

MENTELLE NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF CLOUDY BAY AND CAPE MENTELLE

Drawing Other Blancs

Award-winning international wine writer Matthew Jukes takes a swig of Kiwi Sauvignon Blanc...

I recently spent three weeks in New Zealand touring, judging and tasting. The most bizarre question I was asked (in an interview of all places) was, 'Which new grape varieties should be planted in New Zealand?'

My first reaction was to stifle a snigger. I took the question rather too seriously and came up with fiano, albariño, gros manseng, teroldego and marzemino – quirky, coolish climate and ridiculously intellectual – the grapes, not me.

There is lots of fun to be had with weird and wonderful grape varieties, not least keeping your viticultural team permanently irritated and your accountant's temperature near boiling point. I should have kept my mouth shut, because I then had to spend the next ten minutes back-tracking, trying to explain that you Kiwis have enough on your plates already.

'Concentrate on what you're already doing', I pleaded. My lament is fully justified. New Zealand is famous throughout the globe for cracking sauvignon blanc's code, but complacency is creeping in, so what should be done?

One thing blindingly obvious is New Zealand's complete dependency on this wonderful variety. It is a 'door-opener', I heard over and over again.

Whether you hail from Waiheke Island, Hawke's Bay or Kumeu, sauvignon blanc is seemingly fundamental to the commercial success of your operation.

The geographical challenges of trucking and training (by rail, as opposed to wire) grapes from Marlborough to all-corners of both islands is commonplace. So why, when you get it to its destination, do you drop the ball?

Many have said that a number of 2004 wines ended up stretched and green, with dilute flavours and a general lack of true varietal precision.



Matthew Jukes judges sauvignon blanc.

Pic: Courtesy Marlborough Express.

(Australia is decades ahead by comparison) it is in danger of squandering its considerable sauvignon advantage over the other world players.

My blindness to this precocity (I can now see the light) stems from the fact that in my very first job (1987 Barnes Wine Shop, London SW3) I saw one of the

very first vintages of Cloudy Bay hit the shelves.

I naturally assumed everyone was making great wine back then and these guys just had commercial nous and international contacts. What a shock when I realised the truth – Marlborough was one great big field back then, until a couple of neo-pioneers planted a handful of vines.

What has happened in the intervening twenty-odd years is phenomenal, but Marlborough must make sure that it doesn't lose this initial advantage.

One way of maximising the varietal fame that Marlborough has garnered (aside from not dropping the aforementioned ball) is to challenge the drinker further with new and intriguing versions of this, the most crowd-pleasing of grapes.

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I appreciate the fact that 2004 followed the very short 2003 vintage and everyone made hay (well, some might as well have done) while the sun shone. But with the Loire suffering from the steaming hot 2003 vintage and most Sancerres and Pouilly-Fumés tasting lardier than, well, a block of lard, you had everything to play for, with six months notice to boot.

'Marlborough's mantra should be – lower yields, sadistic viticulture and the most wistful amount of oak.'

Leaving aside the rather surprising number of new plantings sprouting out of every viable piece of turf in the Land of the Long White Cloud, my worry is that because New Zealand has a fledgling wine industry

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**NEW
RELEASE**

SOLO ACT

The Autumn harvest is a little lean in this issue of *Mentelle Notes*. Unlike previous years there is just one new release to whet your whistles – and what a sole act this is. Te Koko fans won't be disappointed with this exceptional wine, a complex alternative to conventional sauvignon blanc (and a big favourite with Matthew Jukes).

Whole bunches and de-stemmed grapes were pressed then racked straight into French oak barrels for a slow, spontaneous, indigenous yeast fermentation. It gurgled away till Christmas 2002 and was followed by a secondary malolactic fermentation. The wine was left on lees in barrel till October 2003 when it was racked before bottling the following Christmas.

DRAWING OTHER BLANCS continued

Cloudy Bay Te Koko is widely considered to be a trailblazing wine. Splitting the jury must be one of Kevin Judd's favourite games, as I adore the stuff, but I know a load of pals who just don't understand the wine. Having said this, I have old magnums of Cotat's Chavignol Sancerre in my cellar that were doing the same sort of thing Te Koko does today. (The 1986 and 1989 still look superb).

In Oz, Cape Mentelle's Wallcliffe also pushes the boundaries of our taste buds, albeit in a different direction, but I do find it a tad menacing on the palate.

Australia throws up a few other curve balls, and all of them good. John Edwards at The Lane in the Adelaide Hills, also shows us how it's done with his 2002 Gathering Sauvignon Blanc (17% semillon, half of which sees three months in one- to two-year-old French oak). This is a recipe that he has finessed, and it is a sensational wine.

Not content with the quest for newer, better-suited clones (F4V6 – lean, but tropical, *not* blowsy), they are also planting tiny parcels of muscadelle, which might or might not come in useful as a blending component to tweak the finished product even more. I love this stuff!

Northern Italy's finest also use sauvignon blanc very successfully as a component in a blend. Franz Haas (Alto Adige) takes sauvignon, riesling, traminer and a slice of barrel-fermented chardonnay to make his delectable Manna 'Cru'. It's a dream.

But this is not what I think the Kiwis should be doing. Marlborough's mantra should be – lower yields, sadistic viticulture and the most wistful amount of oak.



Te Koko might be considered a 'wild child' but she certainly gets plenty of attention, especially from winemaker Eveline Fraser, who wrote the following notes:

Cloudy Bay Te Koko 2002

'Released as a matured wine, Cloudy Bay Te Koko 2002 is a richly textured, alternative style of sauvignon blanc. Luscious aromas of lychee and almond intermingle with green gooseberry and a trace of wood smoke. The weighty palate offers a delicious medley of tangy citrus, crème caramel and nougat flavours, and a long, lingering finish.'

Sensitive oaking, as well as sauvignon's compatibility with semillon is dragging this 'ladies-who-lunch' variety out of the brasserie and into our cellars. Collectable sauvignon blanc – not as ludicrous as it may seem – is starting to gather momentum in our minds.

