

MENTELLE NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF CLOUDY BAY AND CAPE MENTELLE

Bob Campbell examines the phenomenon of Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc.

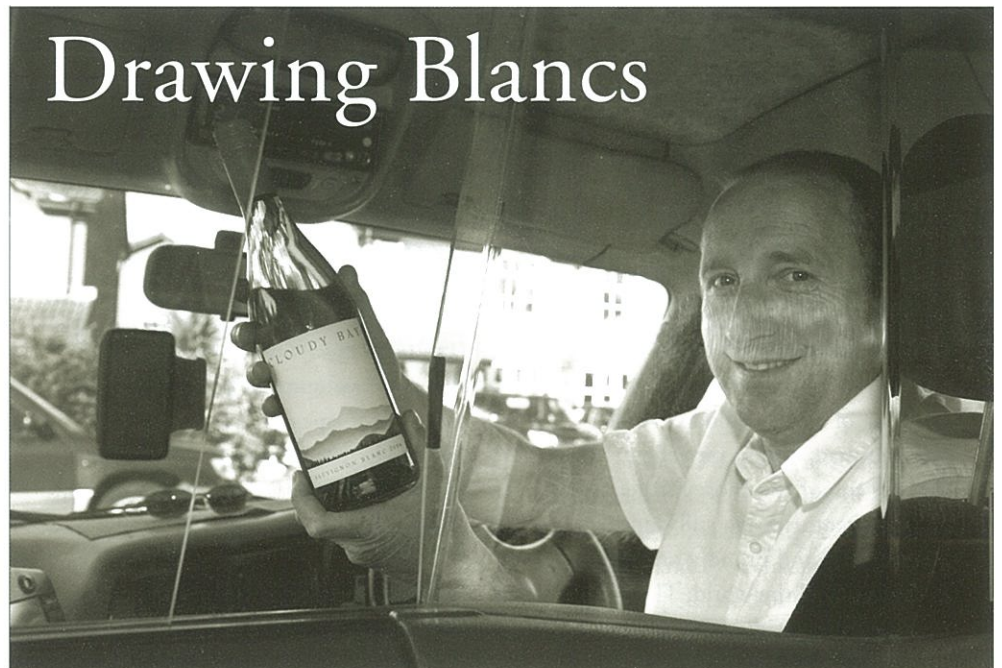
Nostradamus I ain't. I picked Australia to win the Tri Nations this year; New Zealand to win the America's Cup; and confidently predicted that Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt's marriage would last forever.

Several years ago I attracted criticism after claiming that the bubble was about to burst on Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc. I may have written something about a wine lake with a pH of 3.1. There were rumours I'd been in a scuffle with one of Marlborough's more physical winemakers.

I was wrong. Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc is now so big it makes, in the words of John Cleese, 'Ben Hur look like an epic'. What's more, it promises to get much bigger. Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc has become an international brand like Barossa Valley Shiraz or Mosel Riesling. Every serious restaurant in the world should offer at least one example. It's my guess that only 30% currently list a Kiwi Sauvignon Blanc, leaving plenty of room for future growth.

The doomsayers claim that the cowboy factor will result in Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc's downfall. They believe that low-quality Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc will tarnish the image of the brand. 'The end is nigh,' they cried when Marlborough Sauvignon was first offered on the UK market in a wine cask.

As a reformed doomsayer I can confidently say they're wrong. Crappy Bordeaux and Burgundy, and there's truckloads of both, don't tarnish the image of Chateau Latour or Domaine de



Cloudy Bay catches a London cab(bie)...

Pic: Mick Rock.

la Romanée-Conti because wine drinkers know that all Bordeaux and Burgundy is not equal. They're learning that the same is true of Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc.

Why has Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc earned its status as a big brand on the world scene?

I recall a conversation with a driver of a black London cab that helped me understand why demand had skyrocketed in the UK at least.

'The difference between them and us is that they drink what they're supposed to drink while we drink what we like to drink. I wouldn't give you tuppence for Sancerre but I love Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc.' He received an extremely generous tip.

That's it in a nutshell. Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc is different, good and seductively easy to appreciate. It's not hard to love it. It doesn't cost a bomb.

Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc is different, good and seductively easy to appreciate.

He told me that he loved Marlborough Sauvignon and that he had, like many other working class Brits, only recently developed a taste for wine.

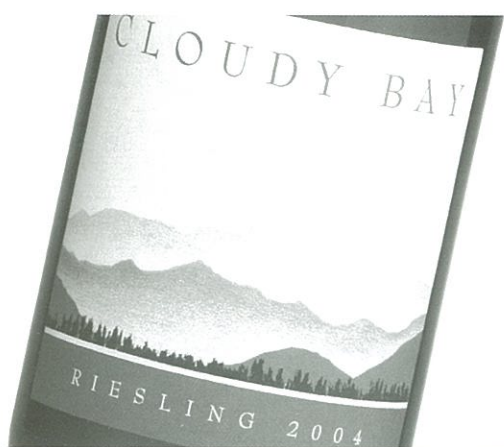
'Wine has always been the drink of the privileged classes. Working class blokes like me have stuck to beer until now,' he explained.

