



Pegasus Bay Reserve

VIRTUOSO

Chardonnay 2009

THE SEASON

An exceptionally early budburst was brought about by a very mild spring. Warm summer days with cool nights and a balmy, dry autumn produced healthy, beautifully ripened fruit while retaining a wonderful balance and crispness.

THE VINEYARD AND THE VINES

The vines, which are 25 years old, grow on their own roots in well drained, stony soil on a series of north facing, gradually descending terraces. The site is warm during the day but cool at night, resulting in good ripening while retaining the berries' natural acids. Our main variety of chardonnay, known locally as Mendoza, typically produces light crops of small berries and hence tends to make concentrated wines.

HARVEST AND WINE MAKING

We use traditional Burgundian winemaking methods. After picking in mid-April, the fruit was gently pressed and the unclarified juice put into large French oak barrels (puncheons), only 30% of which were new. There it underwent spontaneous primary fermentation by the grapes' own yeasts, without any attempt at temperature control. The wine then rested on this yeast deposit (sur lie). In the summer after harvest it started to go through natural secondary (malo-lactic) fermentation by its indigenous micro-organisms. It was regularly tasted during this time and the process stopped when ideal balance was achieved. After a total of 1 year in puncheons the wine was blended, which allowed it to further integrate prior to bottling, which was 20 months after harvest. Virtuoso is made from a small selection of barrels which are felt to best express the vintage and terroir.

THE WINE

The bouquet and flavour evoke impressions of nectarines, white fleshed peaches, yellow plums and rock melon, coating a core of citrus fruits. These intermingle with hints of toasted hazelnuts, marzipan, breakfast cereal, liquorice and black olives.

The wine is concentrated and powerful in the mouth but stays quite restrained and refined. The lingering aftertaste is drawn out by lively minerality and tangy crispness. While ready to drink on release, with careful cellaring it should become more complex and integrated over the next 5 or 6 years and last a decade or more.

Wine in moderation is a natural health food.