Domaine A (Tasmania's most intriguing estate) makes a Lady A Fumé Blanc (oaked Sauvignon) that makes Domaine de Chevalier look pedestrian. As does Vanya Cullen's beauty in Margaret River. Talking of which, Suckfizzle Sauvignon Semillon 2002 is a triumph against adversity. It wears a mighty oaky cloak, but carries it off with catwalk ease.

Now, one thing that is amiss in Australia is the lack of single varietal sauvignons at the ultra-top end. In my Top 100 Australian Wines of 2004, there was not one straight sauvignon blanc (and only two blends made the cut).

On the basis that you can do whatever you want in Marlborough – for goodness sake, hillside pioneer Mike Eaton's TerraVin Cabernet Merlot Malbec is a sign that viticulture can really perform miracles – it is time that Marlborough reached for the stars and started to shore up its position and repel invaders. If you think you are the best sauvignon region in the world, act like it.

Having said that, as all (or maybe just half?) of the readers of this missive know, *Cloudy Bay Te Koko* has already cracked it. Oh, and Kevin knows a lot about dogs. C'mon, you must have seen the new book...

Matthew Jukes was a guest judge at the 2004 New Zealand Wine Awards. He writes for the Daily Mail Weekend Magazine; is the author of the UK's best-selling wine guide The Wine List 2005 and the palate behind the cult wine website www.matthewjukes.com.

DRY TANK

Mother Nature isn't always at her beneficent best, and she certainly was out of sorts in 2003 when she dished up two severe spring frosts, one in October and another in November, thwarting even the most vigilant viticulturists and teams of helicopters.

The cumulative effect was simply that Marlborough's 2003 harvest (and Cloudy Bay's) was down 50% on expected yield. The optimists would see it as a glass half full...others, the glass very, very empty. (Accountants fall into the second bracket.)

To maintain availability of your favourite Cloudy Bay wines, the marketing department has waved magic wands to reallocate stocks of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir 2002 and decided to delay the NZ release of *Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 2003* and *Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 2003* till 1 July, 2005. Rest assured both wines are worth waiting the extra few months – the modest 2003 crop has delivered wines with terrific fruit intensity and flavour profiles.

TOTALLY SCREWED



There is undoubtedly still debate within the global wine industry on the topic of closures. That's code for – to cork or not to cork the bottle, and

increasingly many wine companies, including some French traditionalists, are opting not to.

Australian and New Zealand winemakers have led the charge for the screwcap, a convenient alternative that offers consistency compared to cork.

At the outset Cloudy Bay sat on the fence, half the cellar door allocation of 2002 Sauvignon Blanc went under screwcap seals, half stayed with cork. We tested market reactions to both closures, read the research papers, and ran comparative tastings and lab tests on bottles sealed with both methods. The verdict? Go the screwcap.

First off the rank was the *Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 2003* – screwcaps went to many major export markets. Since then the UK joined up, and the 2005 release will be entirely under screwcap.

Subsequently, the other wines in the company's portfolio will move to screwcap closures. *Cloudy Bay Chardonnay* and *Pinot Noir 2004* are next off the rank in early 2006, followed by *Te Koko 2004*. The aim is to have all wines sold in all markets bottled minus corks by 2008. So save all those corkscrews, they will soon become valuable collectors' items.

Around the World in 28 Days

The 20th Vintage of Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc took Kevin Judd, Eveline Fraser and Siobán Harnett on a whirlwind global tour. Back home in Blenheim Kevin filed this report.



The chefs at Per Se in New York prepare the last supper.

Just the other day I was summonsed into my 15-year-old son's mate's car, his restricted licence meant I was needed as driver chaperone...one of the few things capable of overriding parental aversion.

A fairly sporty little number that had clearly undergone some cosmetic surgery. As I settled into the back seat I realised my memory cells were going through a time warp. This was a little Japanese machine, no surf racks on the roof and the guys in the front didn't have long hair...but my mind spun straight to my old FE Holden.

There is nothing more powerful than the sense of smell to trigger memory cells. I soon realised this Toyota Corolla smelt exactly like my first car.

'How old is this car?' 'An '86.' Ahhh, 1986 was the first year we crushed grapes in our brand new winery. Then the horror set in. I had always considered my old Holden a decrepit beast.

Yep, 20 years will see a car go from having that familiar 'brand new' aroma to a savoury and complex matured odour – and can also make a few changes to a winemaker's appearance and lifestyle. (I judged an amateur winemakers' show once and found a wine that smelt just like the inside of an old Holden.)

Back in '86, life in Marlborough was relatively simple. Tanks, barrels, grapes and gumboots; a Renwick pie for lunch was a treat and if we really splashed out, a bowl of spaghetti at Rocco's was about as flash as it got.

So, here I was in Melbourne 20 years later, at Circa in the Prince of Wales Hotel, addressing a gathering of trade and media, rubbing shoulders with the illustrious Mr Halliday and the Melbourne *Age's* formidable Jeni Port – not something they prepared us for at Roseworthy, nor dining on Smoky Bay oysters, goats cheese agnolotti and roast saddle of lamb.

Dave Hohnen always said 'if you do a good job of making wine for long enough, you'll end up marketing the stuff as well.' Seems he was right.

Whisked from the familiar surroundings of the magnificent Marlborough landscape and the serenity (well, maybe not always that serene) of our well-established cellars, this was the first event of a four-week whiz around the globe to hail the release of our 20th Vintage.

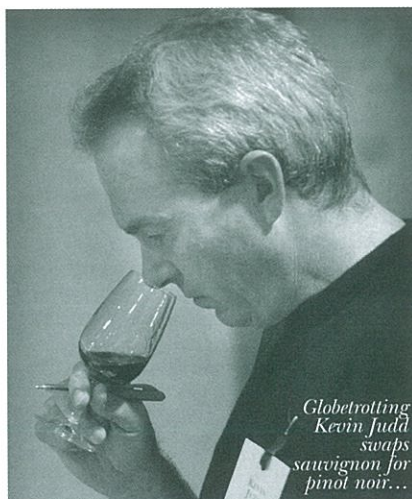
Up to Sydney where the team at Wildfire did us proud. Crayfish ravioli, seared tuna tacos and lemon tart with candied capsicum. Tastings, trade calls, a media dinner, then back to Melbourne for a five-course consumer dinner; then briefly back across the Tasman.