If anything, the widespread popularity of Sauvignon Blanc is probably its biggest enemy. If it's popular people will knock it.

So where to from here? How can Sauvignon Blanc makers continue to stimulate interest in New Zealand's most planted and exported varietal wine?

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New Releases



Cloudy Bay Riesling 2004.

White is Right

Colour is a fascinating topic. From whether we actually see the same colours, to favourite colours, colour associations and the subliminal meaning of certain colours. Widow Clicquot had a thing for yellow – and the colour she chose for her bubbly all those centuries ago still stands prominently and proudly on wine shelves around the world. That yellow is synonymous with the brand. Like the rich ecclesiastical purple is with Cadbury's chocolate – and black is with Kiwi sporting prowess.

To most, white symbolises peace (and in some cultures, death) and it is increasingly used on wine labels – partly one suspects to stand out on crowded wine shelves. White (and shades of off-white) has always been a fundamental component of the ageless and unchanged Cloudy Bay label since its first release in 1986. It is a key component of the simplicity of the image that has adorned millions of bottles since that inaugural vintage.

These new releases are also all white – a terrific quartet for spring and summer sipping.

CLOUDY BAY SAUVIGNON BLANC 2007

'Pale straw green in colour and enticingly fragrant, the 2007 Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc is reminiscent of a fresh summer fruit salsa – ripe peach, passionfruit, mango and juicy citrus – sprinkled with fresh fennel and a dash of Pastis. The palate is rich and succulent, with a zesty citrus and apple-sherbet acidity that leads to a long, lingering, and characteristically crisp finish.'

CLOUDY BAY GEWURZTRAMINER 2005

'Like a Middle Eastern bazaar, the intoxicatingly perfumed 2005 vintage oozes the musky scent of oriental spices with orange blossom and Turkish delight. Tinged with cardamom, the wine's voluptuous palate has the vibrancy of ripe citrus fruits with a brûlée-like creaminess, finishing just off-dry with great intensity and length.'

CLOUDY BAY RIESLING 2004

'Pale gold and explosively fragrant, this riesling is fresh and enticing... vibrant aromas of lime zest and lemon drops combine with a flinty, beeswax complexity. On the palate a hint of honeyed citrus sweetness, reminiscent of old-fashioned lemon curd tart, is nicely balanced by a zingy sherbert-like acidity that lingers through to a clean, fresh finish.'

CLOUDY BAY LATE HARVEST RIESLING 2004

'Pale gold in colour this wine overflows with aromas of tree-ripened apricots and peaches wrapped into a freshly baked almond Danish. On the palate it has flavours of rich orange marmalade that intermingle in a luscious honeyed sweetness, which is counterbalanced by fresh, crisp acidity culminating in a zesty citrus finish.'

Opportunity Knocks

Cloudy Bay recently acquired 33 hectares of mature vineyards in the Wairau Valley, the result of the sale of assets of the neighbouring winery, Cellier Le Brun. Located in the Renwick area, the two blocks were planted to a mix of sparkling varieties and sauvignon blanc, one conveniently located next to the company's existing Widow's Block. The Cloudy Bay vineyard team has been busy renovating both blocks, replacing sparkling varieties with a mix of sauvignon blanc and pinot gris vines, two white varieties that Kevin Judd believes constitute a sustainable and profitable future for Marlborough.



The new vineyard in Renwick.

Shake Me

Blue Lagoon, Bloody Mary, Bellini or Martini could easily be fashion labels, and given the latest discovery at the University of Western Australia they might one day be just that, because researchers there have made a cocktail dress from red wine.

Spokesman Gary Cass explained that the fabric for the little red dress (that even smells vinous) was created from the papery mould that forms on wine vats when oxygen penetrates and bacteria act to 'weave' fibres together.

The dress was made by patting the wet cellulose sludge onto an inflatable doll. When dry, the doll was deflated and hey presto – a flash recycled frock. Only problem apparently is that it needs to stay damp to cling. When dry, the 'fabric' tears easily, a slight impediment for even the most daring fashionista.

Musts

Here are two chances to celebrate everything Marlborough does best...

MARLBOROUGH WINE WEEKEND
26-28 October, 2007
www.wine-marlborough.co.nz

WINE MARLBOROUGH FESTIVAL
Saturday 9 February, 2008
www.wine-marlborough-festival.co.nz

Brave New Wine World

Morris Gleitzman discovers new alternative and diverting wine marketing methods.

My place, me and my publisher, late supper...I prefer to deliver a new book manuscript in convivial surroundings. I love the way fine wine takes the edge off any perception that I might have missed my deadline by a month or two.

