

MENTELLE NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF CLOUDY BAY AND CAPE MENTELLE

Kupe's Scoop

Cloudy Bay announces the release of Te Koko – the result of some lateral oenological thinking.

Ever wondered what winemakers talk about over morning tea? Cap plunging, stuck ferments, barrel racking, neck freezers, the latest Californian zinfandel clone...last month's less than century score in the *Wine Spectator*.

Well, it's all this plus the rugby match and the latest model Alfa sports that pulled into the winery carpark on Sunday afternoon. Predictable perhaps, but just occasionally conversations can take unexpected turns.

Like the day in 1991 when Cloudy Bay's avid and newly recruited oenologist, James Healy, asked Kevin Judd if he thought it would be a good idea to ferment some chardonnay with indigenous yeast. What he was proposing was non-interventionist winemaking, letting nature take an uncharted course.

Judd, trained in Australia to have due respect for modern technology, spluttered into his tea leaves. Yeast should be cultured and well-trained, an indispensable winemaking tool. To risk a pristine batch of Marlborough chardonnay juice to the ravages of unknown micro-flora was heresy.

But he pondered the suggestion for a few days. As long as it was just a small batch...and only a few French oak barrels...just an in-house experiment to keep the renegade amused. Defendable on the grounds of breaking down the barriers of ignorance...

So Judd agreed to an eight barrel trial – four new, four old – and 1600 litres of chardonnay juice from two or three different vineyards, a sufficiently insignificant amount that it could always disappear down the 'long tank' if all turned to custard.

Some morning teas later, the crew sniffed some action. The normally fruity aromas that waft around the



Explorer Kupe and his crew tackle the treacherous Pacific Ocean.
Courtesy Longman New Zealand.

tank hall were masked by a pong not dissimilar to the first nasal attack when approaching Rotorua.

James, a Rotorua native, was not perturbed. Despite the fact his progeny was a gangly, flinty, pretty unattractive lass. But in the spring the ugly duckling underwent a complete malolactic fermentation, and emerged as a savoury, mealy, complex number with great intensity and voluptuous mouth-feel.

‘Made with confidence and character, it is as suave as Fred Astaire with Ginger, but in full colour.’

KEITH STEWART, THE LISTENER

Morning tea talk inevitably turned to subjecting sauvignon blanc to the same treatment.

Kevin Judd volunteered grapes from his own 'Greywacke' vineyard, a gesture of support for wild things.

The result appeared at cellar door only, as *Cloudy Bay Sauvignon 1992 – Greywacke Vineyard*.

The following vintage was too cold for lateral thinking. Then in 1994 the second wild child emerged, *Cloudy Bay Sauvignon 1994 – Motukawa Vineyard*, another shy cellar door offering. It was too wet to bother in 1995 but the commitment now existed to persist with the project.

Cloudy Bay Te Koko 1996 was born of a warm autumn, settled spring and typical long, mild Marlborough summer – and low intervention winemaking. The grapes were sourced from mature estate vineyards adjacent to the winery.

Harvested in the cool of the night under James Healy's careful supervision, the grapes were gently pressed, settled for 48 hours and the juice racked into French oak barrels (10% new) for their spontaneous and languid three-month primary fermentation.

Eighteen months on yeast lees and a complete malolactic fermentation later, James decided it was time (in December 1997) to bottle his feral brew which subsequently enjoyed another two years' rest in Cloudy Bay's cool cellars.

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TWO FOR THE ROAD

New Zealand's reputation for pinot noir grows vintage by vintage. No longer is the Land of the Long White Cloud lauded simply for its sauvignon blanc. Martinborough set the trend for pinot but increasingly Marlborough's cool, even climate and well-drained alluvial soil is proving to be highly suited to the variety.

Cloudy Bay's pinot grapes are sourced from two contract vineyards in the Lower Brancott and Fairhall sub-regions of the Wairau Valley. Here, monitored irrigation, Scott Henry trellising and a combination of shoot positioning and bunch thinning (up to 30% of the initial crop) results in an approximate yield of 7 tonnes per hectare.

The year of 1998 delivered the warmest summer on record in Marlborough and the pinot crop cruised to full ripeness without any of the drama that often accompanies a 'normal' Marlborough vintage.

Winemaker James Healy, who admits his obsession with this beguiling grape, nurtured the peak quality fruit (sourced from three different clones) through open tank fermentation with indigenous yeasts, plunging the vats twice daily. Subsequently the wine was transferred to French oak barrels (45% new) for a secondary malolactic fermentation and 12 months' barrique maturation.

James reckons you'll like the result of his ministrations:

Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 1998

'Exotic aromas of cherry dark plum mingle with spicy nuances in this concentrated pinot noir. Savoury flavours lead into a full palate that exudes sweet, ripe fruit. A wine with fine balance and a lingering finish rounded by soft, silky tannins.'

Long hot summers make great concentrated wines. Try this new release soon!

The same can be said for the latest vintage Cloudy Bay Chardonnay, a wine that lives up to its predecessors:

Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1998

'The Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1998 is introduced by aromas of ripe fruit – fresh, white-fleshed peaches integrated with savoury toasty characters. The palate shows a richly concentrated array of flavours reminiscent of dried fruits and roasted nuts, complemented by a long, lingering finish.'



Bob Campbell MW takes a close look at Cloudy Bay pinot.

HAIL THAT CAB

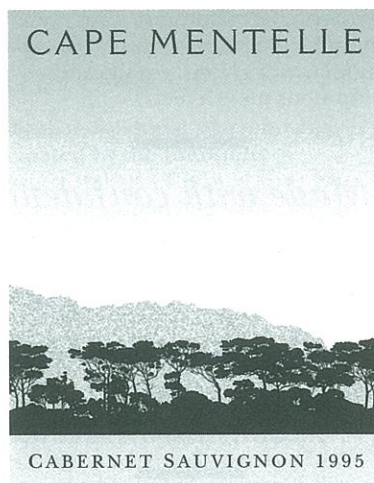
Cabernet lovers will be pleased to learn that a limited quantity of the highly lauded *Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon 1995* has been shipped across the Tasman.