'If we really splashed out, a bowl of spaghetti at Rocco's was about as flash as it got.'

A Wellington launch at the Boatshed, followed by lunch by Ruth Pretty Catering. More oysters, this time from the Clevedon Coast, whitebait fritters and duck rillettes. Media interviews, and a huge vertical tasting with Regional Wines.

Next, off to Auckland for another big trade and media tasting at the Maritime Museum, more interviews. Then back to Marlborough to check emails, and a feed of egg and chips. Around the World in how many days???

Back in the air to Hong Kong – to a photo exhibition (of 20 of my images for child cancer) and a tasting at the Fringe Club, dinner rubbing shoulders with the city's elite. Next day's menu – goose with plum sauce and thousand-year eggs at Yung Kee, more interviews, lunch at Tung Lok Hin with Lau Chi-Sun, editor of Hong Kong's only real wine magazine, *Winenow*, and more glorious food...



Globetrotting Kevin Judd swaps sauvignon for pinot noir...

superior consommé with fish maw and pickled sea cucumber, steamed large sea crab with chicken fat and Hua Diao wine, and finally pork and hairy crab roe.

Next stop Singapore. Do not check in; go directly from Changi to a media lunch, mandatory interviews, and another 20th Vintage vertical, followed by dinner at Whitebait and Kale. The sauvignon blanc matched menu featured sea urchin with shiitake tempura, scallops with saffron, and confit of abalone.

Next day at 30,000 feet en route to Heathrow. Oh it's Sunday, a day to recoup.

Monday dished up lunch at Mosimanns, exemplary tucker – Scottish salmon sashimi style, roast breast of guinea fowl, and Anton's bread and butter pudding. (You've never had pud like this.)

Pardon while I loosen my belt...then a trade dinner at 1 Lombard Street, press interviews, trade visits, another dinner at L'Etranger. Sweet dreams of Alka Seltzer before a big vertical tasting with the UK's illustrious Circle of Winewriters, then off to dinner at Foxhills Golf Club in Surrey, long-time Pelorus devotees.

Back to Heathrow, flit up to Edinburgh for a press lunch on-board the *Royal Yacht Britannia*, gravadlax of Loch Duart salmon, then the most amazing seafood platter – langoustines, roll mops, marinated scallops eased down with another media call and a fabulous dinner at Malmaison.



Britannia's seafood extravaganza.

Weekend off. Time to take a few pics of vineyards in Surrey – then up and away to the Big Apple.

US Election Day '05 spent on the road in New Jersey. Rats, a 35-acre Monet-themed sculptural oasis, Hamilton Farm Golf Club and a quick lunch at The Frog and Peach. Winemaker's dinner at Serenade in Chatham. That's USA, not Kent.

A few days in the biggest of all smokes, where no one seems very happy after the election. Then lunch at Aquagrill where oysters are the go go! Zip off to Zachy's, with one of the best NZ wine selections in New York.

Grand finale time at Per Se, Thomas Keller's (of Napa Valley French Laundry fame) new restaurant on Columbus Circle overlooking Central Park. A vertical tasting for a salubrious audience of press and trade and then – the last lunch...

Poached quail egg with black truffle sabayon, Maine Peeky Toe crab salad, Kiwi John Dory *cuit à la vapeur*, Niman Ranch pork loin with wine poached apples, *temptation au chocolat, noisette et lait...*

Someone has to do this stuff, sure, but when I got home, it was straight down to the Renwick butcher – for a steak and kidney pie, followed by a large custard tart.

The End (really).

PS Space constraints and a salivating editor regrettably restrict details of several other meals.

Ed's Note: Kevin has joined Weightwatchers.

Sail Away

It takes a lot to get Mentelle Notes' editor away from her desk. But the chance to spend Australia Day at sea was truly tempting.

Captain Cook, the sailor who gave Cloudy Bay its name and later discovered Australia (or was it the other way round?), would have approved. The moon was almost full, a giant orb illuminating Sydney's famous harbour with silver shimmers, a great natural light show for those few of us who braved a chill wind to see our cruise liner (aptly named the *Silver Cloud*) sail through the Heads. It won hands down over the giant disco ball suspended from the Bridge, a leftover from New Year's Eve.

Two hundred and thirty five years later, or thereabouts, we retraced some of Cook's journey, up the coast to Brisbane. Now, there is no comparison between the *Endeavour* and the *Silver Cloud*, but that didn't stop us overnight sailors feeling intrepid, especially in the big cyclonic swell that greeted us on Australia Day morning. It was almost enough (but not quite) to put one off the silver service poached eggs served with seamless flair by Paolo.

Captain Cook probably didn't have handrails to cling to, and certainly no stabilisers. Both innovations helped us reach the Panorama Lounge to hear patriotic sentiments from one of Australia's retired larrikin politicians, Don Chipp, augmented by cricketing hero, Bobbie Simpson. They too were headed north.

Nationalism duly feted, it was time to find diversions on a bad sailing day. Common sense suggested the preferred position was to remain seated. One option was a pedicure at the Mandara Spa, the other a wine tasting with sommelier Jean Jacques Jorissen. The toes could wait.

So, there we were, with stage curtains swaying disconcertingly at least 25 degrees between port and starboard, four crystal glasses filled with two anonymous whites, and a duo of reds.

Try holding three glasses while you nose the aromas of the fourth. Keep a tight grip, while you try to bring this glass to your lips, sipping fast before the next lurch.

Is it a chardonnay or sauvignon blanc, asks **[[[**? Too late, it's gone down the hatch, swallowed for safety's sake.

Smacked of Sancerre to me, a bit flinty and briny, (or did someone leave a port hole open?) that typical restrained French approach to sauvignon blanc. It was. Next up another white, more golden, richer palate weight, overt oak treatment. Could it be Australian? Or Californian? Silversea has its HQ in Florida, so I opt for the latter. Bingo.

Just two to go. We pitch and heave and some faint-hearted tasters stagger off to their cabins. (Ooops, cabins to Cook, deluxe suites to us.)



