

MENTELLE NOTES

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Margaret River's Indian Ocean coast is legendary – and also shines white.

Shining White

Cape Mentelle proudly launches its first heritage series Chardonnay...

All too often wine articles about Margaret River focus on its traditional red ambassadors – cabernet and shiraz – the wines that have taken countless vintages of the region's vinous treasures to the world's dinner tables. Less often does one read about chardonnay from 'Margs', the serendipitous variety that according to writer Jancis Robinson MW, and regular Margaret River visitor, 'the grower loves to grow, the winemaker loves to fashion, and we all love to drink'.

The workhorse white grape. Not always. Cape Mentelle's winemaking and viticulture team, led by Coralie Lewis and Dave Moulton respectively, have been quietly working for several vintages to craft a heritage series *Cape Mentelle Chardonnay*. And drum roll folks, the inaugural 2020 vintage will shortly make its debut.

It was a flagship project triggered by several keynote retrospective tastings held during Cape Mentelle's 50th Anniversary celebrations. 'We wanted to craft a memorable pure varietal expression that is identifiably Cape Mentelle,' muses Dave.

'We used both high tech precision viticulture and almost intuitive nurture in the vineyards to conjure the nuances of this wine,' explains Dave, while he and Coralie bench

test another bottle before its official launch.

Sourced from selected blocks of two different estate vineyards – Chapman Brook (16km inland from the Indian Ocean, established 1993) and Crossroads (closer at 8km from the coast with a stronger maritime influence, established 2003) the grapes (Gingin clone) are treated with kid gloves. Think cane pruning, shoot thinning, leaf plucking... The grape equivalent of man-scaping.

In fact, the carefully selected ripe parcels that make the cut are fastidiously handpicked and gently pressed. All batches are kept separate for both fermentation and maturation in 228-litre oak barrels (35% new) and are regularly blind-tasted and rated by the team prior to the final blend.

'The CMV team are aspiring high to create a memorable flagship Chardonnay.'

Rather like an artist layering a canvas with different hues that together create an alluring image with arresting and lingering impact.

In the case of the heritage series *Cape Mentelle Chardonnay 2020* all this TLC has created a memorable Margaret River top-shelf

white ambassador.

For winemaker Coralie Lewis the core attributes of this new flagship are its 'purity, profound structure and winning personality.'

Dave concurs on the purity. And adds balance as a hallmark. But his primary marker is that the wine expresses a sense of place...the three chosen blocks shining their personality and integrity.

Preview samples have been shown to a select few palates and the response suggests that the Cape Mentelle team's passion and commitment will reap rewards.

Between them Dave and Coralie have 15-years experience with the grapes from the Cape Mentelle estate, and 35 years in the region – combined knowledge that has gifted this new Chardonnay definitively good genes.

Listening to them describe their progeny, one might imagine the latest haut couture design from the Rue St-Honoré in Paris.

A creation displaying white peach and nectarine aromas typically associated with the cooler nights at the Chapman Brook vineyard, and citrus and frangipani flowers backed by briny notes from the Crossroads site, the lesser 25% portion of the blend contributing power and mid-palate weight.

'It evolves in the glass rather like the wines I regard as the benchmark,' muses Dave. And in unison he and Coralie proclaim their guiding light to be the acclaimed chardonnays of the Puligny-Montrachet Commune in Burgundy.

While trips from Prevelly to Puligny in the Côte d'Or may not be imminent, the CMV team are aspiring high to create a memorable flagship Chardonnay for the Cape Mentelle portfolio. Welcome to the new local 'Margs' white hero!

PS The forthcoming heritage series *Cape Mentelle Chardonnay 2020* has been impressively rated 95 Points and won a highly coveted Gold Medal in the 2022 Decanter World Wine Awards.

