

MENTELLE NOTES

(ANNIVERSARY WRAP)

THE NEWSLETTER OF CLOUDY BAY AND CAPE MENTELLE

Take Note

This edition marks the 20th Anniversary of Mentelle Notes. David Hohnen looks back.

Mentelle Notes is 20 years old. An event that I will add to a short list of 'I never thought I would see the day when...' which also includes buying water in plastic bottles and a cafe strip in Margaret River.

Our newsletter had its genesis in the Adelaide Terrace boardroom of a company controlled by my bother Mark, called Oceanic Equity. This was sometime in 1982. Oceanic had a portfolio of investments which included a bad one called Cape Mentelle Vineyards. Not unlike a lot of nice little wineries, this one was hoovering up capital while building an inventory of unsold wine. No marketing plan and no marketing expertise.

Oceanic had among their bright, young people a jovial Scot with marketing credentials from the USA called Guy Grant. He was seconded to CMV on a part-time basis with the grand title of Marketing Director.

On whatever day in 1982, he had brought together a group of people with relevant experience for a think tank. Among a few good ideas (and some duds) that drew support was Guy's concept for a newsletter.

Our first newsletter was mailed that year offering a 1982 Rhine Riesling at \$5.50 a bottle and the infamous Lexia at \$5. It also introduced our now famous Dry Red for \$4 for a two-litre flagon which, thank God, made no mention of its origins.

Gradually, on an intermittent and sometimes tardy schedule *Mentelle Notes* gained circulation and contributed to our customer relations, communications and sales.

The first effort was a fairly shabby affair by professional standards but by the second we were getting our act together. We had a name for the newsletter, thanks to a floor painting



Thanks to Fairfax Photo Library, Mr Packer & Mr Murdoch.

Two media moghuls going Mentelle...

session on Guy's boat where, when asked for ideas, my brother Giles Hohnen hit instantly on *Mentelle Notes*.

‘When asked for ideas, my brother Giles Hohnen hit instantly on Mentelle Notes.’

MN also had a nifty A4 format complete with professional graphics courtesy of Perth designer Gary Mann, a mate of Giles' from art school days.

Guy wrote a significant portion of the copy and gave our rag his self-deprecating humour and wit. It set the style we have kept to this day, trying to inform without taking ourselves too seriously and bringing our readers a lighthearted view of industry-related matters in the world beyond the backyard.

Mentelle Notes was there in time to record dual Jimmy Watson wins and in 1985 the beginning of Cloudy Bay. This required a remake of the masthead and ultimately, a remake of the Cape Mentelle label bringing it into line with the Cloudy Bay brand image.

It also recorded the 'merger' with Veuve Clicquot but that significant news was relegated to page two.

Sometime in 1987 the Hohnen brothers (Mark and David) were having a bit of to and fro. Who was it that said, 'thank God for family, otherwise we'd have to fight with strangers'?

Continued inside...

IN THIS ISSUE...

- Mentelle Notes Turns 20!
- Taking Pride in Pinot & the Big Day Out!
- Morris Gleitzman does Zinful Things
- Collecting Corkscrews
- Tasting Techniques
- Island Escapes

TAKE NOTE continued...

The upshot of that little disagreement was that, in 1988, Cape Mentelle's majority ownership changed and Guy Grant was given the option of part-time employment with a mob that loved him but paid him nothing, or staying with a crowd that drove him nuts but paid him well. He made the second and very sensible decision and stayed with the day job.

'Mentelle Notes was there in time to record dual Jimmy Watson wins.'

The March 1988 edition was Guy's last and ironically it included an interview with him by his friend Tony Thorne, still a good read if you have the issue.

We staggered on for an edition but it was obvious the journal would not survive long without professional management.

We sought assistance from journalist Jane Adams, who had recently set herself up as a marketing and communications consultant based in our largest market, Sydney.