The 1995 vintage in Margaret River is still the standout year of the '90s, with 1991 and 1997 close on its heels. A hot year and a small crop produced exceptionally concentrated and ripe flavours in all the Cape Mentelle reds.

Winemaker John Durham was eager to take five from the current full-on harvest to review the 1995 Cabernet, chosen recently as 'Wine of the Month' by *Decanter*:

Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon 1995

'Licorice and mocha aromas lead into a rich core of intense berry fruit combined with hints of sweet spice and high quality French oak. Palate flavours are concentrated and dense, yet seamless and in total harmony with the oak framework. The firm structure and powdery tannins promise longevity in the cellar. A complex, serious wine for cabernet enthusiasts.'



Cloudy Bay wines are available from your fine wine stockist.

KUPE'S SCOOP continued

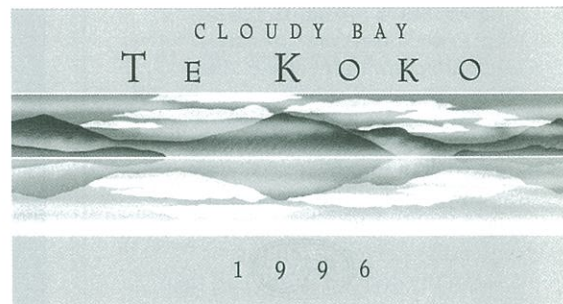
Te Koko is a complete departure from Marlborough's internationally renowned vibrant, zingy, fruit-driven sauvignon blanc style – an alternative, limited edition creation that proudly challenges the safe and conventional.

The legendary brave Tahitian explorer Kupe, who inadvertently contributed to the development of the wine's name, would surely approve.

For it was Kupe, who as early as 950 AD, journeyed with his family across the Pacific in sturdy canoes. Eventually they reached Aotearoa – so-called because his wife Apa te rangi saw some 'long white clouds' on the horizon.

Paddling along the coastline in hot pursuit of Te Wheke o Muturangi, the giant octopus, Kupe's expedition eventually arrived in the Marlborough Sounds, where legend has it that Kupe killed the marauding octopus in Tory Channel. He also dredged the depths of Cloudy Bay for oysters with a scoop net made from the native creeper, supplejack.

The local Maori, Rangitane, referred to the scoop as 'Te Koko' and the bay became known as 'Te Koko o Kupe.' Many years later Captain Cook named it Cloudy Bay.



It's that same spirit of adventure that drives Te Koko's creator James Healy to push the boundaries of his craft, to drop thought-provoking topics smack bang in the middle of morning tea.

'Judd and his team have proved they are not content to rest on their laurels.'

VIC WILLIAMS, EVENING POST

He hopes you enjoy the result of his 'wild' 1991 notion that took nine years to reach maturity.

Cloudy Bay Te Koko 1996

'Ripe sauvignon blanc fruit and prolonged yeast lees ageing in French oak, has resulted in a deliciously savoury and richly textured wine. Aromas of lychee and honeysuckle intermingle with the scent of lemons and a hint of toast. The extended bottle ageing prior to release has allowed the palate to soften, developing surprising concentration and luscious, mouth-filling flavours.'

Wok on the Wild Side

Celebrated chef and author Ken Hom shares his tips for easy, elegant entertaining.

Twenty years ago when I was much younger and more naive, (now I am a lot older but no wiser) I entertained extravagantly. My dinner parties had a minimum of 12 guests and no less than 12 courses every time. I would spend pleasurable days preparing elaborate, obscure Chinese dishes. However, over the past decade, with a heavy travel schedule and the pressures of a busy modern life, my style of entertaining has changed radically.

Now when I entertain, I usually have no more than six guests and just three courses with plenty of good wines. My friends enjoy these intimate dinners just as much as my lavish spreads of the past.

Simple, elegant entertaining is easy and I'd like to offer you some foolproof tips.

Invite friends you really want to see. Spending four hours at the dinner table with good friends is my idea of bliss. Remember the conversation and the mix is almost as important as the food and wine.

Don't invite the same guests all the time, it is nice to mix and match your friends. Never have a party with all the guests from the same profession, nothing is worse than talking shop all evening.

Don't skimp. Buy the best ingredients and have good wines. This is vital, especially if you have only three courses. Remember, your chances of success are greater if your dishes are memorable.

Serve wines you like to drink. I live in France and I am partial to clarets. However, occasionally, I love to share New World wines which elicit much surprise, especially the whites.

Don't attempt new dishes. Always entertain with tried and true recipes or dishes with which you feel comfortable. You don't need the additional stress of knowing whether the dish will be good or not. However, you should feel free to mix and match dishes from different cuisines.

You could begin with a Chinese soup, then a lovely roast chicken with basmati rice, and Thai stir-fry vegetables. I don't worry too much about matching food with the wines, after all, it's a social occasion, not a wine tasting.

Avoid trying to impress your guests. I always think it is grander to make delicious, simple, food, than to present pretentious, mediocre dishes. There is no need to stick too rigidly to other people's rules about food. If you like fish with red wine, then serve it.

Remember to make dishes within the realm of home cooks. If you are making a Chinese meal, don't make more than two stir-fries. There are many recipes in the Chinese repertoire that are braised or steamed and many can be prepared ahead of time. I find that good sturdy wines go well with these dishes.



Ken Hom in his kitchen.

Light meals are usually the best remembered ones. That means light or no sauces, and avoid red meats. Stick to fish or chicken. Although I rarely use a microwave to cook, I have discovered that it does wonders to fish – as good as steaming in a wok.

‘Champagne is the perfect beverage to drink throughout a Chinese dinner party.’

Soups are an elegant opening. I like them because I can prepare them days, even a week ahead, and they freeze extremely well.

