

# TASTING NOTE

PEGASUS BAY



MERLOT  
CABERNET  
2002

14% Vol

e750ml

PRODUCED & BOTTLED BY DONALDSON FAMILY LTD  
WAIPARA CANTERBURY NEW ZEALAND

## MERLOT CABERNET 2002

The growing season was special in that there was overall good heat summation without extremes of temperature and the autumn was dry, warm and very prolonged. This led to very even ripening with the development of true varietal flavours and retention of good levels of natural acidity.

We gave the vines a lot of individual attention. This included careful positioning of shoots and the removal of excess leaves to prevent shading, both within the canopy and in the fruiting zone. Crop reduction was carried out at veraison by 'green harvest' during which individual bunches and grapes that were lagging behind were removed. There was also rigorous selection of fruit at harvest to ensure only the best was included.

The wine was fermented in the traditional Bordeaux Claret manner with the juice regularly being aerated by draining and splashing it from the vat and then pumping it over the cap of floating skins to keep them moist. After fermentation had finished the wine remained in contact with the skins for a period "post fermentation maceration".

The duration of this varied from batch to batch and was assessed by daily tasting to help evaluate the evolution of its tannic structure. When this was felt to be optimum, the wine was separated from the skins and then matured in oak barriques, 30% of which were new, for 18 months. During this time the wine had between 4-6 rackings to achieve clarity.

The wine is a classical claret blend of merlot, cabernet sauvignon, malbec and cabernet franc. Six clones of merlot, 2 clones of cabernet sauvignon, 3 clones of malbec and 1 clone of cabernet franc were used. Each clone was harvested, vinted and matured separately. The proportions of these which went to make up the final assemblage or blend, was determined by taste.

This is the first year in which merlot has been the predominant varietal in this blend. It provides plump, plummy characters and a framework of ripe tannins.

The cabernet sauvignon adds blackcurrant and cassis elements, while the malbec provides an additional aromatic, rose=petal-like element and supports the structure. The cabernet franc adds a lively fruitiness.

While ready to drink on release, the wine should benefit from careful cellaring for the next 5-10 years, showing increasing complexity and harmony.

Wine is a natural health food.

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