But tonight there's a crisis. I'm serving an ambitious supper dish. A ragout of lamb, pig, duck and wolf. (I'm a children's author and I've learned it helps, when presenting a new story, to have an accompanying meal that contains as many of the characters as possible.)

What wine should I serve with such a dish, rich as it is with complex flavours and just a hint of plagiarism? I haven't got a clue. I cast my eye around my modest cellar, but nothing leaps out. (I get a lot of pushy insects down there wanting me to write stories about them.)

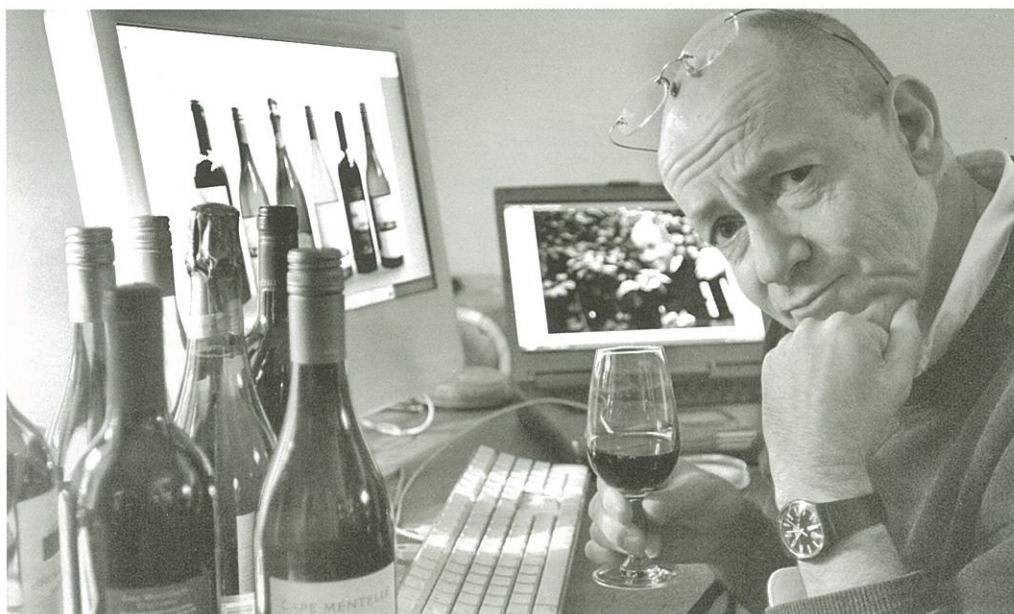
Normally when I need wine advice I go to my friendly neighbourhood wine merchant. We have a good arrangement. He looks after my wine needs and I give him product placement in my stories. That's why so many of my characters are called Stelvin.

But it's very late. The shop's been closed for hours. What can I do? Mismatching wine and food is a sure way to get a publisher grumpy. Before you know it, the conversation can turn to the mismatching of nouns and adverbs. Of advance sums and previous sales. Of future contracts and authors who displease publishers' palates. I still shudder when I remember what happened to Dr Seuss after he served an over-oaked chardonnay with green eggs and ham.

The food is almost cooked and I'm starting to panic. Then I have a flash of inspiration almost as brilliant as my idea of having the lamb, pig and duck blow down the wolf's house.

Of course. The Internet. It's a vast repository of every other type of information, including how to fillet a wolf, so why not wine?

Within seconds I've slipped into my study and am googling furiously. Within a few more seconds my life has been changed forever. It's incredible.



Morris Gleitzman explores a puzzling virtual wine world.

It's unbelievable. I haven't been this amazed since my publisher rejected my previous manuscript, the one about a boy called Stelvin who goes to wizard school.

Yes, there are wine merchants on line, millions of them. Yes, there are winery websites, wine auction portals, and wine critics' blogs and winemaker bulletin boards (though all most of them seem to want to talk about is a bloke commonly called Bret).

They've reinvented wine culture for a new generation and I for one think it's brilliant.

But there's also a vast secret world of wine socialising. A few clicks and I'm a member of a wine club for 30-something singles who meet once a month in stylish bars and restaurants to discuss the blending of wines and other fluids. No wonder there's never anybody under 40 in my local bottle shop. I thought it was just because the owner puts all the bottles on doilies.

Those clever wine marketers. They've noticed how few Gen-X and Gen-Y-ers hang around wine shows in Argyle sweaters hoping a judge will spit something interesting in their direction. They've reinvented wine culture for a new generation and I for one think it's brilliant.

OK, I'm not 30-something and I'm not single, but as a writer of fiction I'm allowed to make things up. A few more clicks and I've reinvented myself as a slim-hipped late-20s nightclub proprietor with a daring ragout menu in search of a wine list.

The chat rooms light up with suggestions. While they debate the finer points of Justin Timberlake's favourite syrah grenache mourvedre,

I hear the distant sound of a front door slamming. My publisher has gone. My manuscript lies unread on the kitchen table.