In the mood for a merlot?

It's a red. Concentrate hard, try not to spill on white linen slacks and matching deck loafers. Even in dim light it looks garnet, see-through and bright not dense blackberry, so it could be a pinot. But the nose is deceptive.

[[[grabs a tilting bottle but his prompts keep coming. Could it be from South Africa, Italy or California? Did Cook go anywhere near there? If it's pinot, it's not true to type. Nor does it conform to the obvious. No pepper hints of shiraz, or dark berries and tobacco for cabernet. Wait on, there is a hint of the latter, but it's probably just the cigar smoke of a Texan oil magnate that's permeated the upholstered armchair.

I give in, and discover it's Californian merlot. (Obviously our sommelier hadn't seen the movie *Sideways* before he chose the wines.) The tasting team has dwindled but the Aussie contingent is holding out in the back row – long enough to spot the Lehmann Barossa Shiraz from 10 paces. We must be in line to win an alarm clock. No, only a souvenir silver biro, scant proof of unswerving (almost) stamina at sea.

Curiously, Australia Day is marked by an Italian theme black tie dinner. Carpaccio, gnocchi with sage butter, osso bucco primavera are all offered, plus an appealing *costate d'agnello al forno*, aka a true nationalist's herb-crusted lamb rack, perfectly pink and just what Captain Cook probably ordered from his bosun.

It could have been a good match with any of the *Silver Cloud's* Italian stallions – Sassicaia, Ornellaia, various Barolos and Valpolicella. Sommelier **[[[** oversees a handsome cellar boasting many of the wine world's best – from Bordeaux First Growth Chateaux, Burgundy, Spain, California, Chile, Germany – and New Zealand. Cook would surely have approved the inclusion of the sole Kiwi floating ambassador, his namesake, *Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc*.

Jane Adams arrived safely in Brisbane. Silversea Voyages include cruises from New Zealand to Australia and feature land excursions to several vineyards including Cloudy Bay. Details: www.silversea.com

THE BLOCK

Reality television hasn't yet come to the wine industry (but can it be far off?), so the notion of *The Block*, a very successful Australian TV-series where four couples compete to renovate four adjoining apartments, is not the reason for the naming of Cloudy Bay's new pinot noir vineyard.

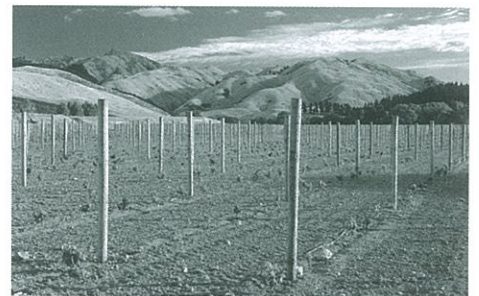
It's called the Barracks Block because the property is on Barracks Road. Simple.

Located on a 150 metre high, north-facing, undulating site in the upper reaches of the Omaka Valley, it's as close as one gets to a continental site in Marlborough. Here hotter days and cooler nights prevail, so vital for flavour development and acid retention, especially in pinot noir, the one variety that seems to benefit from extended 'hang time'.

Cloudy Bay has commenced a three-year program to plant the 40-hectare Barracks vineyard entirely to pinot noir.

Viticulturist Siobán Harnett will oversee the project that is planned to produce top quality grapes. Features of the vineyard's design will be close-spaced planting – 2.2 metres between rows and 1.2 metres between vines – and the use of Dijon clones 667 and 777. The former is characterised by pure high tone aromas, flavour persistence and an inherent firmness. While clone 777 is highly regarded for its dark, rich colour and velvety mouth-feel.

These selected clones are suited to the relatively free-draining, even soils on the site that have been assayed to be a combination of Renwick alluvial silt loam, and Wither silt loess deposited during an ice age. The vines will be pruned to two-canes and the shoots trained on a VSP (vertical shoot position) system, structured for small yields to aid full fruit ripeness.



The beginning of the Barracks Block.

MUSTS

Savour New Zealand

*Masterclasses for Food & Wine Lovers
6 – 8 May, 2005*

*Christchurch Convention Centre
Details & Registration:
www.savournewzealand.co.nz*

Pinot at Cloudy Bay

*Saturday 18 June, 2005
Cloudy Bay Winery, Marlborough
Details: Colleen Oliver
PH: (03) 520 9140
Email: pinot@cloudybay.co.nz*

Cruise Control

Morris Gleitzman spends four hours and thirty two minutes at Wine Australia.

It was a mission impossible, but me and Tom Cruise have never been ones to wimp out. Sometimes you have to go for the dream of a lifetime, especially when the tickets are only \$22.

This was my dream. Wine Australia, the biggest public wine show in the southern hemisphere. Nearly 500 winemakers, all keen to slosh their product over my palate. As I stepped into the packed Sydney Convention Centre I was floating on air, a metre off the ground, and I didn't even have a wire or Emmanuelle Béart attached.

As it turned out, my mission was a bit more impossible than Tom's. He pulled off some very impressive stunts in the movie but I'm pretty sure tasting 8427 wines wasn't among them, though I did go out for popcorn at one stage.

Anyway, I'm getting ahead of myself. To track the progress of my mission (and to try and persuade the trustees of the Sydney Convention Centre to lift the lifetime ban), I'll let my tasting notes speak for themselves.

2.15pm Just tasted my first wine, a superb *Cape Mentelle Chardonnay*. (Thought it best to start here in case I ever write about this unforgettable afternoon for *Mentelle Notes*. That's if *Barbie* magazine isn't interested.)

I'm already dropping behind schedule. Perhaps leaving this until the last day wasn't such a good idea. The event closes in four and a half hours. That means I've got 1.9 seconds to taste each wine. I'll have to move fast, which I'll be able to do now I've cleared up the little misunderstanding that kept me at Cape Mentelle's counter for all those extra minutes. Turns out when you spit at a wine tasting, you don't do it back into the bottle.

2.47pm If I don't get organised, I'm going to blow this mission completely. That's why I've decided to focus for a while on one variety (riesling) from one area (the Clare Valley not including the supermarket carpark up the north end). Still a big undertaking. I've only got time for the tiniest sip of each wine and no time at all to discuss the back label notes with each winemaker. They probably think I'm a bit rude, snatching the bottles and pouring my own on the run.