Cab Flagged

Any addition to the Cape Mentelle portfolio is worthy of some fanfare. Especially if it is a new riff on the estate's icon grape – Cabernet Sauvignon. The CMV vine and wine team will shortly release their *Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon 2020* that joins the range as a companion to the Margaret River series Chardonnay and Shiraz.

In winemaking terms this decodes to a drink-now approachable wine characterised by red (as opposed to dark) fruits. Think berries rather than plums, and softer tannins. A pure fruit-driven expression of the variety that is intentionally made to enjoy sooner (at two years bottle age), that will cellar but doesn't need to.

The cabernet grapes are selected from both the Trinders and Wallcliffe vineyards.



'We have had great fun crafting this wine that is an amalgam of ideas,' enthuses viticulturist Dave Moulton. And they start with the fact that bright, pure fruit is the hero of this wine.

'So often cabernet is seen as an intimidating wine but it doesn't need to be and this new expression isn't, nor does it need a special occasion,' explains winemaker Coralie.

So Dave who thinks of this new cabernet as 'Robin to Batman' recommends the Cab Sav 2020 with wood-fired pizza. His specialty is a thin crust topped with finely grated cooked potato, rosemary and truffle oil.

The CMV marketing department may however not adopt his suggested brand positioning, even if this new expression of cabernet aspires to super hero status and longevity. A classic wine for all seasons and reasons.

New Releases

Just in time for summer come three super sipper fridge-ready Cape Mentelle wines, classics one and all including the white ambassador – *Cape Mentelle Sauvignon Blanc*. These wines are available to members of the Cape Mentelle Wine Club, online shoppers and at Cellar Door. If you have any queries please contact the knowledgeable Cape Mentelle staff.

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CAPE MENTELLE ROSÉ 2022

Delicate Ethereal Pure

Perfectly timed and poised for summer sipping this beguiling pale salmon hued rosé is a triple blend crafted from shiraz, grenache and merlot from three different estate vineyards.

'Be greeted by delicate aromas of rose petal and red berries that amplify on the palate accentuated by hints of turkish delight and rose water, with a slight briny minerality and an attractive textural mid-palate, that lingers.' The perfect sundowner...destined to match sushi platters.

CAPE MENTELLE SAUVIGNON BLANC 2022

Bright Persistent Delicious

Grapes were sourced primarily from the Crossroads and Chapman Brook vineyards to create this pristine expression of sauvignon blanc. As inviting as Margaret River's lauded coastline.

'Crafted from the finest parcels, a wine of tension and drive that opens with intense aromas of guava, lychee and passionfruit with smidges of lemon curd. Medium weight palate with mineral elegance, a saline edge and a taut punchy citrus finish.' Beach picnic anyone?

CAPE MENTELLE WALLCLIFFE SAUVIGNON BLANC SEMILLON 2017

Soulful Illuminating Exploratory

A timeless classic blend of two harmonious varieties, only the best quality fruit selected from two sites – Chapman Brook and the Trinders vineyards.

'Bursts forth with fresh apple, lemongrass and cut hay over subtle flintiness and fresh curd notes. The palate displays a core of citrus backed by briny, then floral mellowing complexity. Drink young with freshly caught cod with a herb sauce, or tempura scallops or cellar to conjure added complexity.'

Wine Club

Here at Cape Mentelle we are constantly focussed on how we can improve our processes to ensure peak sustainability, in the winery and the vineyard. Wine Club members can now participate in our latest initiative – repurposed wine boxes. Club orders are dispatched in signature gift boxes but members now have the option of electing deliveries in repurposed wine boxes.

For every recycled box deployed Cape Mentelle donates \$5 to **Nature Conservation Margaret River** and so far over \$2000 has purchased 400 native plants for the revegetation project at the mouth of the Margaret River. Our thanks to members who have already supported this initiative!

2022 CLUB PACKS

Mentelle Explorer members will shortly receive a vertical selection of *Wallcliffe Sauvignon Blanc Semillon* (2016 – 2018) plus the Margaret River series *Chardonnay 2020* and dual 2018 reds – *Cabernet Sauvignon* and that all time fave – *Zinfandel*.

