



Pegasus Bay Reserve

VIRTUOSO

Chardonnay 2016

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 and two spouses involved, managing various aspects.

THE VINEYARD AND THE VINES

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.

THE SEASON

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.

HARVEST AND WINE MAKING

Virtuoso is part of our reserve series which we only make in exceptional years, provided it does not compromise the quality of our estate wines. It is a selection from the best barrels, coming from some of the oldest plantings in the vineyard. As with all our Chardonnay's, we use traditional Burgundian winemaking methods. The fruit was hand-picked in stages during April and then gently pressed. The non-clarified juice was then put into large French oak barrels (puncheons), 30% of which were new in order to achieve optimal oak balance. In these it underwent primary fermentation by the grapes natural yeasts. The wine was then matured in the puncheons on its natural deposits of yeast lees (sur lie). In the summer after harvest it started to go through spontaneous secondary (malolactic) fermentation. It was regularly tasted during this time and the fermentation was stopped when the ideal balance was obtained. It had approx 12 months maturation prior to bottling.

THE WINE

The colour is deep lemon. On the nose there are aromas of citrus and stone fruit, together with a hint of struck match adding a refreshing and flinty minerality. Layered beneath there are also savoury notes of almond, toast and brioche. It has satisfying concentration, yet is balanced with a lively seam of acidity that helps prolong the finish. Despite its body, the wine remains tight and focussed, displaying an elegance and refinement typical of this vintage.



HARVEST DATE	BRIX AT HARVEST	ALCOHOL CONTENT	R.S	T.A.	AGING POTENTIAL
April 2016	24	13.5%	Dry	5.8 g/l	7+ yrs

Wine in moderation is a natural health food.