

PEGASUS BAY

FINE WAIPARA WINE



MAESTRO Merlot Malbec 2005

TASTING NOTE



Heavy nor'west wind was frequent over the period of flowering of the grapes which impaired their pollination and lead to a small crop of grapes setting on the vines. The rest of the season, however, was excellent with good heat accumulation over the summer and autumn. The fruit was thus beautifully ripe and in optimal condition when harvested.

This wine is a blend of classical Bordeaux grape varieties and in making it we have utilised traditional methods which have made the region's wine so famous and have given Claret a household name. The berries, without stems, were placed in vats and during their fermentation the juice was regularly drained from the bottom, allowed to aerate by splashing and then pumped back over the floating cap of its skins to keep them moist and healthy. This enabled excellent extraction of colour and tannins. When the fermentation had finished the vats were sealed to exclude air and there was a period of *post-fermentation maceration*, during which the wine was kept in contact with the grape remnants. The duration of this was determined by regular tasting, the aim being to achieve ideal structure and mouth-feel. After several weeks the new wine was run off into French oak barriques, which were kept in our cellars over winter. When the weather warmed in the spring after harvest, the wine underwent natural malo-lactic fermentation by the action of its own indigenous micro-organisms. It was kept in barriques for 2 years, during which time it underwent several rackings to clarify it. It was kept for a further 9 months in old large oak vats to help it mature and soften. It was then carefully blended and bottled according to taste.

The wine has a bright garnet hue. The low crops have given the wine extra concentration. Merlot (85%) has provided a core of plump, plummy, velvety fruit, while malbec (15%) has provided rose-petal-like notes, along with a backbone of ripe, savoury tannins which flow through the palate and draw out the length. There are also hints of vanilla pod, dark chocolate and liquorice.

While ready to drink on release, careful cellaring will result in the wine developing a range of additional fascinating nuances, while at the same time mellowing. After several years it may throw a deposit and decanting is recommended. It is expected to peak about 6-8 years after its vintage and will live well beyond.



Wine is a natural health food