



Pegasus Bay Reserve

VIRTUOSO

Chardonnay 2019

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. 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.

THE SEASON

Unsettled weather over flowering resulted in a lighter than average set, meaning that no further fruit thinning was necessary. A classic North Canterbury summer then enabled this smaller crop to mature beautifully. Accelerated ripening allowed harvest to take place slightly earlier than usual, and favourable autumn weather ensured the grapes were picked in perfect condition.

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 late March and early April and then gently pressed. The non-clarified juice was then put into large French oak barrels (puncheons), 40% of which were new to achieve optimal oak balance. In these it underwent primary fermentation by the grape's 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 approximately 12 months maturation prior to bottling.

THE WINE

On release it has an enchanting lemon hue. A feast of tantalising aromas greet the nose, roasted peach, green apple and grapefruit pith interwoven with toasted grains, smoky bacon, flint, orange blossom and a lick of struck match. The palate is powerfully expressive and generously proportioned, dense and layered yet fresh and vibrant. An opulent and creamy mouthfeel is perfectly balanced with integrated oak and a frisky acidity that excites the mid-palate, creating focus, energy, and drive. The finish is seamlessly executed, long and explosive with a rewarding nutty afterglow. A full bodied and complex Chardonnay displaying classic North Canterbury essence.



HARVEST DATE	BRIX AT HARVEST	ALCOHOL CONTENT	R.S	T.A.	AGING POTENTIAL
30th March - 6th April 2019	24	13.5%	Dry	6.5 g/l	7+ years