Mentelle Collection members are in for a red dominant treat offering old vs new comparisons of both *Cabernet Sauvignon* (2012 and 2018) and *Shiraz* (2010 and 2018) plus the Margaret River series *Chardonnay 2020* and *Wallcliffe Sauvignon Blanc Semillon 2017*.

To join and for more details about the **Cape Mentelle Wine Club** options, please check the website. www.capementelle.com.au/wine-club Club members also have the option of customising their selections – your favourites, our treats and more. To do so, members are invited to log into their accounts and check the 'Club List' for all available wines. E: wineclub@capementelle.com.au



Warm welcomes and latest release wines await at the Cape Mentelle Cellar Door...

Cabernet Cavalcade

Times flies when you make cabernet! This year's **International Cabernet Tasting** marked a milestone – the keenly anticipated 40th Anniversary event – a day when the world's best reds lined up for sniffing, spitting and storytelling, tales both tall and true. A quick calculation shows that over 12,000 of the world's finest cabernet bottles have been uncorked and enjoyed by several thousand fans. over the years.

To mark this year's milestone there were tandem tasting halls, one in the Cape Mentelle barrel hall, the other in the original vat room permitting more guests to relish 20 international cabernets from the 2019

vintage, including of course, a collection from Margaret River.

Among them legends including Châteaux Ducru-Beaucaillou, Cos d'Estournel and Margaux, Ornellaia (Italy), Spotteswood (USA) and Craggy Range and Te Mata (NZ). The local champions (apart from the host) were led by Cullen, Xanadu, Juniper Estate and Devil's Lair, ably supported by Aussie cabernets from Yarra Yering and Wynns. No winner, just wide smiles and insightful commentaries from guest speakers Erin Larkin, Gabrielle Poy, Jane Faulkner and Stefan Neumann.

The post-tasting lunch catered by Tiller Dining featured fresh local seasonal produce from their 20-hectare farm and orchard in nearby Yallingup.

Full Circle



Pic: Nikita Booth

Ely Jarvis – three times lucky.

Some things happen in threes, and that applies to Eloise Jarvis who has recently been appointed Cape Mentelle's new senior winemaker. Back again – for the third time.

Ely was born in Papua New Guinea but her GP father soon moved to open a practice in Busselton and Ely grew up amid vines, and winemakers. She studied horticulture and landed her first vintage job in 1996 as the 'Lab Rat' at Cape Mentelle. Stint One.

Then after some vinous globetrotting with her winemaker husband she re-joined Cape Mentelle in 1998, first as Cellar Foreman, evolving to Production Winemaker. Stint Two covered seven years and special projects, including a joint venture with Fonty's Pool in Pemberton.

Then came time for a family, an academic career teaching viticulture and oenology at WA's Curtin University, and the establishment of Margaret River's sustainable viticulture program, a project undertaken by Ely's successful regional consulting business.

Roll on to 2022 and Ely has returned to Cape Mentelle as senior winemaker and in conjunction with Dave Moulton is responsible for the entire estate portfolio. Stint Three.

'Happily I find myself back at Cape Mentelle, a place I deeply respect and love. I am excited to be part of the team and look forward to crafting world class wines that express their unique terroir and origin.'

Like many winemakers Ely believes that great wines are made in the vineyard. 'Vines need nurture to ensure balance and harmony with the environment, which makes the winemaker's job such a joy.'

According to Ely, it's definitely a case of third time, even luckier.

Pics: Ovis Creative



Twenty of the world's top Cabernets were swirled, sniffed and spat by cab fans at the Cabernet Tasting 2022. Cape Mentelle founder David Hohnen (right).



Dream Weaver

Max Allen gazes into the possible future of wine.



“Psst! Over here!”