3.05pm Mornington Peninsula pinots. Some wonderful wines here. Big crowds at each counter, though. Luckily most tasters are holding their glasses up to the light, which is a boon for me as I remembered to bring some drinking straws and a small step-ladder.

MORRIS GLEITZMAN PREPARING TO TASTE 8427 WINES IN FOUR HOURS AND THIRTY TWO MINUTES



3.32pm Hunter Valley reds. I know, a bit non-specific, but the speed I'm tasting I don't have time for long words like 'cabernet' and 'shiraz'. And forget those new Italian varietals. I can taste 18 wines in the time it takes me to say 'sangiovese'. And 18 more in the time it takes the winemaker to say 'hey mate, that's my sangiovese you're dribbling down your shirt'.

4.17pm New Italian varietals. Some of them seem to be showing a little excess CO_2 on the middle palate, though that could be because I've got hiccups.

'I can taste 18 wines in the time it takes me to say 'sangiovese.'

4.28pm Thank God for screwcaps. Not only can you be sure each wine won't be corked, you can save precious pouring time by sucking a few drops out of each one. Try doing that with a cork. (I just did, it doesn't work.)

4.40pm I'm starting to slow down. I should have put more time into training for this event. A quick run through the cordials in the fridge at home just wasn't enough. Plus, I'm starting to question my decision a few hundred wines ago to stop spitting. Swallowing is quicker, but there are side effects. Sore throat muscles for a start, and fuzzy thinking, and not being able to stand up much.

4.59pm This is brilliant. And much more efficient. Instead of tasting by grape variety, which means returning to each counter a lot of times, I'm doing it by maker. Up to 22 wines at the one counter. Super-efficient, especially if the maker is prepared to pour them all into the one glass. Some will, some won't. No great loss. Even with the wines in separate glasses, I can still save time by not swallowing until all 22 are in my mouth.

Memo to Wolf Blass. A cabernet/shiraz/grenache/pinot/riesling/chardonnay/durif/sauvignon blanc/sangiovese/tawny port blend is definitely worth looking at.

5.10pm I'm starving. Cracker biscuits just won't soak up this many wines. Why doesn't the wine industry use a more substantial palate-freshener? Chops, for example, or beef vindaloo? Hang on, what's that commotion over at the Tasmanian stand? Good grief, they've brought out platters of salmon sashimi and smoked quail.

5.20pm Memo to exhibitors at next Wine Australia. If you want your wines to taste really fantastic on the day, serve them with salmon sashimi and smoked quail. These Tasmanian wines are the pick of the bunch in my book. They leave the other 8263 for dead. They taste brilliant. A bit salmony and quaily, but brilliant.

5.35pm I think I'm falling into a classic wine-tasting trap. As the day draws nearer to its end, the exhibitors start pouring bigger and bigger tastes. And the punters hang around and drink them.

And after the second glass of a particularly nice pinot they start gushing to the winemaker about his or her unique skills and offering to buy shares in the winery and volunteering to do unpaid work in the vineyard. I think I've just promised to spend next winter cleaning out the sludge bins at Curly Flat.

6.35pm What? Last drinks? But I'm on a mission. I've got hundreds of wines left to taste. Or is it thousands? The winemakers don't look too happy either. There are a lot of half-empty bottles on their counters.

6.47pm Memo to punters at next Wine Australia. When the organisers say no wine is to be taken off the premises, they mean it. Those security guards are highly trained to spot any wine secreted about the person. They spotted the 47 half-empty bottles stuffed inside my clothing almost immediately. I wonder if that's why Nicole dumped Tom, because his clothes were getting stretched out of shape when he went on impossible missions to wine shows?

Morris Gleitzman is a regular contributor to Mentelle Notes and popular children's author. The editor is sending him a spit bucket and stop watch for his birthday.

Kanga Rouge

Jacques Lurton was the guest speaker at the 2004 Cape Mentelle Cabernet Tasting. He talked with wine writer, Ken Gargett.

'He is one of them, but he is also one of us.' It was the prefect way for Cape Mentelle CEO, Dr Tony Jordan, to introduce the super-guest, Jacques Lurton, at the 2004 Cape Mentelle Cabernet Tasting. The featured year was 2001 and while the automatic reaction is to think of vintage conditions in Bordeaux, it was also pretty special in a few other places known for cabernet, not least Margaret River itself. It was always going to be an exciting occasion but Jacques' presence made it doubly so.

Jacques is the human reflection of how cabernet has progressed in recent decades. He grew up literally among the vines of Bordeaux, and some top-notch vines at that. Though I think Christmas lunch at our place would have been a little tense if a former generation had let slip a half share in Chateau Margaux in exchange for a small property in St Emilion because it was closer to home.

The name Lurton pervades the French wine industry in much the same way as the name Kennedy used to in American politics. Jacques notes some 17 members of his family either own or manage Bordeaux chateaux, including such illustrious names as Climens, Cheval Blanc, d'Yquem, Brane-Cantenac and Desmirail. Things were not always so healthy. When Uncle Lucien was given Brane-Cantenac, it was considered the equivalent of being disinherited, so poor were its prospects.

Unlike many from the region, Jacques, and his brother François, were not blinkered by tradition and were prepared to look further afield.

It was this sense of inquiry that eventually led to a meeting between Jacques and Tony Jordan at Petaluma more than 20 years ago. He has visited Australia every year since then.

For Jacques, cabernet is king. He is quick to point out that it is rare to find great vineyards anywhere in the world without some cabernet (Burgundians, let alone those who may enjoy an occasional glass of white, can address all correspondence on this to the editor), and that cabernet is blended with almost every red variety grown (again, pinot the exception). He backs his argument by citing both ageing potential and customer acceptance and that '80% of the great wines of the world include cabernet.'

Jacques considers himself to be 'not a specialist but a generalist.' It is as well, as, in addition to the family interests in Bordeaux, in 1990, he and François decided to expand their horizons.

