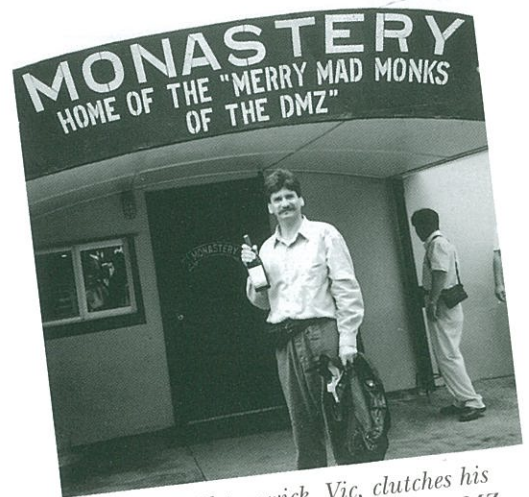
Mike Jones, Nelson N.Z. shows the Fijians his Kava recipe...



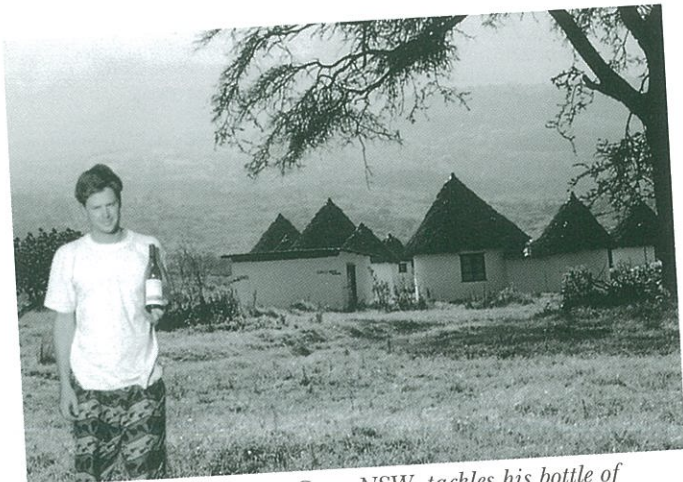
Paul Kelly, Leck, Scotland, at his annual St Andrew's golf bash with the 19th hole tippie – Cape Mentelle Cabernet.

Some Mentelle Ambassadors are given to poetry rather than pix. Take Helen and Paul Evans of Auckland who travelled the world with a bottle of *Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1994*, discovered in a little store in Galway, Ireland:

*"We begin our wee story  
To success and export glory  
In Galway, the Emerald Isle  
Cloudy Bay Chardonnay did beguile  
A bottle we bought  
Of New Zealand, we thought  
But the weather was cold  
This bottle we'll hold  
Across the Irish Sea  
England, France, Switzerland, Italy  
That bottle of nectar  
Source of much conjecture  
Superb body and flavour  
Our minds did savour  
Until Paris at last  
'Tis end of trip and fast  
An apartment Art Deco.  
Students and artists do echo  
The cork I pull  
As we start to drool.  
A toast to special friends, good times  
And, of course, fine wines."*



John Paine, Elsternwick, Vic. clutches his Cloudy Bay Chardonnay in Korea's DMZ (demilitarised zone) between North and South. So as not to offend the monks he consumed it in Seoul's Hilton Hotel.



John Corbett-Jones, Lane Cove, NSW, tackles his bottle of Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc in Arusha Park, Tanzania.

*Congratulations to all these bold adventurers – runners up in the Mentelle Ambassador Program.*

*You too can become a Mentelle Ambassador. Turn to the back page story for details of the winner and how to enter.*



Dana Robinson, Christchurch, N.Z. at the tomb of Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam.