You stop dead in your tracks. There’s nothing but tall trees and the path in front of you, disappearing into the gathering gloom of a Margaret River summer’s evening.

“Here!” whispers the voice again.

“In here!”

And then you see it. A faint glow in the bushes. Warm light emerging from a crack in the door of a well-camouflaged shack. You nudge the door open, and a hand bundles you inside, shutting out the world behind.

“Did anyone see you?”

“No, I, uh ...”

“Who knows you’re here?”

“No-one! I promise. What is this place ...?”

“No time for that now. Come with me.”

You notice your new friend is wearing an antique Cape Mentelle cellar rat t-shirt, from a vintage sometime in the mid-2010s. It’s tattered and stained purple, clearly loved to bits.

You enter a low-ceilinged room, candle-lit, with six or seven people huddled around a table. A couple of faces you recognise, from long ago cellar door visits and dinners back in the early 2020s, glance up and their eyes widen.

“Did you bring it? Have you got it?”

You reach into your backpack and slowly pull out the old bottle. There are gasps – “A cork! It’s got a cork!” – excited whispers – “Cabernet! It’s a cabernet!” – then a rush of activity.

Someone finds glasses – real glasses, made

from glass – a corkscrew – rusty and stiff, but still functional – and gently, as though it were a precious relic (which it is), the bottle is opened and the wine is poured, flashing garnet in the candlelight.

Eyes close as glasses are brought trembling to noses. Grateful sips are taken. Mouths are flooded with long-forgotten flavours. Someone starts weeping.

It has been such a long time. And this once-familiar scene feels so strange to you now, it makes you realise how much has changed.

“There are gasps – A cork! It’s got a cork! – excited whispers – Cabernet! It’s a cabernet!”

It started slowly at first. Back in the 2020s, winegrowers were trialling new grape varieties, partly with an eye to a warming world and changing weather patterns but mostly for fun, to satisfy curiosity, to play with new flavours.

Then what seemed like a gradual shift in the climate began to accelerate. Ripening patterns swung out of whack. Grapes long considered “classic” became more marginal. The chardonnay and cabernet vines that once covered this region were joined by southern Italian varieties – falanghina and aglianico, greco and nero – then by genetically-modified, heat- and disease-resistant varieties first developed by the CSIRO in the 2030s.

This wasn’t the only major challenge winemakers faced. Recognising that the

manufacture and transport of heavy glass was one of the biggest sources of carbon emissions in booze production, an international glass moratorium in 2026 forced the world’s drinks producers to phase out traditional bottles altogether – or pay an enormous tax on them.

For years now, the vast majority of wines have been sold on tap, in re-usable keg or bag-in-box cask, or recyclable can. No corks, no screwcaps, because no bottles. Even the glasses you drink from aren’t made from glass anymore: they’re made from a clear bio-engineered cellulose that can be crushed and composted.

The growth in demand for no- and-low alcohol “wellness” drinks really picked up pace in the mid 2020s, too, after the Australian Wine Research Institute developed ground-breaking technology that could extract alcohol without affecting flavour or sucking the soul out of the liquid. Traditional wine – fully fermented, with 13% or so alcohol – became the exception rather than the rule.

Fine wine – “classic” varietal wine, bottled in heavy glass with some SO₂ to help it age gracefully – became an indulgence. Those few remaining people who wanted to enjoy such old-fashioned wines the old-fashioned way were forced underground, meeting in secret in undisclosed locations.

Which is how you find yourself here. In this shack hidden deep in the bush, huddled around a candlelit table with old friends and strangers. Drinking a bottle of history. Drinking in the memories.

Twenty-seven years (!) ago, when he was just starting out on his wine-writing career, Max Allen wrote a future-gazing story for Mentelle Notes about the then-new-and-shiny Internet, and how it might change the world of wine. There were visions of a winemaker controlling ferment temperature remotely via a laptop from a helicopter (using a “portable modem plugged into his mobile phone” – long before the iPhone was invented) and buying wine online from a “virtual shop assistant” using “cyber-cash”. Ah, such innocent times. His last book, Intoxicating, Ten drinks that shaped Australia, won the Andre Simon Memorial Award in the UK. His next book, Alternative Reality, due for publication mid-2023, is about Australia’s evolving viticultural landscape.