Give your dinner a few moments of thought before rushing out to shop. Too often, home cooks plunge into organising a dinner party without considering the balance of the meal or logistics. Think about how you would feel as a guest at this dinner. If your instincts tell you it will be good, chances are you'll be right.

Start the evening with champagne. It immediately puts everyone in a good mood, an important factor that will determine how the rest of the evening will flow. And buy the best.

By the way, I have found that champagne is the perfect beverage to drink throughout a Chinese dinner. The acid and sweetness balance out the oils and flavours one finds in Chinese cooking. Then again, I find Bordeaux, Burgundies and cabernet sauvignons are perfect as well.

Finally, never panic. If something doesn't turn out the way you thought it should, don't mention it to your guests. Just patch it up as best as you can, smile, have another glass of champagne and enjoy yourself. Have plenty of wine on hand as well!

Here is a recipe from a typical dinner party chez Hom. It is dead easy to make and tastes wonderful.

Quick Steamed Salmon Fillets

You can steam this dish in a wok or microwave where it cooks to perfection.

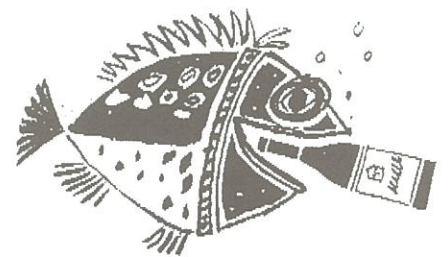
Ingredients

700g salmon fillets
1 tsp salt
1/2 tsp freshly ground white pepper
1 tbsp Chinese Shaoxing rice wine or dry sherry
1 tbsp light soy sauce
3 tbsps fresh chives, finely chopped
3 spring onions, finely chopped
2 tsps ginger, finely chopped
1 tbsp peanut oil
2 tsps sesame oil

Method

Rub the salmon fillets evenly with salt and pepper. Pour on the rice wine and cover tightly with plastic wrap. Prepare the rest of the ingredients. Cook the salmon in the microwave oven at 100°C for 3-5 minutes, depending on its thickness. The salmon is done when it feels firm and not spongy. Remove and let sit for 3 minutes. In the wok, combine the two oils and heat. While the oil is heating, sprinkle the salmon with soy sauce, chives, spring onions and ginger. When the oils begin to smoke, pour this over the top. It should sizzle. Serve at once.

Ken Hom's latest book, *Ken Hom Cooks Thai* is published by Headline Books.



MUSTS

Sheraton Taste of New Zealand

Cloudy Bay & James Healy
host a series of dinners and tastings
13 - 16 June

Sheraton Hotel, Brisbane
Details: (617) 3835 3535

Pinot at Cloudy Bay

Saturday 24 June
Cloudy Bay Winery, Blenheim
Bookings: (03) 520 9140

Negociants Winemakers Tour

25 - 29 September
Catch it in Auckland, Wellington
Dunedin
Christchurch and Queenstown.
Details: (09) 366 1140 or
negnzn@negociants.com

Bag Men

by John Newton

Charles Holloway staggered and blinked his way out of the cool, dark restaurant. Not that he was drunk. Charles? Never. Although he had, of course, sampled several wines. Several very fine wines, courtesy of his host. No, it was the sudden blaze of dusty sunlight.

Powerful was Mr Holloway, wine critic and judge. A single word from those thick and shiny lips could sink an entire vintage or container load of wine. Take today's host. An importer of Italian wines. He needed Charles Holloway. And Charles Holloway was inclined, after lunch, to be expansive in his praise.

He rolled a baffling Barolo (truffles? violets?) around the palate of his mind as he scanned the sooty streets for a cab. Fat chance at 3pm in Sydney. The only regret, he thought to himself, was opening such a wine so young. Tantamount to paedophilia. Another ten years would be prudent.

That's when he spotted him. Sprawled across a park bench under the overhead rail. 'It couldn't be,' he muttered, changing direction.

The object of his scrutiny was shabbily dressed in once good cloth, head back, scowl on an alcoholically tanned face, great beak of a nose, nostrils like twin black holes, right paw clutching a bottle, swathed in its traditional brown paper bag.

'It bloody is!' he replied to himself, gleefully, scuttling closer, peering down at the man, who was oblivious to his presence until registering the shadow that fell across his face.

He kicked out his legs, scrambled to an upright position. 'Garnpissoff!' he exploded, clutching his bottle to his chest.

'David?' asked Holloway, 'David Cantor?'

The man squinted into the sun, held up a grubby hand to shade his eyes. The scowl curved into a sunny smile.

'Charlie! Good Christ! Siddown, siddown.' He slid along the park bench and gestured regally for Holloway to join him, which he did, somewhat gingerly, flicking at the seat before entrusting it with his flannel trousers.

David Cantor had been, until his disappearance, another eminent wine critic, as different in temperament and style as was cabernet from pinot.

Cantor: acerbic, pungent, stroppy, entertaining, and honest to the edge of civility. Holloway: cautious, conservative and correct. They clashed often, and, all but once, to Holloway's disadvantage.

The final clash had been fatal. For Cantor. He had accused Holloway of cash for comment. Huge scandal. Holloway called in several favours in the industry. And that was the end of Cantor. Was it true? Who knows? Hard to prove. And now, irrelevant.

Here was Charles Holloway, shiny, well lunched and shod. And there was Cantor. Holloway was almost piddling himself with glee.



He trailed off again and took another long

'I'd offer you a drink, old mate,' Cantor waved the bagged bottle at him, 'but, I'm not sure it's your thing...not bad for the price though. They call it an oloroso, touch of rancio, good balance...' he trailed off. His head sank back into his chest, the scowl resurfaced.

'Er, no thanks old boy. Just lunched. Perhaps a tad too well. But what have you been up to?' he asked, too brightly. Cantor's head flopped onto the back of the bench, he stared blankly at the heavens.

