



Pegasus Bay Reserve PRIMA DONNA Pinot Noir 2015

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

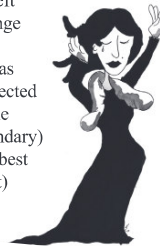
The vineyard is located within the Waipara Valley of North Canterbury, on free draining, north facing terraces carved out of New Zealand's Southern Alps by an ice-age glacier. It benefits from being in the lee of the Teviotdale Range, giving maximum protection from the Pacific's easterly breezes and 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

Cooler than average spring temperatures led to a smaller set, however this resulted in excellent fruit concentration. A warm summer and long lingering autumn then followed, allowing this smaller crop to reach optimum ripeness.

HARVEST AND WINE MAKING

Prima Donna 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 Pinot's, we use traditional Burgundian winemaking methods. We picked the various blocks at different stages, depending on their maturity, aiming for a range of red and dark fruit flavours. Approximately one third 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 approx a week, the must started to ferment naturally. During fermentation the floating cap of grape skins was 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 (30% 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 18 months, a selection from the best barriques (representing the many different plots & clones of pinot) was chosen and carefully blended, to produce the most complex and balanced wine possible.



THE WINE

It is deep ruby in colour. The nose is packed with vibrant red fruit suggesting strawberry, raspberry and pomegranate. Beneath this is a savoury underlay, evoking impressions of roast game, spicy pepper and black olive tapanade. The palate is mouthfilling and rich, balanced with velvety tannins and a seam of refreshing acidity that helps draw out the wine's lingering finish. While ready to drink on release it can be expected to cellar well and evolve gracefully for many years.

HARVEST DATE	BRIX AT HARVEST	ALCOHOL CONTENT	R.S	T.A.	AGING POTENTIAL
April 2015	23.5 - 24	14%	Dry	5.3g/l	10+ yrs

Wine in moderation is a natural health food.