



Pegasus Bay Reserve

PRIMA DONNA

Pinot Noir 2012 Aged Release

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 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.

AGED RELEASE PROGRAM

Our aged release program started back in 2006 when we set aside a few cases of our key varieties, Riesling & Pinot Noir, with the intention of releasing them in 2016, 10 years later. Stock has been set aside every vintage since. The inspiration for this came from the desire to offer our customers the opportunity to taste these wines in full maturity, something that is relatively rare these days. We consider this to be a particularly satisfying time to experience these wines with the added complexities of bottle age, while still offering years of good drinking ahead.

THE SEASON

This was our coolest summer in almost 40 years of growing grapes at Pegasus Bay, but it was followed by a lingering dry autumn. By leaving the grapes on the vines until later in the season we achieved a beautiful spectrum of ripe varietal flavours. Mother nature came to the party by naturally moderating crop levels which has contributed to good fruit concentration and body in the wine.

HARVEST AND WINE MAKING

Traditional Burgundian winemaking methods were used to make this wine. We picked the various blocks at different stages during late April and early May, depending on their maturity. Approximately 10% of the grapes were put at the bottom of the fermentation vats as whole bunches, with the balance being destemmed on top, retaining as many whole berries as possible. The vats were kept cool over the next few days to help extract the soft, silky tannins from the pinot noir skins. After approximately a week the must started to ferment naturally. During fermentation the skins of the grapes were gently plunged twice daily. When the fermentation finished, the grape remnants were left to steep in the wine for up to a week to help extract a different range of tannins that add structure and depth. The exact duration of this period was determined by daily tasting. Subsequently the wine was gently pressed off and put into oak barriques (40% new) from selected artisan Burgundian coopers. In the summer after harvest, when the weather warmed, the wine underwent a natural malo-lactic (secondary) fermentation. After maturing for 18mths in these barriques, the batches made from the many different plots and clones of pinot were carefully blended in varying portions to produce the most complex and balanced wine possible.



THE WINE

Its colour is deep ruby shot with flecks of amber. Its generous aromas and flavours suggest dark cherries, blackberries, raspberries and mulberries, suffused with chocolate mocha and spice. Bottle age has given the wine a pronounced savoury character, suggesting grilled meats and mushrooms with a hint of black olive tapenade. It is seductively light on entry but rapidly expands on the palate to become rich and mouth filling, while retaining elegance and poise. Silky tannins help draw out its lingering aftertaste.

HARVEST DATE	AVE. BRIX AT HARVEST	ALCOHOL CONTENT	R.S	T.A	AGING POTENTIAL
20th April - 5th May 2012	24.5	13.5%	Dry	4.8 g/l	Drink now