I don't care. I'm young. I'm free. It's a brave new world out there in the cyber-cellar of the 21st century.

I go back to the chat room and enquire if there are any slim-hipped late-20s futures traders who'd like to invest in my new business venture, a range of virtual wines that will go with virtually anything, including green eggs and ham.

Morris Gleitzman regularly contributes to Mentelle Notes. His latest children's book is Give Peas A Chance (Penguin).

The Final Cut

MN's regular columnist – The Cellar Rat – bows out, uncensored.



In the early days there was just Gerald (aka The Rat), Al and Kev...1989.

Dearest Mentelles,

All good things must pass and so it is for the Rat. Yep, it's time to move on. Call it mid-life crisis, maybe even midriff crisis, but with a heavy heart and an enlarged liver The Rat is fleeing Cloudy Bay. No talk of sinking ships please.

After 19 years and 20 harvests something had to give, and it turned out to be me. The smart money was on Kev, but this turned out to be one of the few things that I managed to beat him to.

Kev always recounts my arrival at Cloudy Bay as me walking into Cellar Door wearing a black woolly hat. In fact, it wasn't a woolly hat but a luxuriously full head of hair.

So Dearest Mentelles, what happened between the hairy Rat rocking up on his Honda 125 in 1988 and 2007 when a follically challenged rodent drove out the gate in his Ford Courier?

For one thing, I'm a much older and wiser Rat now, although you might question the wiser bit. Yep, a lot of sauvignon blanc has flowed through this winery, and my system, over the intervening years. So, sit back and enjoy the rambling reminiscences of a rather rotund rodent.

It started for The Rat with a six-pack of Steinlager, watching the sun set behind Mount Riley in the Richmond Ranges seated beside Kev and the legendary Al Stanbury, when the words 'would you like a full-time job here?' rang in my ears.

If only I'd known what I was getting into when I replied, 'That would be good'. The wine industry in Marlborough was in its infancy then, so much so that when Kev, Al and The Rat ventured to the local watering hole we were derided by the locals as being gay because we came from a winery. Actually I've always had my suspicions about Kev, but Al and I were as straight as...

The next thing I encountered at CBV was a laconic Western Australian hell bent on making a great Marlborough cabernet. The man racking out of 10/5 was one David Hohnen, clutching his manual Red Wine For Beginners and a Steinlager. OSH was in the distant future.

When I asked Al who he was, he replied, 'the boss'. I was impressed even though I didn't know at that stage who Jimmy Watson was. I do now.

In 1989 I was invited to experience a harvest at Cape Mentelle. Obviously it had dawned on Hohnen that his manual, whilst perfect for Margaret River, may not have been ideal for Marlborough conditions. I had a fantastic time and thought their reds were great, but remained unconvinced about their semillon/sauvignon. There's a lesson in there somewhere.

In 1990, to quote David Hohnen, a 'froggy came a courting' and Veuve Clicquot invested in CBV. My initial reservations were offset by meeting Joseph Henriot, then president of VCP, who turned out to be a fantastic guy.

Incidentally, he outranked David Hohnen in the relatively flat hierarchy that was CBV.

The sampling of a decent amount of the Clicquot portfolio helped sway me completely. The French were surprised, and amused, to learn we were in the process of making a bubbly. Upon tasting the 1987 for the first time, Monsieur Henriot was heard to say, 'this is more like a meal than a wine'. But he quite liked it, and so Pelorus was born.

In 1990 Kev informed Al and me that we were getting an assistant winemaker. Now there's a term. The Rat always thought if you're a winemaker you're a winemaker and if you needed assistance the cellar staff would help you out. He was from Auckland but his expertise, we were told, was bag-in-a-box.

We were disturbed by this news. Luckily, as fate would have it, this maestro of bladder technology turned out to be one James Healy, trying hard to leave his sordid past behind.

James embraced the concept of putting premium wine into glass bottles. He also embraced the concept of pouring premium wine out of bottles, much to the detriment of our wine library. Many's the time The Rat staggered out of the Warm Room, leaving Al and James waxing lyrical about the particular wines we were enjoying.

On one such occasion, when we'd run out of other things to bullshit about, the wild ferment of an idea turned into Te Koko. What do you think of that?

The 1990s for me was all about the Next Generation. As fate would have it one of our growers, David Leonard, moonlighted as a gynaecologist and a rigid breeding program was installed at CBV.

The Rat was blessed with two bonny boys. Nick in '93 and Tim in '95. The birth of these two boys coincided with two of the most difficult vintages in Cloudy Bay's brief history.

If you ask my wife Tracey, it wasn't beer and skittles for her either. Tracey retained her interest in horses. Kev also kept up his end by producing an additional two males, Kohen and Alex. Kev's wife Kimberley became a florist.

In 1998 a saddened Rat (tears) was hit with the news that Cape Mentelle had headhunted The Rat's mentor and good friend, Al Stanbury, the Swiss army knife of CBV.