'He rolled a baffling Barolo (truffles? violets?) around the palate of his mind.'

'Up to? Up to? Absobloodynothing. Wandering. Ended up in the Northern Territory. Hung around Darwin. Not a bad life.'

He turned, scrutinising Holloway through sad and bloodshot eyes, a puzzled look drawing creases across his face. Suddenly, he grabbed the sleeve of the great man's cashmere jacket, leaned forward, staring into his face. Holloway, nosing sour sherry breath, recoiled slightly.

'I've forgotten something you know,' Cantor whispered, hoarsely, 'something important. Very important.'

'Whatever do you mean old boy? Something valuable? Can I help?' he asked nervously.

Now Cantor let go of his sleeve, fell against the bench, closing his eyes. 'Must remember, must remember,' he muttered.

Then, shaking his head as if to clear it of a swarm of insects, he turned to Holloway, now with a huge grin.

'Charlie, Charlie,' he threw an arm around him, embraced him, 'the piss we drank! Remember when Benson cracked an entire bloody crate of the '88 Petrus! Have you ever had anything like it? I can still see that wine...a bloody great castle, full of secret and mysterious rooms...'

draft from the bottle.

Yes I remember, thought Holloway, you drank more than half of it. He looked at him with disgust. But Cantor was back in his nightmare.

'But what is it Charlie? Can't remember. Terribly important. Terribly, terribly important,' he peered around anxiously, then began trembling, rummaging frantically through his pockets.

'Charlie,' now in a wheedling tone, 'Char-lie, a bit short...you couldn't...until the end of the month...twenty...?'

'Twenty!' exploded Holloway, standing. 'For my old mate D Cantor? The country's finest palate? For God's sake man.'

He pulled out his wallet, dragged out a fistful of notes. 'Take it man, a gift, not a loan. Get some of that fine oloroso into you. Now, I'm afraid, I must be off.'

He thrust the notes at him, some fluttered to the pavement. Cantor grabbed at the money, stuffed it into his pockets, muttering gratitude. They shook heartily.

'Lunch soon.'
'Absolutely.'

Holloway walked briskly up Bourke Street, shaking with mirth. He couldn't wait to tell them at the club. The great D Cantor. Oloroso...rancio...not bad for the price. The brown paper bag! Too good, too good.

A sudden shout from behind. He stopped, turned. Cantor shuffling towards him, waving the bottle. He grabbed Holloway by the shoulder, holding him tight. 'I remembered! I remembered!' he said excitedly.

Still holding him in an iron grip, Cantor threw back his head, sucked the bottle dry, threw it over his shoulder, and then, expertly, directed a thin, hard spray across Holloway's face, from forehead to chin, scoring both eyes.

'Seeing you, it all came back. I'd forgotten to spit, Charlie! You see? I forgot to spit!'

John Newton is a Sydney food writer and novelist. His most recent book Sydney Sources (Wakefield Press) lists 18 Sydney wine merchants so MN hopes he remembers to spit!

Pinots on Parade

It was inevitable that Cloudy Bay would eventually follow Cape Mentelle's lead and host a comparative varietal tasting. Of course, in Marlborough it couldn't be cabernet, it had to be pinot noir.

So, winemaker James Healy has been scouring the world for its finest garnet beauties, the best of Burgundy, Carneros and the Antipodes.

Among the 18 contenders from the 1997 vintage are Domaine AF Gros Richebourg, Saintsbury, Au Bon Climat, a bevy of Australian beauties and independent New Zealand wine judge John Comerford's clutch of Kiwi challengers including Felton Road, Ata Rangi and the brave host, Cloudy Bay.

Pinot at Cloudy Bay, a celebration of the intriguing and elusive pinot noir grape and all its regional nuances, will be held at the winery on **Saturday 24 June**, commencing at 11am. The format will be similar to the Cape Mentelle cabernet event – the tasting followed by a palate-cleansing glass of Pelorus, then an informal lunch accompanied by those 18 garnet beauties.

Confirmed pinotphiles and others about to be beguiled should book early to avoid disappointment. Tickets are NZ\$150 (tasting & lunch). Complete the enclosed registration form and fax or mail to Freepost 87, Cloudy Bay Vineyards or contact Chris Mullany PH (03) 520 9140 FAX (03) 520 9040. email: pinot@cloudybay.co.nz

For accommodation ideas check www.destinationmarlborough.com

A SPECIAL CASE

London-based wine writer Robert Joseph was in Tokyo recently judging the second Japan International Wine Challenge. The results must have pleased the Kiwi contenders who scooped a swag of medals and trophies.

Between brackets he had time to explore traditional Japanese cuisine, and folklore. According to Joseph, ever since the French Champagne house which owns Cloudy Bay took over its Japanese distribution, sales have boomed.

Certainly, Japan is a growing export market and collective wisdom says that Japanese shoppers are seduced by luxury brands. But MN thinks the growing interest has more to do with a small but keen bunch of knowledgeable wine drinkers who have been weaned off sake and whisky.



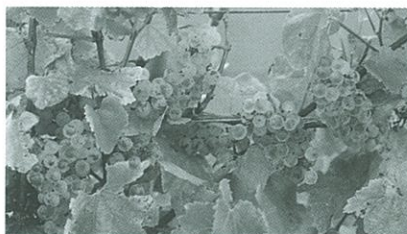
The Cloudy Bay team (Ivan, Kevin and James) hard at it selecting wines for the forthcoming pinot noir tasting. (Just joking.)

SECOND CHANCE

Forward planners with pinot envy should also note that January 2001 will see Wellington host an exciting international event, **Pinot Noir 2001**.