They now make wine in the south of France, Chile, Argentina, several regions of Spain and for a while, did so in McLaren Vale.

Despite selling out of McLaren Vale in 2000, as his competing interests in South America required too much of his time and energy (something that Jacques clearly has far more of than most of us), Jacques was not finished with Australia, not by a long shot.

'For Jacques, cabernet is king.'

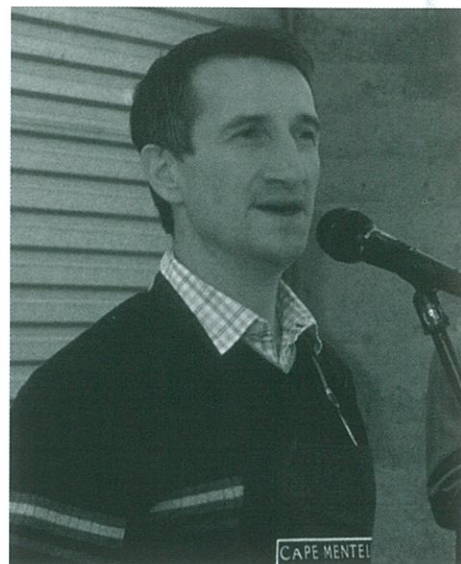
He had honeymooned on Kangaroo Island and loved the place. Keen for an excuse to visit us, he has purchased land on the Island and will soon be releasing his first wines.

Within six to seven years, Jacques plans to spend at least half of his time in Australia. With the enormous demands upon him from vineyards around the globe, it will be interesting to see if he can manage it. For anyone who doubts his commitment, Jacques has already had concrete open-fermenters shipped all the way from Burgundy because he could not find a local with the expertise to make them.

For a man so closely associated with all-things cabernet sauvignon, Jacques' choice of wines for Kangaroo Island may seem a little surprising.

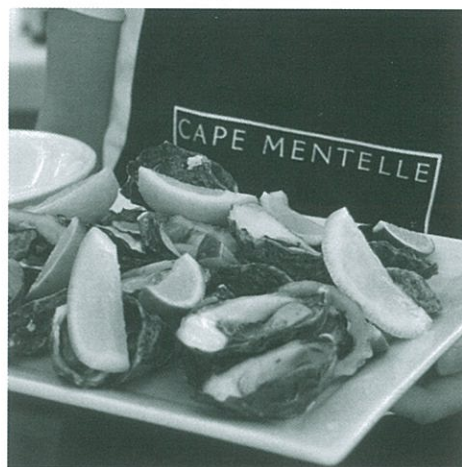


Cab fans enjoy the 2001 cabernet selection.



Jacques Lurton talks cabernet...

Aside from small quantities of a Saignee, there will be a semillon to keep alive the Bordeaux connection, which Jacques aims to make in the style of Domaine de Chevalier. If he succeeds, it is bound to set a few tongues wagging – from Graves to the Hunter.



The two reds will be blends. There will be a sangiovese/cabernet franc with a tiny quantity of malbec 'for spice'. This follows in the footsteps of the Super Tuscans. Perhaps Jacques will call it a Super Kanga? The second red is a shiraz viognier blend with a small amount of cabernet sauvignon. Some of the wines will be bottled under screwcap and a decision will be made on the remainder in time. Jacques is keen to bring a new level of elegance in wine to locals and is keen to tackle the 'challenge of reconnecting' to drinkers.

It's true – Jacques Lurton is indeed both one of them and one of us.

Ken Gargett whose columns appear in the Courier Mail and Wine admits to liking cabernet and Cuban cigars. He filed this report before heading to Havana for a cigar festival.

'Wine is the best liquor to wash glasses in.'

JONATHAN SWIFT

Pinot Rules OK!



Birds' eye view of the 2004 Pinot Tasting.

Roll out the red carpet – not for the Academy Awards or the latest take-'em-by-storm Kiwi fashion show – but for the star grape variety, pinot noir. This elusive Burgundian grape certainly knows how to pull a crowd, and curiously seems to be celebrated more than any other variety.

In Oregon, in Wellington, in Tasmania, and the Mornington Peninsula major calendar events focus wholly and solely on the grape that Jancis Robinson MW once described as a 'minx'.

Well, if it's the boldly flirtatious that turns you on, you have an important date – **Saturday 18 June** when pinot is again on the agenda at the annual **Pinot at Cloudy Bay** tasting, the near solstice day-long immersion session for serious pinotphiles.

This is the sixth in the series that unashamedly showcases pinot, the variety that intrigues winemakers the world over. They dwell on its velvety mouth-feel, garnet colour, earthy forest floor nuances, the importance of clonal selection, close-spacing and more recently, the impact of hang-time on flavour concentration. Is your favourite pinot well hung?

Every year New Zealand's pinot noir producers appear to get a better measure of these (and other) obsessions and are making increasingly complex and elegant wines. The country's best will join other 2002 vintage wines specially selected for the annual tasting.

Among them will be several Burgundian Grand and Premier Crus – Jean Grivot Clos de Vougeot, Dugat-Py Gevrey-Chambertin, Mongeard-Mugneret Vosne Suchots and Daniel Bocquetnet Echezeaux; Yabby Lake and Carlei Green Vineyards from Australia and a Kiwi sextet including Akarua, Ata Rangī, Quartz Reef, Pegasus Bay, and the Wairau host, Cloudy Bay.

The tasting, held in the barrel hall, will be followed by lunch prepared by passionate local chef Chris Fortune and accompanied by all the pinots. Sample delicious local produce, savour the intriguing wines, celebrate their differences – and hear all about them from guest speaker, Bob Campbell MW.

Pinot fans should book early (first in best dressed) to avoid disappointment. Tickets are \$235 (tasting & lunch). Registration form enclosed. For more details call Colleen Oliver Ph (03) 520 9140 Fax (03) 520 9040. Email: pinot@cloudybay.co.nz

HOARE'S LAMENT



The last view of Hoare's Cabernet.

Dear John,

By the time you return from Colombia and find this, I'll have gone. For good. I've packed the trunks and I'm not coming back. After 18 years I can't take it anymore and it's time for one of us to make the break.