# PRICE LIST & ORDER FORM

JUNE • 1997



Wine	Description	Price per Case	Price per Bottle	Amount Ordered	Cost
Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1995	Complex and savoury with figs, butterscotch and browned toast. Marlborough magic 10 years on!	\$347.40	\$28.95		
Cloudy Bay Cabernet Merlot 1994	The Red is back! Garnet hue with berry fruit cassis aromas, earthy overtones and soft palate spiced with oak. Enjoy now or cellar.	\$289.80	\$24.15		
Cape Mentelle "West's Best Case"	4 x CM Cabernet Merlot 1995 4 x CM Shiraz 1995 4 x CM Zinfandel 1995	\$300.60	N/A		
<b>T-SHIRT OFFER</b> Black <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/>	Small <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Large <input type="checkbox"/> XL <input type="checkbox"/> XXL <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	\$25.00 (inc. postage)		
<b>APRON OFFER</b>	Black, pull-through adjustable strap.	N/A	\$25.00 (inc. postage)		
<b>U.K. DELIVERY</b> Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1995	Please indicate your requirements below for delivery to the U.K. and include price in your total order.	\$360.00	N/A		
ADD FREIGHT COSTS (SEE BELOW)					
<b>SEND THEM MENTELLE IN THE U.K.</b>					<b>TOTAL</b> (INCLUDING GST)



## SEND THEM MENTELLE IN THE U.K.

If you would like to surprise family and friends why not send them a gift case of Cloudy Bay Chardonnay. (Prices include VAT and delivery within mainland U.K.)

Wine	Price per Case Delivered in U.K.	Amount Ordered
Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1995*	\$360.00	
* Limited availability		<b>Total</b>

**Address wines to be sent in U.K.**  
(Please print)

Name .....

Address .....

Post Code .....

Tel: ( ) .....

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

Postal Address: .....  
Postcode .....

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

Fax: ( ) .....

Is this your first order of Cloudy Bay wines? YES NO

Signature: .....

**REMITTANCE DETAILS**  
Cheque Bankcard Viscard Mastercard American Express Diners  
Credit Card Number.

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## FREIGHT

Freight Charges All national deliveries	Per Case \$6.00
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## DELIVERY ADDRESS & INSTRUCTIONS

EXPIRY DATE ..... / .....

Note any special delivery instructions below:

Delivery Address: .....

### Sign up – we'll send you Mentelle

If you or a friend within New Zealand would appreciate receiving a copy of Mentelle Notes please complete this coupon. Send to: PO Box 376, Blenheim or Fax to: (03) 572 8065

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

Address: .....

Postcode: .....

Tel: ( ) .....

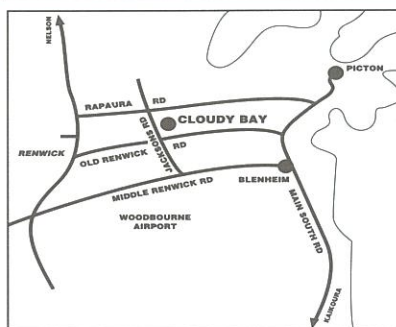
Fax: ( ) .....

*"Judd is the Clint Eastwood of winemaking – lean, wiry, laconic and with a fast right hand – to the cork puller."*

John Schreiner,  
WEST END TIMES, VANCOUVER

### PLEASE NOTE

- Orders must be in full or half case lots.
- Feel free to make up your own mixed case using the bottle prices listed.
- All prices are G.S.T. inclusive
- This order form valid until publication of November '97 Mentelle Notes.
- Send order with payment to Cloudy Bay Vineyards Ltd, P.O. Box 376 Blenheim, New Zealand or Facsimile (03) 57 28065
- Only persons aged 20 years or over may legally order wine.
- Deliveries can only be made to a street address-not a PO Box or RD number.
- Please allow 10 days for delivery.



### Cellar Door Opening Times

**CLOUDY BAY**  
Monday to Sunday - 10:00am - 4:30pm  
It would be appreciated if groups would make a prior appointment



**Cloudy Bay Vineyards Limited**  
P. O. Box 376 • Blenheim • New Zealand  
Tel: (03) 572-8914 • Fax: (03) 572 8065