Guest experts will include Jancis Robinson MW, James Halliday and Burgundy's famed Robert Drouhin. Delegates will be able to sip and swallow (or spit) countless bottles of New Zealand's best pinot noir for three whole days from 25 - 28 January. Pre- and post-conference tours will also be available to New Zealand's pinot producing regions. Registrations: Verve Consulting PH (04) 385 1458 FAX (04) 385 1498 or email: mail@verve.co.nz

VINTAGE REPORT



MN goes to press before the end of the vintage, but mother nature has already shown enough of her hand for a preliminary assessment of the year 2000.

Kevin Judd reckons it's been a bit of a mixed bag. The summer was cooler than average and the weather during flowering was pretty indifferent, resulting in a disappointing berry set. Sauvignon blanc seems to have been hit hardest; yields are likely to be down by up to 30 per cent on 1999.

Cool conditions prevailed during January and it looked like it would be a late season. But then someone found the heater knob and conditions reverted to a more typical Marlborough summer. Harvest commenced in mid-March after a hot dry February and all the vineyards are in excellent condition. The pickers' fingers and toes are crossed.

THE OTHER DAY

...I was talking to a colleague about this, that and the other. He mentioned in passing that he was in a syndicate that owned a race horse.

I respect this bloke's business acumen, so I led him a bit further on the subject of his nag.

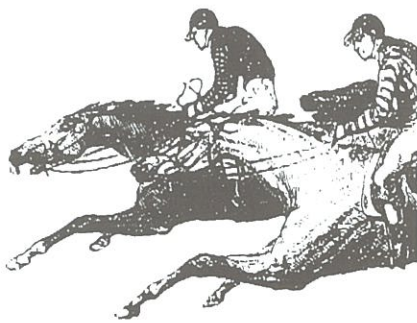
It turned out that the horse, Dangling Slack (not his real name to protect the innocent, but close), was running at Flemington in Melbourne, and was a sure bet. How sure? I asked.

'Well,' said my friend, 'the last three starts he's had the anchor out and that's so we can get a run with no lead in the saddle bags. He's a sure winner, mate, no worries.'

I'm not a betting man usually, but for some reason I recalled the words from a country and western song – something like, 'I never knew a winner who hadn't placed a bet...'

I was ready to be a winner so I resolved to place a bet.

But then my friend, who was now quite excited, blew my optimism to smithereens.



'Bruce', he said 'We're so sure about this one, we've asked my old man to give the winner's acceptance speech.'

All over red rover, I said to myself. If there's just one thing I've learnt about the winning game it is this: Don't prepare speeches before the event.

However, being a loyal sort, I decided to back old Dangling Slack anyway.

So on the Saturday I showed up at my local which has a Pub TAB and a big TV screen. Someone showed me how to fill out the card and feed it into the machine. And I shelled out \$40.

We watched a couple of races in Brisbane and one in Perth, and then they were running in Race 5 at Flemington.

Now, I know enough about the gee-gees to be worried when the race caller fails to mention your nag. It's an even bigger worry when the nag doesn't even show up in the TV long shots. Dangling Slack was at the wrong end of the pack and that's where he finished the race.

Later, I phoned my mate for an explanation. He quoted the jockey. 'I jumped him well, he went to sleep beautifully but he never woke up!'

So that's it for me as a betting man. Forty dollars buys a great bottle of wine and that makes me a winner every time.

And you can guess what happened on the next Saturday. Yessiree, Dangling Slack came home.

Cheers,
Bruce Lees

Adventures in Paradise

Kevin Judd spent part of the summer in the Cook Islands under a Pacific palm tree – a tough assignment.

A spray of dust lifts off the runway as our 15-seater prop-jet touches down on a seemingly huge, white strip that appears to sever the top off this adventure island. Dredged from the lagoon bed by the Americans in WWII, the runway's compacted mixture of powdered coral is an impressive achievement, and can easily accommodate a Hercules or the occasional 737.

Kia Orana...welcome to Aitutaki, a 50-minute flight north of Rarotonga in the Cook Islands in the Pacific Ocean, the remnant of a once mountainous volcanic island. Over millions of years the volcano gradually eroded and sank while coral polyps grew around the perimeter, eventually forming the triangular reef that today contains the atoll-like collection of motu (narrow, coral sand island cays). Subsequent volcanic activity, just one million years ago, formed the main island of Aitutaki that now covers some 20 square kilometres and sits to one side of the huge turquoise lagoon.

There are no signs of an international airport here, just one solitary palm-thatched terminal building and a couple of sheds. However, during the '50s the lagoon was an aquatic landing strip for the giant Solent flying boats of TEAL (Tasman Empire Airlines, the forerunner of Air New Zealand), a desolate stopover for refuelling on the 'Coral Route' between Auckland and Tahiti.

There are a mere 1800 inhabitants on Aitutaki, incredibly friendly, carefree people who seem to thrive on their subsistence living, farming the deep, red soils with crops of arrowroot and taro, with scattered plots of pawpaw and bananas.

The entire island is inundated with the prolific coconut palm, a versatile plant that not only serves as a food source, but also provides the thatching material for the traditional houses. Nothing is wasted – even the coconut shells are cut in half and used for bra cups.

This varied agricultural landscape is also the home of wild domestic pigs, chickens and Aitutaki land crabs.

In the words of Alan Maki, shopkeeper, concrete block maker, organic beef farmer and importer of many foodstuffs, 'You simply can't starve or get lost here.'

This broad-shouldered, happy Aitutakian was once an export representative of Watties New Zealand and has an eye for an opportunity. So on returning home, he established an import arm for the family business. Shipments occasionally include supplies of Cloudy Bay.



Tropical cooler.

So where does the Cloudy Bay go? By some weird coincidence, our destination – the Aitutaki Lagoon Resort, Cloudy Bay's sole Cook Islands customer. Occupying the entire coral sand Motu of Akitua, at the head of the lagoon, this resort is a true tropical island paradise.

'You simply can't starve or get lost here.'

ALAN MAKI

Palms stretch in every direction, reaching out over the lagoon, hibiscus and frangipani proliferate among the thatched cabins which are dotted along the shore.