It's become apparent that being the rough red you found so attractive in my youth is no longer enough for you and we've simply grown apart. I've tried, year after year to become what I thought you wanted, but it's now apparent that my tannins are too green, my palate too herbal. Even in the hot vintages (remember '98? I still have the photos), even on the stones (God, those stones...they did my back in) it was just not going to work.

QUACK QUACK

Duck lovers and other gastronomists are alerted to the forthcoming **Savour New Zealand 2005 Masterclass** weekend, to be held from **6-8 May** in Christchurch. This year the celeb chef line-up is led by Mr Kitchen Confidential Anthony Bourdain, who heads a culinary cast that includes Kiwis Tony Astle, Judith Tabron and Simon Gault, and the Australian duo, Greg Malouf and Cheong Liew.

Cloudy Bay is proud to sponsor the welcome cocktail party, along with Marlborough's Regal Salmon. Several CBV wines will also be poured at the Gala Dinner.

But the quacker event of the program will be **Duck Duck Duck** when Adelaide's Cheong Liew and CBV viticulturist Siobán Harnett (a self-confessed duck lover) will consummate a marriage made on earth – of duck and *Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir*. Registration details: www.savournzland.co.nz



Cheong Liew does duck.

Latterly we tried being creative and dressing up. There was the 'Rower's Red' and the 'Hoare's Hit'. (Repeat that quickly.)

I've seen your eye wandering... don't think I'm blind. You'll probably replant me with a plump young pinot or a racy little savy (that tart's everywhere around this neighbourhood). You should be ashamed.

Darling, let's not dwell on what happens tomorrow, I'll just remember that for so long we had each other between rows 77-100.

Yours truly,
The Cabernet

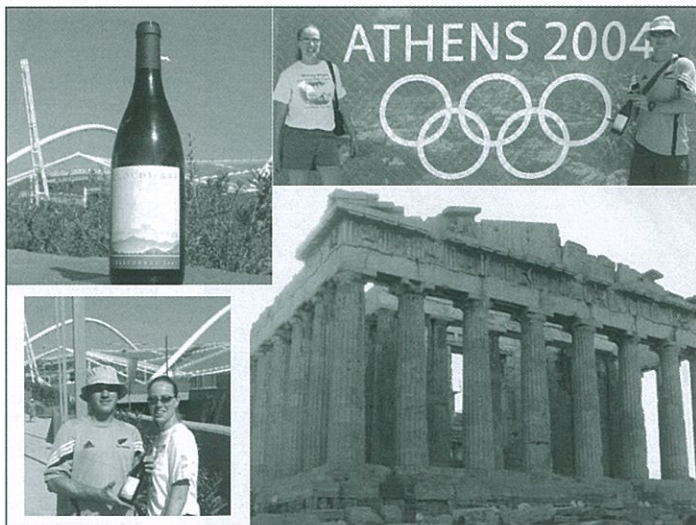
Ed's Note: John Hoare's cabernet block will be grafted over to the racy little district tart.

Olympic Win

Postmark Athens...David and Tammy Nasse.

The Athens Olympics are over – but not all the medals have been handed out yet. One belated award for terrific achievement goes to sporting spectators, Tammy and Dave Nasse from New Plymouth who took their ambassadorial bottle of Cloudy Bay Chardonnay on a journey to Athens via Malaysia. Like all good athletes they had to train for the main event, so they shared the bottle with friends while stopping over in Malaysia.

Now this is where the editor had to call for adjudication, because the bottle that finally ended up in Athens was empty. Obviously, the training session was successful but there was scant pictorial evidence. Nevertheless, the jury decided to permit a win, particularly in light of the Nasse's very professional postcard entry. No olive wreaths though, or gold medallions, just a case of wine headed to New Plymouth.



You too can be part of CBV's export effort. It's easy. Next time you are far from home and spot a bottle of Cloudy Bay – in a taverna in Mykynos, a licensed grocer in Glasgow, or on a cruise liner in the Caribbean – buy it and take a photo. Then send it to The Editor, Mentelle Notes. Taking a bottle with you is also commended and encouraged. MN will publish the best and most alluring photo (make sure digital images are high resolution) and the winning Mentelle Ambassador will receive a FREE mixed case of CBV wines. All entrants receive a CBV T-shirt.

FIRE POWER



Ready for any emergency – Sylvia and 'Little Red.'

A quick glance at the Cloudy Bay staff car park reveals vehicles of all makes and models – four-wheel drives, vans, sedans, sports cars, utes, bikes – and a fire engine. 'Little Red' as the Nissan Safari is known to all, belongs to cellar hand, Sylvia Gardiner who lives on a hilly, 50-acre sheep farm in the hidden Onamalutu Valley, 15 minutes at non-emergency speed from Cloudy Bay.

Story goes that Sylvia needed a car to get to work. She saw an ad in a Christchurch paper and went to check out the fire engine. With only 14,000km on the clock, a 4.2litre engine, water tank, pump and hoses it seemed like a steal, so she bought it. The only modifications have been the chrome mag wheels, adding a touch of extra class to 'Little Red'. So far her duties haven't included fire fighting, but 'Little Red' happily carts hay, water, and sprays weeds with ease. Could grape juice be next?

GRAPE DATES

Meteorologists studying climate change have come up with a novel way to check on claims of global warming. French researchers have used grape harvest dates, which are tightly related to temperature, to reconstruct temperatures over several centuries in Burgundy.

The findings, published in *Nature*, show that the 1520s and the period between 1630 and 1680 were as hot as the end of the 20th century, although 2003 was the hottest year ever recorded in France.

Apparently the Burgundians have been fastidiously recording harvest dates for pinot noir right back to the 13th century, and the recent re-analysis of this data by the Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique suggests that global warming may be a misnomer. Seems some years are simply hotter than others, and the grapes riper. Ain't nature grand.

POST IT

Most Cloudy Bay drinkers know of winemaker Kevin Judd's other passion – photography. His evocative vineyard images (and some pouches) have featured in exhibitions, books, magazines, calendars, posters, advertisements and websites.