Jane had worked with the ABC and *Weekend Australian*, notably on the Indulgence page backing the late Geraldine Pascall. She's no laugh-a-minute practical joker but she is a thorough professional with a good sense of humour. We might not have admitted it at the time but we were overdue for deadline discipline and Jane doesn't really subscribe to a laid-back approach. So our subsequent editions met schedule with Germanic precision.

Mentelle Notes had always incorporated articles from outsiders including some of our better wine journalists. Jane took us a step further and over the years our pages have been enhanced by contributions from people like Clement Freud, Peter Mayle, Tim Winton and versatile children's author, Morris Gleitzman. These pieces are invariably accompanied by a cartoon – Dean Alston in earlier days and currently, Neil Matterson.

In 1991 the newsletter underwent a complete redesign. It introduced the dolphin logo, a concept Jane hit upon in the shower (a source of many good ideas she tells us) which would ultimately become a common logo linking both wineries, as well as the prime label graphic for Pelorus, subsequently released in the May 1992 edition.

The revamp utilised high-quality paper and duo-tone photographic reproductions including the wacky and welcome contributions from our roving *Mentelle* Ambassadors.

Where the cover shot had invariably been a bottle, we ventured more laterally with illustrative photos. Kevin Judd, now as famous a photographer as he is a winemaker, gained his first public exposure with pics he contributed to MN.

An ongoing and essential element of *Mentelle Notes*, nurtured by Jane, is the content from people within the company, notably the cheeky Cellar Rat (aka Gerald Johnson at Cloudy Bay) and Ed Lines from our London-based Marketing Director, Edward Berry.

In October 1994 *Mentelle Notes* expanded to eight pages. This facilitated more news and in the July edition, a more detailed review of older red vintages.

So here we are in March 2002. I have missed the deadline as usual but I won't unplug the phone. The Editor has mellowed in recent years and I haven't been chivvied for quite a while. Nevertheless, I will be living on the edge until this copy is filed.

Where to now? Well, I'm sure the Editor has lots of ideas but if we have a problem we will just tell her to take a shower.

ED'S NOTE: Little did I realise that when David Hohnen called me back in 1988 I'd be going *Mentelle* for fifteen years...

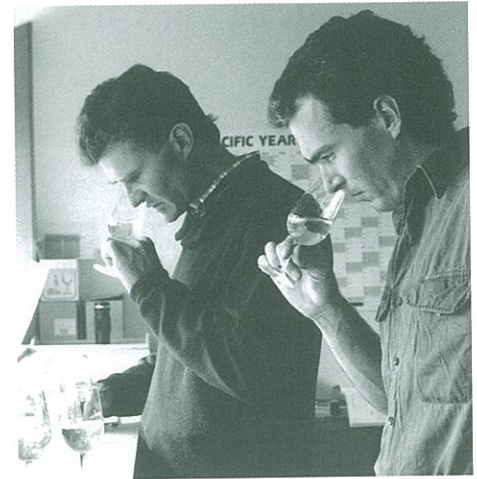
Every issue has been great fun.

Thanks to all the contributors in-house and out; to Jo Cooper at Broad Concepts, Belinda Henwood, and Paul Franc at Contact Printing who have made my role relatively seamless.

Thanks too to the many MN readers whose feedback makes it all worthwhile. Rest assured I'm taking plenty of showers in order to maintain MN's standards. Oh, and you may be surprised to know that MN's international circulation now surpasses several noted wine magazines. Rupert and Kerry watch out!



Joseph Henriot, then CEO of Clicquot and David Hohnen discuss the deal that ended up on page 2 (1990).



Hohnen and Judd stick their noses in it (aka blending at Cloudy Bay, 1989).

The 'Jimmy'
'So when young Lochinvar Hohnen rode out from the West and captured our trophy (the Jimmy Watson) there was considerable reaction.'