Run by Steve Christian (a Norfolk Island native and direct descendent of Fletcher himself), this is not the resort for you if your expectations include a phone on the dunny wall and Sky TV. The rooms are reasonably basic but come with infallible, friendly service, great food and the most idyllic South Pacific setting. This is, as the slogan says, 'A Special Place'... an understatement if I ever heard one.



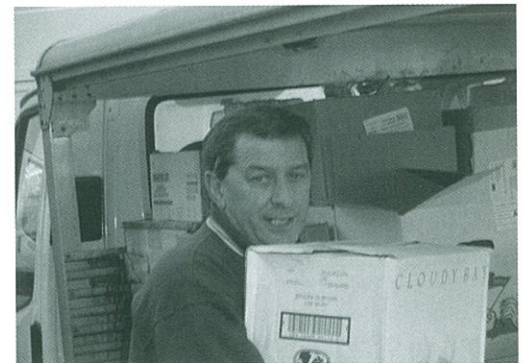
Cloudy Bay's Cook Island importer, Alan Maki.

MOTHER'S MILK

These days most of the milk we drink comes in cartons from the supermarket. The milko is a rare sight. Unless of course you live 'round Hanover Square in London and know Dave 'the Milk' Glover.

According to expat Kiwi Don Hewitson, proprietor of the infamous Cork and Bottle wine bars in Hanover and Leicester Squares, he's a helpful chap, especially on 'Cloudy Bay days.' They're the ones when Dave dabbles in a bit of diversification, changing his load from 'Dairy Crest' to equally healthy bottles of Cloudy Bay and Pelorus.

Imagine the surprise of Cloudy Bay's London salesman Simon Gotelee when he was told the empty shelves would soon be stocked by the milko. Tall story, said Simon. Then right on cue, in trudged Dave with his precious non-dairy delivery. All in a day's work for a lateral-thinking Londoner!



Dave 'The Milk' Glover reckons a glass a day keeps the doctor away.

'Food without wine is a corpse; wine without food is a ghost; united and well matched they are as body and soul, living partners.'

ANDRÉ SIMON

HONED HOOTERS



Wine tasters make much of their palates, but it is really your hooter that does most of the work, and apparently it works best in your youth. The pundits maintain your sense of smell is in its prime in adolescence, a pity really because who could afford (or had heard of) a First Growth when they were in high school?

The Duellists

These unabashed musketeers – the not so honourable comedian, social commentator and leader of the 'Pull Yourself Together Party', Gary McCormick and the Right Honourable David Lange, entertained a happy crowd in Cloudy Bay's barrel hall last year.

Pithy political satire (and cheek-aching laughter) was the order of the day, stirred along with chilled glasses of sauvignon blanc. No self-respecting Gen-Xer with a pony-tail, boxer shorts and suitcase with wheels will ever think of Cloudy Bay in the same light again. But had there been a polling booth at the gate, McCormick and Lange would by now be running the country.



VALE JOCK



Jock and Susan Graham debate the merits of Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc.

a passion for grapes, he was the only non-producer Fellow of the Wine Institute of New Zealand, and a wine judge.

He and his widow, Susan, had helped foster the country's wine industry since the '60s when Susan first commissioned Jock as a contributor to the

The New Zealand wine industry is still too young to have cultivated very many 'grand old men of wine' – which is possibly why Jock Graham's death late last year touched so many.

Jock was fondly regarded and respected by winemakers and wine drinkers alike – because he understood wine from both sides of the bottle. A prominent journalist with

women's pages of the *New Zealand Herald*. His column continued for over 30 years – a no-fuss, intelligent commentary that charted the impressive growth of the industry over the past three decades.

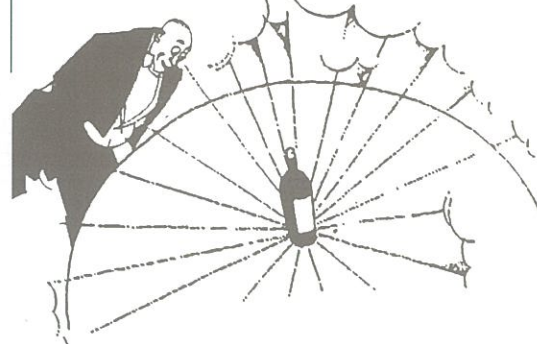
Jock, who was 87 years young, died at 11am on Armistice Day – and inadvertently scored a minute's silence. He would have enjoyed the irony.

CUTTING EDGE

Be your own sommelier with the elegant, functional Kalao wine knife. Made from stainless steel and aluminium, it has a micro-serrated blade and smooth lever action guaranteed to pull even the most troublesome corks. MN Special Offer price \$98 (inc. postage) on enclosed order form.



WEB WATCH



Cloudy Bay's marketing team have been keeping a weather eye on cyber space and reckon it's probably time to join the global paperless economy. So from this month you can catch us at the joint Cloudy Bay and Cape Mentelle Website. Log on for new release tasting notes, cellaring advice, winery news, distribution details and some good yarns from *Mentelle Notes*. But don't try to order your favourite CBV drop, as at this stage there will be no Internet sales facility. (Because we haven't found a foolproof way of delivering wine to Greenland.)

Find us at www.cloudybay.co.nz or www.capementelle.com.au

GOOD SUIT

MN isn't prone to puffery but exceptions can sometimes be made. Careful readers of *Decanter* may have noted that the 1999 Top Wines of the Year included no less than four from the CBV stable – *Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1998* and *Pelorus Vintage 1994* and *Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon 1994* and *Semillon Sauvignon Blanc 1998*.

GLOW JOB

If you haven't heard of bioluminescent bubbly before, you will soon. Apparently a Pennsylvania company

proposes to make a glow-in-the-dark fizz, just what the doctor ordered for midnight feasts.

The chemistry relies on luminous genes and the reaction of two chemicals – luciferin and luciferase. Both occur naturally in glow-worms and fireflies, compounds that can apparently be genetically engineered, then cultivated on bacterial media. Transfer to such useful, everyday items as hair gel, cake icing – and beverages – is apparently easy.