Continued ...



The Rat 19 years on.

The Final Cut goes on...

Suddenly The Rat was left with a reformed bladder technologist, an ex-West Coast hippie, an engineer with a penchant for speaking in tongues late in the evening, and Kev.

Taking over from Al exposed The Rat to many new challenges, dealing with glass producers, carton manufacturers, cork suppliers, screwcap producers and not forgetting the death stars of marketing and sales, and editors.

The Rat didn't know there were so many ways of putting a label onto a bottle incorrectly. The Pelorus had too much fizz, not enough fizz and on the odd occasion, just the right amount.

Kev could look at a carton, a capsule, a label and tell me it was the wrong colour. Kev's colour blind, he told me. Kev also introduced me to the profound wisdom in the term, 'It's only a f..k up if it can't be fixed'. What do you think of that?

And so Dearest Mentelles, to everyone and anyone who has been a part of Cloudy Bay, many thanks for the past 19 years. I hope you've enjoyed it as much as I have. To Jane – thanks for being a patient editor. And remember, a winery is just stainless steel, wood and concrete but it's the people who give it heart.

And we've had many, both past and present at Cloudy Bay with very big ones.

Love light and peace.

PS This one's for Kev, the last chicken in the shop. What do you think of that?

Ed's Note: The last Rat column is the first ever to meet the deadline.

A Ripe Bunch

Viticulturist Siobán Harnett charts the frustrations of the 2007 vintage.

For those of us in Marlborough, 2007 will be remembered as the thumper, bumper crop that never happened. You see, even when the grapes rumble down the row and off to the winery we vineyard types want to know what to expect next harvest. We're shameless.

Predictions for sauvignon blanc 2007 yields were higher than average, so from winter 2006 we were planning to keep our sauvignon in check.

Now, before your eyes glaze over and you find yourself wanting to turn the page and check out the cartoons, trust me, it's actually quite interesting.

The fruiting cycle for grapes takes 18 months from inception to harvest and is strongly influenced by factors such as summer heat (preceding and current), carbohydrate store of vines (like a BMI for vines) and vine water relations (rainfall and irrigation).

Our friendly local boffins are getting pretty clever at updating grape growers as to potential yields, so this time last year word was out that 2007 could be a Biggie.

While this was music to many growers' ears (and especially the local travel agents), it's not exactly the brief that we can work to, so we adjusted our pruning rates and waited with sav-baited breath.

Things were ticking over nicely in Marlborough and we slid largely unaffected through the November frost. The early varieties, chardonnay and pinot noir, flowered through a warm patch later that month, and just as the sauvignon blanc inflorescences were taking a deep breath to rip off their caps and get down to some serious flowering action, the coldest December in 50 years pulled a big hand-brake on things. You see, no-one looks good when naked and cold, least of all a sauvignon blanc flower.

January was spent rattling sav bunches to check out the (lack of) berry set. It's very hard to fill out the date for 'bunch closure' on the phenological diary when it never actually happens. I think you're now



Harvesting the home block, Cloudy Bay, 2007.

getting the picture. After a few weeks we could see sub-regional trends for fruit set, which we graded from 'quite good' to 'pass the hankies'.

As if to make up for December, late summer and autumn proved to be a dream with settled, dry conditions. Sailing into harvest slightly ahead of schedule we weren't complaining, with the exception of Julie, who was managing hand-picking on just three hand-picking bins. (Hmmm, slight oversight there.)

Day after day of settled weather and the sauvignon blanc was inching closer to harvest. Fingers were strumming on tractor steering wheels and lab benches all throughout the business. No-one said a thing, as no-one wanted to jinx things. Kevin Judd said less than nothing, which wasn't actually much more than usual, but it still wasn't much.

Eventually, we got the green light to get stuck in and it was grand. Engines started, vines shuddered, floodlights flooded, sauvignon ferments wafted through the cellar, growers stood in gateways and waved farewell to the fruit at four o'clock in the morning. And then they thought, 'I wonder what yields we'll get next year?' Shameless.

Pinot Unpicked

Pinot at Cloudy Bay turned eight this year, and by all accounts it was a good party.



Pinot passionates rate the form.

Sometimes the most memorable celebrations are those one attends with least expectations. You roll up ready to enjoy yourself, without any preconceived ideas, and good vibes flow.

Well, that's not exactly the situation for most attendees at the annual *Pinot at Cloudy Bay* tasting. Invariably, expectations are high. Pinot-loving friends have told tales, wine writers have extolled virtues, and winemakers have quietly agreed that Cloudy Bay's celebration of the fickle Burgundian grape is worth hustling a ticket. Attendees arrive ready to be impressed (or come back for a second time).

This year the line-up focussed on the 2004 vintage, and featured wines from the 'mother' region Burgundy; Oregon; Napa and Sonoma Valleys; Tasmania; Mornington Peninsula; and a Kiwi clutch.