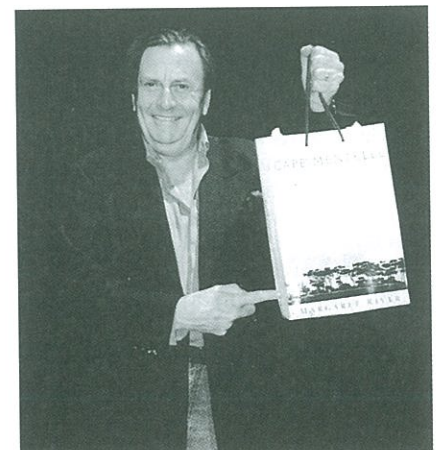
MARK SHIELD, 1983



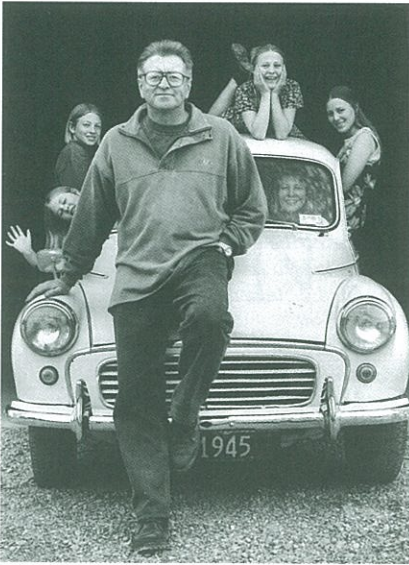
Ivan Sutherland and Sue Pilcher partaking of the Stein Fairy's visit to Cloudy Bay, 1990.

Truths
'One of the first wine regions with which I fell instantly in love in 1985 was Margaret River.'

ROBERT JOSEPH



Barry Humphries has CMV in the bag, 1999.



James Healy and the Morris that's still a family icon, 1998.

Various vinous soothsayers have predicted the world will tire of cabernet given the rash of international plantings.

MICHAEL HILL SMITH MW, 1991

CM Magnums:

Most enjoy only a short life. Opened, empty and forgotten quicker than a bad hangover, they end their days on a lonely council rubbish tip...

1983



Michael Palin with his lifetime supply of Cloudy Bay Chardonnay, 1997.

Mental Notes

Wine is all about mental notes. They're what you mean to scribble down and never do, as a particularly noteworthy bottle is whisked away from the table.

MICHAEL PALIN, 1998

MW's Good Taste

I am so guggestible that I can instantly pick up in a wine any characteristic merely hinted at by someone else.

JANCIS ROBINSON MW, 1989



Stitch (aka John Stutchbury) strips for Jancis Robinson MW, Marlborough Sounds, 1995.

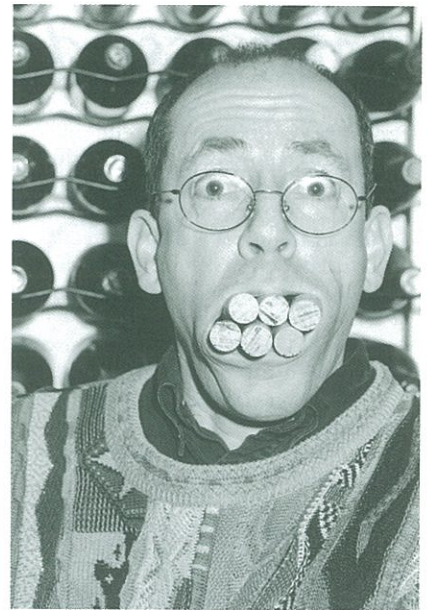
Wine drinkers are true hedonists.

PHILIP CLARK, 1999

Juddism

Méthode Champenoise is a dreadful term, it sounds like a birth control technique.