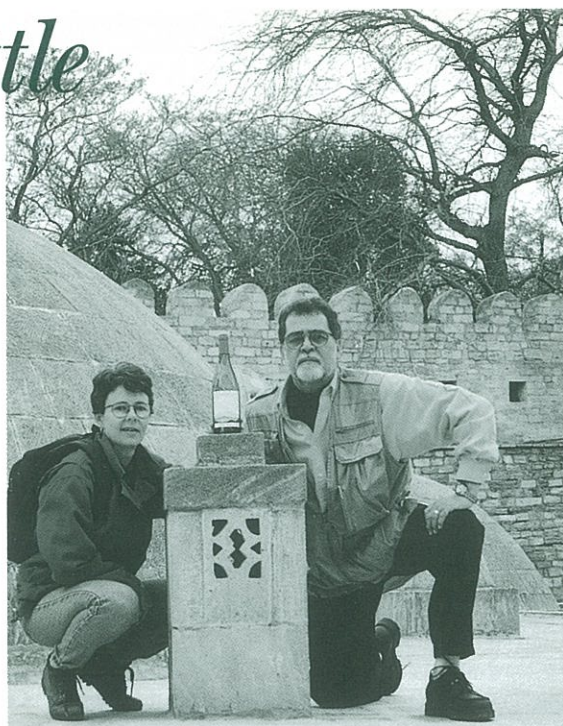
More importantly, the technique is said to be useful to surgeons to highlight cancer cells, or to military strategists to detect nerve gas. If only the widow Clicquot could get in on the act – we'd all be drinking orange Champagne.



Baku Bottle

The Mentelle Ambassador program has encountered some fairly far-flung Cloudy Bay bottles – they have turned up on polar ice floes, in African jungles, on remote islands – and even in helicopters. Amateur ambassadors will go a long way for a chance to win a case of Cloudy Bay.

The latest Mentelle Ambassadors are, ex-Picton resident Kirsty Burnett and her husband Bill, a real diplomat in Baku, Azerbaijan. For those needing a geography lesson, Azerbaijan lies on the Caspian Sea, sandwiched between Russia and Iran. Arab traders and oil magnates know exactly where it is – and like Kirsty, they probably know where to find the 6th century Turkish bath house, the backdrop to this winning ambassadorial photo.



Kirsty Burnett and husband Bill McKinley with their bottle of Baku bath 'oil'.

If you too wish to be part of CBV's export effort, keep your eyes peeled. Next time you're in some distant corner of the globe and spot a bottle of Cloudy Bay (or Cape Mentelle) – in a trattoria in Treviso, a cigar bar in Havana or the dining room of your

AUSSIE BOTTLERS

Keeping up with your viticulture can be a taxing business. Just when you've memorised viognier and verdelho, along comes sangiovese and his red Italian mates nebbiolo and barbera. They sound like they're related to mataro (which the French know as mouvedre) and tarrango, the latter being the clever creation of the Australian scientific research organisation, CSIRO.

Their scientists have been at it again. This time they've bred four new varieties – cienna, vermilion, rubienne and tyrian. The sire for these new grapes (which sound like paint chart colours) was sumoll, a grape from Barcelona which was crossed with cabernet sauvignon. Commercial bottlings and CBV plantings are a way off yet!

PUZZLE SOLVED

Here are the answers for MN's mental crossword puzzlers...

ACROSS:

1. Marcs 4. Blanc 7. Piper 9. Doona
10. India 11. Crackling pork
14. Petitioning 15. Clanging hints 19.
Loire 20. Debut 21. Dogma
22. Casks 23. Yield

DOWN:

1. Medoc 2. Rioja 3. Sparkling reds
4. Bring on the day 5. Audio 6. Crack
8. Positioning 12. Repel 13. Right
15. Colac 16. Acids 17. Noble 18. Sated

favourite club, buy it and take a photo. Then send it to The Editor, Mentelle Notes, PO Box 376, Blenheim. Taking a bottle with you is also highly commended and encouraged. MN will publish the best and most alluring photo and the winning Mentelle Ambassador will receive a FREE mixed case of CBV wine. All entrants receive a CB T-shirt.

VISITOR'S BOOK

Regular MN readers will recall last year's publication of *The Colour of Wine*, Kevin Judd's evocative photographic record of Marlborough's stunning vineyards. It is the ideal souvenir if you've tasted the beauty of the valley and its wines, and the perfect enticement if you haven't. Copies are available at the special MN readers' price of \$45 (including postage). Order soon on the enclosed order form or call the winery: PH (03) 520 9140 for stockist details

BOTTOMS UP

Australian folklorist Warren Fahey is fascinated by the traditions of toasting, the art of raising your glass with an accompanying witty ditty.

MN's editor feels sure there are plenty of readers just dying to see their favourite toast in print.

Here's one to get you going:

*'There are many good reasons for drinking –
And one has just entered my head:
If a man doesn't drink when he's living,
How the hell can he drink when he's dead!'*

MN will print a selection of the best entries. The winning toast will receive a six-pack of current wines. Send your entry to: Toasts, Cloudy Bay, PO Box 376, Blenheim or email: info@cloudybay.co.nz

Cloudy Bay Te Koko 1996

'A big, creamy wine with a whiff and lick of honeycomb embedded in its savoury hide. Bold stuff, lively and full to the brim with a salad of flavours that includes straw, linseed, aromatic oak...occasional tobacco and even a touch of lychees. Made with confidence and character, it is as suave and tempting as Fred Astaire with Ginger, but in full colour.'
Keith Stewart, THE LISTENER

'It is fruit salad in a glass but so much more. Te Koko is an outstanding expression of sauvignon blanc and this vintage has delicate floral aromas and flavours that last and last.'
Joëlle Thomson, CHRISTCHURCH PRESS