Thinking Ahead

Pics: Ovis Creative



More hands make light work – Revegetation at Rivermouth team at the mouth of Margaret River.

Cape Mentelle is committed to its environmental and social responsibility strategies that are enshrined in CMV's recently acquired (and hard to achieve) ISO 14001:2015 certification. This best practice ISO standards program required an audit of the entire business – from vine to wine and even further – including *Mentelle Notes*. Have you noticed it is now printed on ecoStar+ 100% recycled post consumer waste paper? We also have a digital version.

In the vineyard we use a range of sustainable viticulture practices, including recycling grape marc for compost, spread only where the GIS system indicates it is needed to assist vine vigour and uniform ripening. The tractor fleet has been 'recycled' too, to more fuel-efficient models, while beneficial insects are released to control pests. Inter-row cover cropping also attracts beneficial insects.

And there is more. All new plantings utilise recyclable steel posts. Old pine ones were donated to fire damaged properties in the Perth Hills to replace fencing. Irrigation decisions are highly calibrated to save water and all our winery waste is meticulously managed. Eagle-eyed visitors will also spot a Porsche EV charging station in the car park. And that's just the beginning...

Cape Mentelle sponsored the Viticulture & Sustainability Excellence Award at the 2022 Margaret River Wine Show, a \$3000 travel bursary recognising the importance of sustainable viticulture. And the winery staff host regular winery school tours featuring amongst other environmental delights, wastewater management.

It should of course be noted that Cape Mentelle has always been environmentally ahead of the times. Back in the day founder David Hohnen had a flock of guinea fowl to eat vineyard grubs, and watermelons were

scattered down vine rows to divert the silver eyes from grape sampling. Sheep grazed under vines (and still do), weed trimming and enriching the soil. There was an early compost project too. So all is not that shiny bright and new.

And the CMV staff regularly volunteer for regional environment projects, currently focussed on the Cape2Cape track maintenance and Revegetation at Rivermouth, a coastal endeavour aiming to stabilise the fragile dunes at the mouth of Margaret River, supported by the Margaret River Wine Association. This latter project receives donations from the annual Cape Mentelle Movie nights where, of course, the popcorn buckets are recyclable. We're trying to leave no kernel unturned.

If you have more ideas on how we can be even more sustainable in our environmental endeavours do let us know: cellardoor@capementelle.com.au

Vintage Report

A year of the unexpected might be the most appropriate summary for Vintage 2022 at Cape Mentelle. Winter and spring were in a word – wet. In fact, the southwest of WA posted the wettest first half of the vintage year since 1964 and the highest October rainfall since 2011. Then the tables turned and La Nina's east coast impact left the West very hot and dry.

The growing season started late, and slowly, especially for sauvignon blanc. Then with the December heat waves the

compressed season kicked into gear progressing to an ideal harvest. Of special note is the quality of the chardonnay – small bunches of exceptional quality grapes, while cabernet sauvignon displays classic varietal expression, intensity and elegance. According to viticulturist Dave Moulton shiraz is also a standout. He is in no doubt that 2022 is a year to behold!

Coralie Lewis and Dave Moulton, checking the bunches, Vintage 2022.



Pic: Nikita Booth

Happy Travels

Willing Mentelle Ambassadors keen to pack a bottle of Cape Mentelle in their luggage have faced the occasional challenge of late, especially those living in WA. But borders are open and tripping is back on the calendar, as are long-awaited family reunions.