KEVIN JUDD, 1988



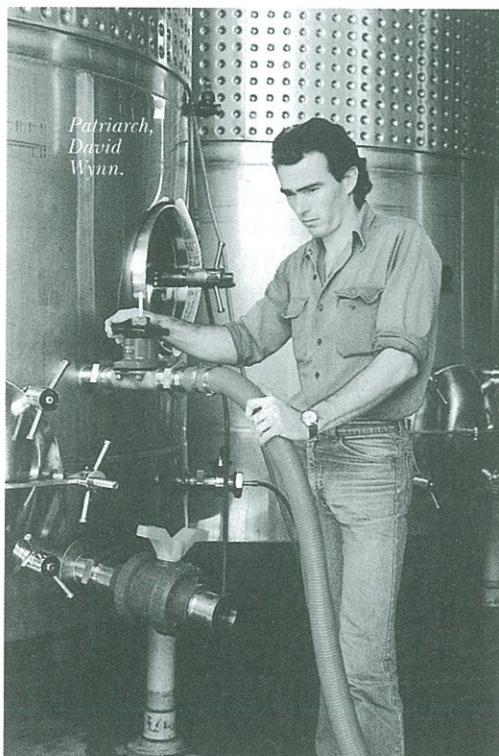
Morris Gleitzman, corked, 2000.

I struggled with the concept of keeping a bottle of red longer than the drive home from the shop.

MORRIS GLEITZMAN, 1997

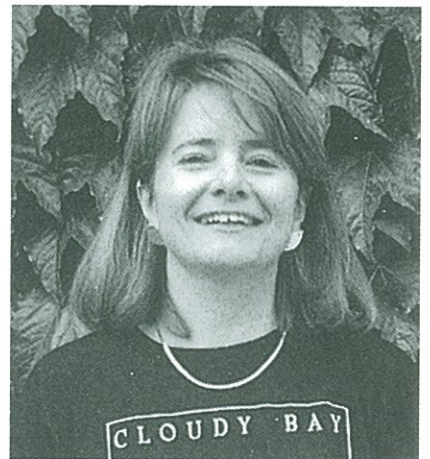


Edward Berry of Ed Lines fame, before he got serious, 1992.



Patriarch, David Wynn.

Juddy's long hose, 1987.



The Ed...not telling when!

Zinful Things

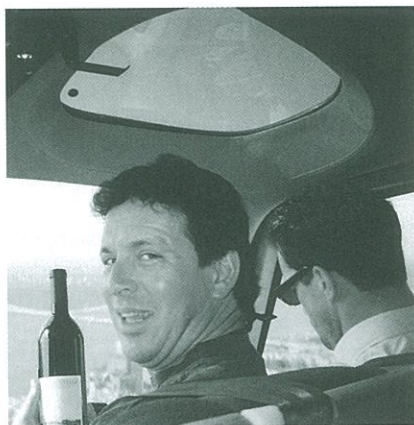
Zin is the only wine we allow the rusty old hype machine used by the CMV marketing team to really go to town on.

1985

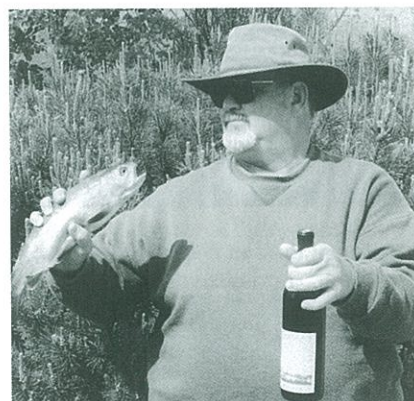
Ambassador Hall of Fame

For at least a decade Mentelle Ambassadors have been roving the globe, discovering hidden treasure and Cape Mentelle and Cloudy Bay bottles in the most remote and obscure locations. From Antarctica to the deserts of Arabia, from Indian beaches to Andean high peaks, aspiring MN ambassadors have proved themselves to be a most intrepid lot.

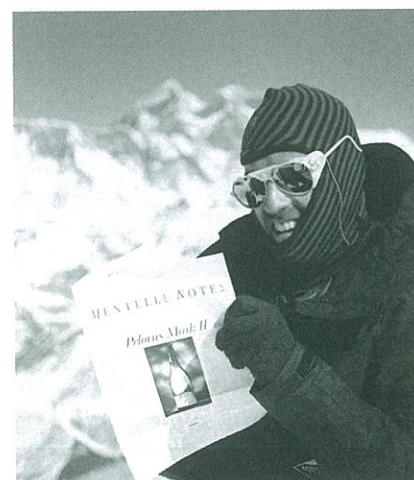
Others have opted to leave home clutching their most prized possessions – and carefully packed ambassadorial bottles. Corks have been pulled atop construction cranes in Hong Kong, in helicopters over Manhattan and Tibetan temples.