The wines were carefully selected to represent exemplary quality alongside regional differences, with an excusable bias to the Kiwi contenders.

The three blind-tasted flights are interspersed with commentary from wise (or brave) pinot hands, willing to stick their palate out before the final unveiling.

Over the years, some egos have bruised, but remarkably the pinot pundits have largely got more right than wrong.

This year the 2004 vintage provided some consternation but not for wine correspondent and educator Geoff Kelly, who has recorded in-depth notes on his website.

A man of vinous detail, Geoff cites the \$2000 retail value of the 19 tasting wines, if purchased by the bottle. He notes the quality of the Schott Zwiesel tasting glasses, the invitation warning participants from 'wearing fragrance' (no Issey Miyake in our Barrel Hall!) and delights in the silence once the tasting is underway.

The outcomes may have surprised the Burgundians.

'Any supposition that the wines from Burgundy must inevitably dominate an international pinot noir tasting is simply no longer true, as the results of this tasting show,' he reports. Kelly thinks the French were unlucky on the day, a result of a non-optimal 2004 vintage.

But if the French didn't shine, what did? According to Kelly, the plaudits go to the Kiwis. 'The best were not only vividly varietal, but interestingly Burgundian (in style) as well.'

By Burgundian he means – fragrant, floral and beguiling with cherry-like fruit, velvety and long, packed with flavours ranging over cherries, berries, flowers, mushrooms and even casseroles. He believes some of the New Zealand wines in the Tasting lean towards those origins.

Geoff Kelly's top wine was the Littorai Pinot Noir from the Anderson Valley in California. Then came Pegasus Bay, Mt Difficulty Pipe Clay Terrace, Domaine Fourrier Gevrey-Chambertin, and close on their heels, the Craggy Range Te Muna Road and Cloudy Bay.

Till it was unmasked, Kelly took the latter as displaying 'good premier cru quality and style'.

'Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir has quietly increased in concentration, mouth-feel and precise varietal character over five years, and the trend line is promising.'

He commended its subtle classical style and gave it 17.5 points out of 20, a half mark behind his top-pointed French wine.

Undoubtedly some of the other 130-odd pinot participants would disagree, but diversity is ultimately what makes the wine world tick.

For Geoff Kelly's full report check: www.geoffkellywinereviews.co.nz

Drawing Blancs *cont.*

Tinkering and terroir are the twin solutions. Marketing people call it 'brand extension'. Winemakers can have a little fun with the variety by fermenting it in oak, fermenting it on the gross lees, encouraging malolactic fermentation, and ageing it in oak on the yeasty lees – à la Te Koko. The very different result is more likely to appeal to a small group of non-SB drinkers than those hard-core 'just gimme the fruit' Savie lovers.

Introducing district styles is likely to be more effective. There are three emerging styles in Marlborough: Awatere Valley (cooler, tomato leaf, brambles, gooseberry), southern Wairau (heavier soils, richer, riper, armpit, passionfruit) and northern Wairau (bonier soils, more delicate, aromatic, currant, passionfruit). Blended wines that bring together characteristics of different sites will continue to have their place but district and winemaking variants will add needed diversity and complexity.

I should mention that the cooler Awatere Valley with its intense, leafy wines will have increasing influence. The Awatere Valley now has a larger area under vine than Hawke's Bay, New Zealand's second largest wine region. If growth continues at present rates the Awatere will, within a few years, be home to more vines than the Wairau.

I'm optimistic about the future of quality Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc. Vine age, experience and the market's willingness to award excellence should keep it moving in the right direction.

However, my optimism could be the death knell for the brand as indeed it was for Jennifer and Brad. I still can't see why he'd dump a nice girl like that just as I can't begin to imagine why anyone would turn their back on Sauvignon Blanc in favour of an insipid wine like pinot gris.

Bob Campbell MW is an Auckland-based writer, teacher and taster of wine whose first loves include riesling and pinot noir but who, in the spirit of vinous promiscuity, readily accepts a glass of almost anything. Even pinot gris from Kevin Judd.

STARTLING SAUVIGNON BLANC STATS

	Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc (Hectares)	Marlborough Total Plantings (Hectares)
2007	8719	12704
2006	7681	11475
2005	6019	9877
2004	5069	8539
2003	3655	6676
2003	3050	5730
2001	2002	4354
2000	1899	4053

Source: NZ Winegrowers Statistical Annual - www.nzwine.com

Femmes Fatale

We all know the saying 'wine, women and song' but in this case it really should be wine, women and chanson – because the inaugural Cape Mentelle Parfum 2007 is inspired by Larissa Bray's vintage at Alain Graillot in the Rhône.



Fellow perfumers – Glenys Rodgers, Larissa Bray and Sarah Thomas.

'I wanted to make a wine like Crozes-Hermitage with 100% whole bunch shiraz,' explains Larissa. So being a resourceful woman she engaged all her female colleagues in the project.