Now Kevin has decided to shrink some of his favourite images – so you can share them with friends. The six gift-card pack (with envelopes) is \$25 (inc. postage) and is available from Cloudy Bay Cellar Door, or by mail order.

MENTELLE NOTES

is the free publication of
CLOUDY BAY & CAPE MENTELLE VINEYARDS
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Tel (03) 520 9140 Fax (03) 520 9040
email: info@cloudybay.co.nz
web: www.cloudybay.co.nz

Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 2004 – the 20th Vintage

'Marlborough's most celebrated sauvignon blanc faces many challenges for its crown, but fame and consistently good quality help ensure it retains its position.'

Bob Campbell MW, WINE (Australia)

'These guys never miss. The 20th Vintage, and it's right on song. Marvellous clean, fresh, vibrant gooseberry, citrus, herbal and tropical fruit aromas that translate onto a palate of superior concentration, depth and drive. Clean, tangy, dry finish.'

'An outstanding sauvignon.'

Huon Hooke, SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

'Deliciously vigorous from the first noseful of its strutting aromas to the last pure fruit note of its lingering aftertaste...'

'Pristine, fresh, direct but also effortlessly sophisticated...'

Keith Stewart, THE LISTENER

'Aromatic but fine with archetypal aromas of fresh fruit salad, intertwined with a touch of herbaceousness followed in the mouth by lovely layers of passionfruit and gooseberry and a mouth-watering lemon bite.'

'Generously fruity, this is also rather stylish'

Peter McCombie, WINE INTERNATIONAL (UK)

'This is a beauty with nice gooseberry and spicy mineral aromas with faint hints of tropical fruit. It's bright and zippy and terrific current drinking.'

Ray Jordan, WEST AUSTRALIAN

'The palate is pure and startling, racy and crisp with fresh acidity. This is an elegant wine with superb length.'

91 points, Samantha Caphorn
WINE INTERNATIONAL (UK)

'Cloudy Bay sings harmoniously.'

'A pungent herbal perfume leaps from the glass, followed by that lingering zing of freshness and light tropical fruits... rounded sweet and curvaceous.'

Jeni Port, THE AGE (Australia)

Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 2002

'Stylish Marlborough wine with youthful light lemon green colour and substantial body. Concentrated grapefruit-like flavours with nutty leesy complexities, finely balanced acidity and a creamy texture.'

4 Stars, Michael Cooper, CUISINE

'Lemony yellow, white flowers with honey on the nose, ripe yet precise chardonnay fruit with underlying minerality, great polish and persistence.'

'Simply superb wine for drinking now.'

Stephen Spurrier, DECANTER (UK)

'The epitome of restraint and elegance...'

James Halliday, WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN

Cloudy Bay Pelorus NV

'There was a time when lots of Champagne tasted like this – full-bodied, creamy, mature. Very few do nowadays because it takes time and money to create the complexity, the depth and the lovely nutty yeastiness that makes this inspiring sparkler.'

Best Buy, OZ CLARKE WINE BUYING GUIDE 2005

'Pale straw gold. Rich, yeasty, and chocolaty with notes of lemon verbena. A gentle mousse with plenty of acidity. Quite rich and rounded. A nice wine.'

THE WORLD OF FINE WINE (UK)

Cloudy Bay Late Harvest Riesling 2002

'If you have willpower to put it away it will mature magnificently, creating added complexity. One of the great wines of 2002.'

Chris Donaldson, CHRISTCHURCH PRESS

A View from the Vineyard



This image, photographed by Kevin Judd at dusk, was selected to commemorate Cloudy Bay's 20th Vintage. The lone eucalyptus tree, which is illuminated at night, stands tall and proud among the legendary Marlborough vineyards.

*‘And they went out into the fields,
and gathered their vineyards,
and trod the grapes, and made merry...’*

JUDGES 9:27



PRICE LIST & ORDER FORM

MARCH • 2005



Wine	Description	Price per Case	Price per Bottle	Amount Ordered	Cost
Pelorus NV	Oz Clarke reckons it's better than some Champagnes! Try it soon...	[Six-pack] \$197.70	\$32.95		
Cloudy Bay Te Koko 2002	Sauvignon with a difference. Wild ferment, oak aged, luscious and lingering.	[Six-pack] \$214.20	\$35.70		
Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 2002	Think flowering citrus and smoky nuts in a tightly woven textured and elegant frame. Enticing...	\$376.80	\$31.40		
MARGARET RIVER MIX	2 x Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon 2000 2 x Cape Mentelle Cabernet Merlot 2002 2 x Cape Mentelle Zinfandel 2002	[Six-pack] \$231.90	N/A		
Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1998 [1.5L Magnum]	A thought-provoker from a fine vintage. Intense, rich and elegantly balanced.	N/A	\$76.00		
CB BLACK BIBBED APRON	Impress at your next BBQ!	N/A	(inc. postage) \$25.00		
WINE DOGS BOOK	A must for all pooch lovers.	N/A	(inc. postage) \$42.50		
KEVIN JUDD GIFT CARDS	Evocative images from Marlborough vineyards.	[Six-pack]	(inc. postage) \$25.00		



REMITTANCE DETAILS

I enclose a cheque made payable to CLOUDY BAY VINEYARDS

CHARGE MY CREDIT CARD

- Visa
- Mastercard
- American Express
- Diners Club
- Bankcard

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NZ DELIVERY ADD \$7.00 PER CASE OR \$7.00 PER MAGNUM

TOTAL NZ\$
(INCLUDING GST)

EXPIRY DATE /

Signature

CONTACT & DELIVERY DETAILS

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms)
First
Surname

Postal Address

..... Postcode

Tel: ()(Daytime) () (Evening)

Fax: () Email

Delivery Address and Instructions

PLEASE NOTE

1. Feel free to make up your own mixed case using the bottle prices listed.
2. All prices are G.S.T. inclusive
3. Send order with payment to Cloudy Bay Vineyards Ltd, in the Free Post envelope provided or Facsimile (03) 520 9040
4. Only persons aged 18 years or over may legally order wine.
5. Deliveries can only be made to a street address – not a PO Box or RD number.
6. Please allow 10 days for delivery.
7. Send Em Mentelle in the UK regrettably not available in this issue.



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