Cape Mentelle club member Campbell Morris headed east mid-year for a bit of surf and snow, visiting family in Gerroa NSW and then heading to Thredbo for some downhill exercise. Of course he packed a bottle of *Cape Mentelle Zinfandel* to warm the cockles after a days skiing, a snap that has earned him Mentelle Ambassador status.



Snow bunnies Campbell Morris and his mother Jenny, Thredbo NSW.

Budding ambassadors, be they strolling the Champs Elysées or meandering the Yorkshire moors, clutching their CM bottle, are encouraged to capture the occasion and send the photo (high res image) to info@capementelle.com.au If *Mentelle Notes* publishes your image the prize is a current release mixed case of Cape Mentelle's finest!

Westward Ho

Travel is back on the menu so wine explorers are alerted that Jetstar has commenced its direct cross-Nullarbor run three times weekly from Melbourne to Busselton. Imagine in only five hours you can be sipping refreshing *Cape Mentelle Rosé* down at Prevelly Beach with a view of the Indian Ocean. Up, up and... catch the South-West express soon!

Starry Nights



Movies at Cape Mentelle al fresco cinema screenings begin again this year from **Friday 16 December to Tuesday 31 January 2023**. Beanbags and glasses of Cape Mentelle's finest will accompany new release and favourite films (Friday to Tuesday nights). Film buffs can expect theme nights, food truck catering by Little Hand Dumplings and a brand new screen and sound system. For more on Cape Mentelle's outdoor summer cinema go to: www.capementelle.com.au/movies

Surf's Up



Barrels rolled out for the world's wine-loving champ surfers...

Inevitably the big Indian Ocean waves that roll in near Prevelly Beach a few clicks west of Cape Mentelle attract the world's best surfers. Cape Mentelle was delighted to host the world's premiere of Apple TV's 'Make or Break' movie night for the competitors in the World Surf League championship series, an off-board relaxing occasion during the 'West is Best' 2022 Margaret River Pro won by Australian surfer Jack Robinson.

Latest Drops

CAPE MENTELLE CHARDONNAY 2020

Heritage Series (to be released in 2023)

'Very toasty, smoky bouquet with ripe stone fruit aromatics. Layers and layers of precise clean peeled nectarine and peach, butterscotch and pear flavours are present. Rich creamy textures, struck match notes and bright acidity add to create a wine of excellent quality.'

95 POINTS, DECANTER WORLD WINE AWARDS 2022

CAPE MENTELLE CHARDONNAY 2020

'Waxy, round and creamy with ripe white stone fruit and juicy pineapple, lime, citrus acidity. Bright, fresh and exciting with a lovely citrus peel finish. Balanced yet rich.'

93 POINTS, DECANTER PANEL TASTING

CAPE MENTELLE SHIRAZ 2018

'Deep colour. Intense blackberry pastille, musky dark plum aromas with dark-chocolate notes. Richly concentrated and supple with abundant smooth dark berry fruits, lacy / al dente tannins, superb mid-palate viscosity and underlying cedar notes...Generous, buoyant and vigorous. Idiosyncratic but delicious.'

95 POINTS, Andrew Caillard MW THE VINTAGE JOURNAL

CAPE MENTELLE CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2017

'Palate has both density and power, yet is nuanced by a soft, leafy, floral character... plush and bolstered by oak...clove bud and aniseed lace together... The length of flavour is the ultimate testament to quality here.'

95 POINTS, Erin Larkin HALLIDAY WINE COMPANION

'Attractive blackcurrant, mulberry aromas with praline, herb garden notes. Supple and well concentrated with blackcurrant pastille, mulberry, fine slinky tannins and underlying roasted chestnut, mocha notes. Finishes velvety with very good mineral length. Impressive definition and precision.'

96 POINTS, Andrew Caillard MW THE VINTAGE JOURNAL

CAPE MENTELLE TRINDERS SHIRAZ CABERNET 2018

'Impressive, for the price.'

93 POINTS, Erin Larkin HALLIDAY WINE COMPANION