Geoff Midalia coptering over Manhattan.



Ed Rogers from Perth was brave enough to kiss a fish.



Himalayan mountaineer Colin Bald cheated but we forgave him due to the lofty altitude.

Ice floes, camels and penguins have proved popular props, so too have shady palm trees and warm, tropical waters.

Congratulations to all MN's adventurers and successful ambassadors. Your diplomatic missions have undoubtedly done more for international relations than the UN and CHOGM combined.

To mark the 20th Anniversary of *Mentelle Notes* we have appointed several of our most talented ambassadors to the Mentelle Hall of Fame.

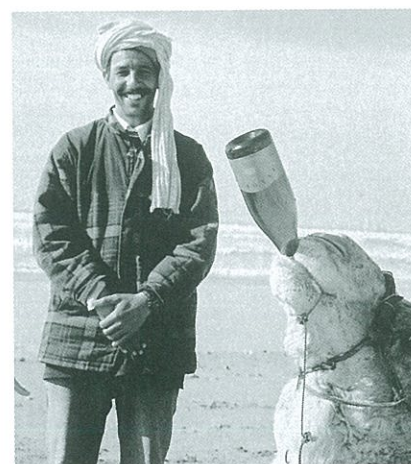
Hall of famers will each receive a spanking new T-shirt and bottle of *Pelorus 1993*. Please all take a bow!



Ornithologist Alan Rogers flying high on the Galapagos Islands.



Tony and Caroline Vincin sank to great depths.



And last but not least – the very discerning Egyptian camel.

THE CELLAR RAT

Dearest Mentelles,

Twenty years of MN! You could have bowled me over with a pinot gris, when MN's Editor told me that.

The Rat came on board around 1990 with the Editor's directive to 'tell us what it's like to be a cellar rat', so since that first Rat File I've talked about everything but being a Rat.

Looking back through the old MNs has brought back some great memories of people and wines. Most, if not all those efforts fuelled by 12 to 14% Alc. and James screaming 'This is great Rat, I'll get another bottle.'

The 'Wine writers as dog breeds' was unbelievably epic. I can still see us, tears streaming down our faces, nearly sick from laughing so much and marvelling at how red wine could possibly be coming out nose, ears and tear ducts.

One day I'll put out *The Rat Uncut*. It'll come with a bottle of CMV Zinfandel or maybe a CD by Derek and Clive. Then again maybe not.

The Rat didn't think anyone other than my Mum (hi Mum) actually read the Rat, until a group of very nice people from Taupo called into the winery and wanted a photo and autograph. What nice people.

Then there are the people you wish had never read it. I mean to say guys, it's just a bit of fun, a laugh. You can take a joke, can't you?

OK, so it wasn't James who got our wine wrong in a tasting and Ivan your crop estimates have always been spot on. Hell, let's not let the truth get in the way of a good yarn.

Twenty years of MN...

You should have laid a few down; no not in your bird cage. Looking through the archives the Rat was amazed at the number of people who appeared in MN's pages, both famous and well, ordinary.

We've had more cricketers than you could poke a stump at, wine writers, wine makers, foodies, chefs, rugby players, grape growers, babies, dead dogs and the odd one or two who fit all of the above.

The one common thread that's joined them has been their love of wine and life. Oh, and not being too worried if MN's Editor took the piss out of them. I mean to say, what self-respecting pinotophile would be seen dead wearing viking horns and a black eye?

Oh yeah, and I think it's time we updated that photo of Juddy, it must be ten years old.

So MN...Happy Birthday! You're a great read. (Yes, Winston, I can read.) My favourite issue? The next, of course!

Love, Light & Peace,

Gerald

PS. This one's for Jane, Spike, Waylon & Nugget.