



Pegasus Bay Estate

Merlot Cabernet

2020

THE FAMILY

The Donaldson Family have been seriously involved in viticulture and winemaking for over 40 years. Founder Ivan Donaldson planted one of Canterbury's first vineyards 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 now involved.

THE VINEYARD AND THE VINES

The vineyard is located within the Waipara Valley of North Canterbury, on free draining, north facing terraces. 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. They are located on the "Glasnevin Gravels" where greywacke stones, silt and loam have been washed down from the mountains over the millennia. The soil is 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.

THE SEASON

Settled weather over flowering provided a healthy fruit set, which was then thinned back to desired levels. The ensuing summer was dry with very little rain, resulting in perfectly ripened small berries full of intense flavour and concentration. Thankfully, our harvest was able to proceed during the C-19 lockdown, and an unbroken autumn full of warm days meant the fruit was picked at its optimum ripeness.

HARVEST AND WINE MAKING

This wine is made in the same style as the celebrated Claret from Bordeaux, using traditional methods. After being picked during mid-April, the grapes began fermentation naturally in stainless steel tanks. During this process the juice was regularly pumped 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 (15% new). The following summer, when the weather warmed, it underwent a natural malo-lactic (secondary) fermentation. After maturing in oak for 18mths, the various batches were then carefully blended in varying portions to produce the most complex and balanced wine possible. The finished product is predominately Merlot, with the remainder comprised of Cabernet Sauvignon, and a small amount of Cabernet Franc.

THE WINE

On release it has a deep crimson tint. A sensuous amalgam of dark fruit, wood smoke and spice rise temptingly from the glass. Impressions of bramble, cherry and plum first on attack, followed by a flotilla of roasted red pepper, aniseed, tobacco leaf, leather, and mint. The mouthfeel is impressively concentrated, with confident tannins and radiant acidity weaving across a wide, succulent palate. Brawny and classically structured, the voyage ends with a sustained and spice laden finish. While ready to drink now, this wine will reward careful cellaring for many years to come.

| HARVEST DATE | AVE. BRIX AT HARVEST | ALCOHOL CONTENT | R.S | T.A. | AGING POTENTIAL |
|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----|---------|-----------------|
| 11th - 17th April 2020 | 25 | 13.5% | dry | 4.7 g/l | 10+ years |