Pelorus

'If you can't get hold of a 1928 Bollinger, this will have to do instead.'
Tim Atkin, LIFE MAGAZINE, UK

'A prime candidate for the best wine of any type made in New Zealand... World class.'
Graeme Barrow, NORTHERN ADVOCATE

Pelorus NV

'A delicious wine...it's full yellow with a mature, buttery, smoky toasty-bread richness. It's still a very individual wine, tasting like a toned-down version of its elder brother.'
Huon Hooke, SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc

'Cloudy Bay continues to release lip-smacking sauvignon blanc like this '98.'
92 points, WINE SPECTATOR Top 100

'People say that Cloudy Bay in a good year is as good as a sauvignon blanc can get. I disagree. I think it is the best in the world.'
John Graham, SUNDAY TELEGRAPH, UK

'A zingy, gooseberry and passionfruit wine, with a crisp but not puckering finish. It leaves even the hardened 'just one glass of sauvignon' drinkers hankering for more.'
Brendan Burns, MARLBOROUGH EXPRESS

'Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 1997

'A good demonstration of why pinot is a drinking rather than a tasting wine. Has plenty of weight, extract and concentration. The nose reveals a generous quota of toasty oak and it's developing nice gamey overtones. Delicious with quail risotto.'
Huon Hooke, SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon 1995

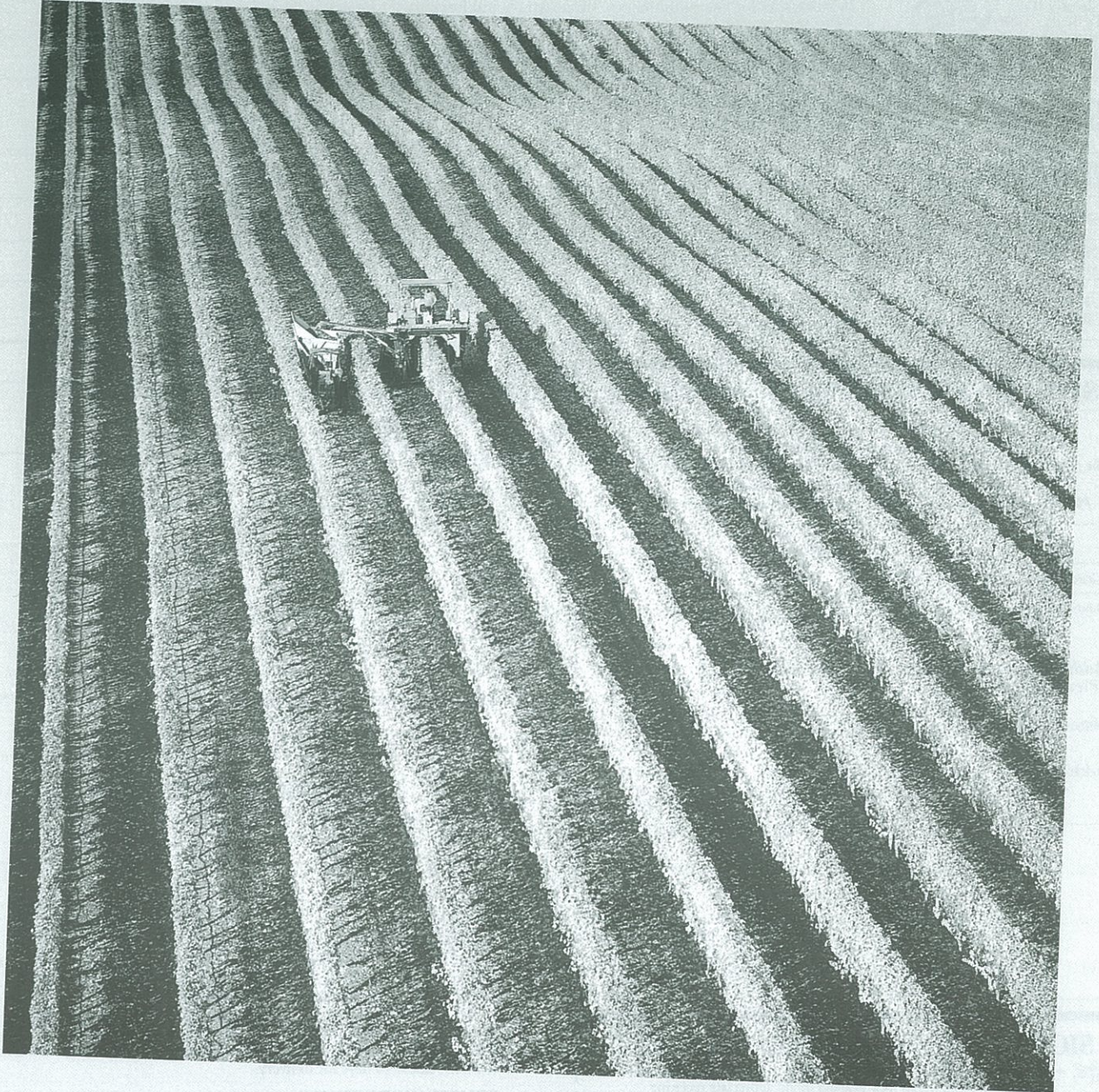
'I almost went mental (sorry) when I tasted the 1995 Cape Mentelle cabernet. At last, a truly remarkable cabernet with plenty of grunt... If you are serious about collecting one of Australia's great wines, this is a must have.'
Douglas Neal, DIVINE

'Blackcurrant fruit pervades with herbaceous notes, the palate full of dark fruit is smooth and succulent, rich and dense; tannins need time.'
Wine of the Month, DECANTER

MENTELLE NOTES

is the free publication of
CLOUDY BAY & CAPE MENTELLE VINEYARDS
For further information please contact the winery
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A View from the Vineyard



‘Wine...is one of the most noblest cordials in nature.’

JOHN WESLEY

