

Pegasus Bay Merlot Cabernet 2016

The Story

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 Vineyard

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.

Vintage 2016

Warm and settled weather during flowering led to a very large initial set. Fruit thinning was then undertaken to bring the crop back to the desired level. A perfect summer, followed by a warm dry autumn enabled the subsequent grapes to be harvested with excellent flavour development and physiological ripeness.

Winemaking

This wine is made in the same style as the celebrated Claret from Bordeaux, using traditional methods. After being picked in May, 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



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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, 15% Malbec and 5% Cabernet Franc.

Tasting Note

The wine is deep ruby in colour. Its abundant aromas suggest blackberries, dark plums, cassis and mocha, with underlying hints of vanilla, spice, cigar box and game. The palate is rich but muscular, with a backbone of ripe tannins that provide a savoury aftertaste of black olive tapenade. While the wine is full bodied, the Merlot component ensures it remains smooth and succulent, with generous fruit weight.

Alcohol Percentage	14%
Residual Sugar	Dry
T.A.	5.6 g/L
Aging Potential	10 + years



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