



Pegasus Bay Estate

Merlot Cabernet

2023

THE FAMILY

The Donaldson Family have been seriously involved in viticulture and winemaking for almost 50 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 the second generation now actively 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 during Spring resulted in successful flowering and a healthy fruit set, meaning crop thinning was needed in some areas. Good heat concentration in early to mid-Summer then allowed the grapes to ripen beautifully. The remainder of Summer and Autumn threw up a mix of hot days interspersed with cooler spells, although rain was sufficiently spread out to ensure the bunches remained healthy and disease free.

HARVEST AND WINE MAKING

This wine is made in the same style as the celebrated Claret from Bordeaux, using traditional methods. After being picked over several weeks in 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 (approx. 20% new). The following summer, when the weather warmed, it underwent a natural malo-lactic (secondary) fermentation. After maturing in oak for 18 months, 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, Malbec, and a small amount of Cabernet Franc.

THE WINE

Inky purple in colour, the bouquet is richly fruited and fragrant, resembling dark forest berries, melded with wood spice, cinnamon, cigar smoke and dried herbs. The palate is superbly weighted, with a seductive silky texture, and layers of polished tannins. Mouth-filling, it offers succulent fruit intensity, while retaining poise and a delicious sense of brightness. Our 2023 Merlot Cabernet is commanding in structure, incorporating richness, tension and a savoury, moreish finish.

HARVEST DATE	AVE. BRIX AT HARVEST	ALCOHOL CONTENT	R.S	T.A.	AGING POTENTIAL
19th - 30th April 2023	24	13%	dry	4.5 g/l	10+ years