Parfum was made by throwing whole bunches into a plastic bin, fermenting grenache juice was added and then the 'girls' were asked to take turns stomping and swirling the grapes. After 10 days the wine was pressed to tank and racked into four barrels, then left in the Tropicana (warm) Room to finish malolactic fermentation. The final step

was to rack it clean before filling four two-year-old French oak barriques due for 12 months maturation in Cellar 6.

'It was the first 2007 wine to go through malo and already shows seductive savoury characters and a textured tannin-backed palate,' enthuses the creative directrice who sourced the grape parcels for her heady Parfum from two Western Australian wine regions, Donnybrook (shiraz) and the Swan Valley (grenache).

The first Cape Mentelle all-girl 'fragrance' is at this stage viewed as a non-commercial development.

Sauvignon Search

There is no doubting New Zealand's determination to excel as the world's icon sauvignon blanc producer. This ambition shows not just in the quality of the wines produced and their global marketing, but in the industry's all-stops-out commitment to wine research.

Over \$17 million will be invested over the next six years in a research project to examine the distinctive qualities of NZ's global ambassador grape, sauvignon blanc. The project is funded by both government and industry and is being carried out jointly by the Marlborough Research Centre and Auckland University.

The aim is to analyse the definitive and unique characters of Kiwi sauvignon – that distinctive herby, tropical fruit zing that has already attracted multi-million dollar export sales. Subsequently, the intention is to establish new pathways to further exploit the unique difference of the grape that has driven New Zealand's wine industry success.

Viticultural and vinification techniques will be examined so winemakers can ultimately fine-tune desirable flavour components. Canopy management, leaf density, elevation and terroir will also go under the microscope. Currently, the focus is on Marlborough but the project will eventually encompass other regions. Some crystal ball gazers suggest pinot noir will be next in line for similar Rolls-Royce research.

Bottle Spotter

Once upon a time if you were trying to locate a street or a supplier you looked up a directory or the *Yellow Pages*. Now you install a GPS device on your dashboard or go googling.



Back in the '80s frustrated Cloudy Bay fans hung out in the back streets near the Sydney distributor's warehouse and tail-gated the delivery van to its first drop-off, demanding stock with menaces.

But times change and now in the UK those who are prone to Marlborough's flagship sauvignon blanc can jump on the Cloudy Bay Locator – a web-based search engine for the nearest stockist.

All you need do is key in your date of birth – for compliance reasons – and away you go, searching by postcode or region. When you spot a suitable restaurant (each has a short profile and photo), you can place an on-line reservation and order your selection of Cloudy Bay wine from the on-screen availability list. It will be chilled and ready to pour when you arrive for dinner. Now how's that for service?

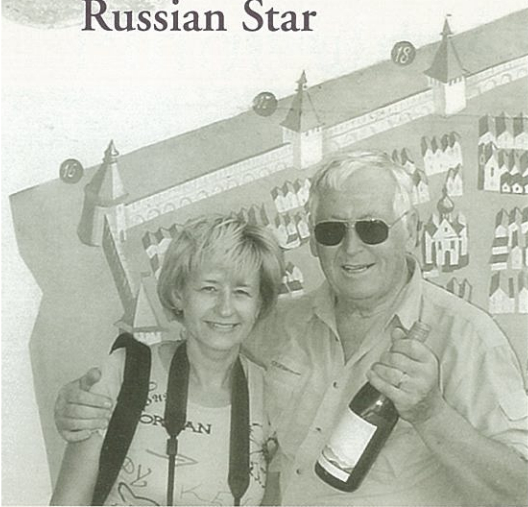
Check it out before you next travel to the UK and surprise friends and relatives with your reserved ambassadorial bottle.

www.cloudybaylocator.com

Hot Stuff

If Italian viticulturist Riccardo Cotarella is to be believed, the familiar summer adage 'slip slap slop' might soon apply to grapevines. Cotarella claims that global warming means stronger sunlight, which causes sunburn, not on the faces and arms of vineyard workers, but of the skins of grapes. He believes technologists will eventually come up with the equivalent of block-out sunscreen for grapes. There are already commercial cosmetics made from grape residues, so surely a refreshing L'Occitane bunch spray can't be far away.

Russian Star



Ivan and his wife Luda check the map – in Astrakhan.

There is no doubt that Mentelle Ambassadors are great adventurers – and none more so than photographer Ivan McLellan, sometimes of Christchurch. One look at his website verifies Ivan's itchy feet that in the past six years have seen him in the USA, Rajasthan, Cuba, Malta, UK, Crete, Helsinki and beyond, including a mammoth motor home journey in late 2006 across old Mother Russia.

In the hot northern hemisphere summer he arrived in Astrakhan, land of watermelons and tomatoes on the banks of the Volga River, with a shaken and stirred bottle of *Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc*. In total, Ivan and his convoy travelled 169 days, traversing 28,900 kilometres on 2060 litres of diesel, recorded by 4900 photographs including this winning Mentelle Ambassador entry.

