



Pegasus Bay Estate

Merlot Cabernet

2018

THE FAMILY

The Donaldson Family have been seriously involved in viticulture and winemaking for over 40 years. Founder Ivan Donaldson planted the first Canterbury vineyard in 1976 and went on to establish Pegasus Bay in 1986 with his wife Christine. It is a true family business, with all four of their sons and two spouses involved, managing various aspects.

THE SEASON

Settled weather during December provided optimal conditions for flowering. A very hot summer then enabled the grapes to ripen beautifully. Free draining stony soil helped mitigate the effects of some late summer rain, and the ensuing dry autumn meant the fruit was able to be picked in excellent condition.

THE VINEYARD AND THE VINES

The vineyard is located within the Waipara Valley of North Canterbury, on free draining, north facing terraces carved out of New Zealand's Southern Alps by an ice-age glacier. It benefits from being in the lee of the Teviotdale Range, giving maximum protection from the Pacific's easterly breezes and thus creating a unique mesoclimate. The vines are over 30 years old, with a large proportion planted on their own roots. The soil is free draining and of low fertility, resulting in naturally reduced vine vigour. This produces low yields of optimally ripened, high quality, flavourful grapes, which fully express the qualities of this unique terroir. The vineyard has warm days, but the nights are amongst the coolest in the Waipara Valley, drawing out the ripening period of the grapes, while still retaining good natural acidity.

HARVEST AND WINE MAKING

This wine is made in the same style as the celebrated Claret from Bordeaux, using traditional methods. After being picked in April, the grapes began fermentation naturally in stainless steel tanks. During this process the juice was regularly drained and sprayed back over the cap of floating grape skins (rather than plunging), to ensure a perfect tannin balance was extracted from the fruit. The wine was then gently pressed off and put into French oak barriques (25% new). The following summer, when the weather warmed, it underwent a natural malo-lactic (secondary) fermentation. After maturing in oak for 2 years, the various batches were then carefully blended in varying portions to produce the most complex and balanced wine possible. The finished product is a blend of 40% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Malbec and 5% Cabernet Franc.

THE WINE

It is deep purple in colour. The nose reveals an intoxicating patchwork of both sweet and savoury aromas, with hints of liquorice, chocolate, black cherry, vanilla and spice. On the palate it is rich and mouth-filling, with fine grained silky tannins. There is satisfying body, however the Merlot component ensures the wine remains smooth and succulent, with generous fruit weight. While ready to drink now, it will evolve gracefully in the bottle for many years to come.

HARVEST DATE	BRIX AT HARVEST	ALCOHOL CONTENT	R.S	T.A.	AGING POTENTIAL
April 2018	24	14%	dry	5.4g/l	10+ yrs