You too can be part of Cloudy Bay's export effort. It's easy. Next time you are far from home and spot a bottle of Cloudy Bay – in a bistro in Mumbai, a ski stub'n in the Austrian Alps or the departure lounge at Copenhagen – buy (or borrow) it and take a photo. Digital images need to be 5-mega-pixel resolution if you wish to be in the running. Send photos to the Editor, Mentelle Notes. Email entries: info@cloudybay.co.nz MN will publish the most alluring photo and the winning Ambassador will receive a FREE case of Cloudy Bay. All entrants receive a CB T-shirt.

Joint Action

The medicinal properties of wine are constantly under the microscope and the scientific outcomes are increasingly positive for those who are regular, moderate wine consumers. Various studies have shown beneficial effects of wine in heart disease, stroke, even Alzheimer's disease. The latest research adds another good news story – the impact of alcohol on crippling rheumatoid arthritis.

According to Dr Henrik Kallberg from the Swedish Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, the consumption of three or more units of alcohol per week was associated with a 50% drop in the risk of developing rheumatoid arthritis. He believes that the alcohol suppresses the immune system and damps down the painful inflammatory condition. More research is needed but it's good news for the world's 20 million sufferers and more grist for the notion that a good glass of wine a day keeps the doctor at bay.

*This wine should be eaten,
it is too good to be drunk.*

Jonathan Swift



Festive Case

It's time to think of treating yourself – and this is one end-of-year bonus you can justify if you have worked hard. **Santa's Six-Pack** is designed to bring Christmas cheer to almost any occasion – be it a formal midday Xmas lunch or a relaxed family gathering. The selection includes two aperitif bubbly *Pelorus* bottles, the new release zingy *Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 2007* and acclaimed *Chardonnay 2005* for starters, the *Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 2004* for ducks and other birds, and the sticky finale – *Late Harvest Riesling 2004*.

And be sure to tell the boss, she might want conceivably want a case too!

Latest Drops

CLOUDY BAY PELORUS 2002

'Pelorus is New Zealand sparkling wine at its best: vibrant, well constructed, delicious and memorable.'

Kerry Tyack, METRO MAGAZINE

'Consistently among the top New Zealand bubbly and the current release will do nothing to dent its reputation. Has attractive, creamy, biscuity, characters and an elegant, lively freshness.'

Ivan Donaldson, THE PRESS

CLOUDY BAY SAUVIGNON BLANC 2006

'Stands out for its subtlety and balance, with a fine-grained texture and inviting tropical vivacity.'

91 Points, WINE SPECTATOR, USA

CLOUDY BAY TE KOKO 2004

'Distinctive and idiosyncratic individuality of one of my favourite wines... I love its funky complexity with mineral savoury aromas and flavours showing the influence of lees and oak on this sauvignon blanc.'

93 Points, Ray Jordan, WEST AUSTRALIAN

'Has been called sauvignon blanc on steroids because Kevin Judd and his team use wild yeast, malolactic and barrel fermentation to produce a funky, rich savvy of real complexity.'

Charles Gill, OTAGO DAILY TIMES

CLOUDY BAY CHARDONNAY 2005

'This high-flying Marlborough winery has produced a string of winning wines in the past years but this is the very best I've tasted. It has everything – great complexity, richness and weight, and ethereal texture and power delivered with great subtlety. I can promise that this one will age superbly.'

95 Points, Bob Campbell MW, TASTE MAGAZINE

CLOUDY BAY PINOT NOIR 2005

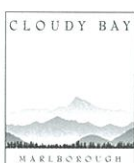
'Perennially smart Marlborough pinot. Has lashings of sweetly ripe black cherry... underlined by a subtle touch of new oak. Succulent and lush with good tannins adding backbone. Delightful drinking.'

95 Points, Huon Hooke, SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, AUSTRALIA

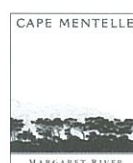
CLOUDY BAY RIESLING 2003

'A remarkably Alsace-style riesling although it's better than most from that northern French region. A concentrated and complex wine with an array of citrus, flower and spice flavours.'

5 Stars, Bob Campbell MW, TASTE MAGAZINE



CLOUDY BAY VINEYARDS
PO Box 376 Blenheim, New Zealand
T: (03) 520 9140 F: (03) 520 9040
info@cloudybay.co.nz www.cloudybay.co.nz



CAPE MENTELLE VINEYARDS
PO Box 110 Margaret River, Western Australia 6285
T: 61 8 9757 0888 F: 61 8 9757 3233
info@capementelle.com.au www.capementelle.com.au



Harvest at Cloudy Bay 2007.

A View from the Vineyard

*'They are not long the days of wine and roses
Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for awhile, then closes
Within a dream.'*

ERNEST DOWSON

