

TASTING NOTE

PEGASUS BAY



MERLOT
CABERNET
2004

14.5% Vol

e750ml

PRODUCED & BOTTLED BY DONALDSON FAMILY LTD
WAIPARA CANTERBURY NEW ZEALAND

MERLOT CABERNET 2004

A mild spring was followed by extremely hot weather over the early and middle parts of the summer which made us wonder whether we might lose varietal typicity. Subsequently the weather moderated and the autumn was dry, lingering and warm. Overall pattern of early development and maturation with a gentle, drawn out ripening period, promoted bright, ripe fruit flavours and tannins, with soft, natural acidity.

We have 6 clones of merlot, 3 clones of malbec, 2 clones of cabernet sauvignon and 1 clone of cabernet franc in our vineyard. They were all harvested, fermented and matured separately. This final classical style wine was produced by blending these according to taste just prior to bottling.

After picking the fruit was carefully hand selected so that only the best grapes were used. These were then fermented in vats in the traditional Bordeaux manner with the developing wine being taken from the bottom of the tanks, aerated by splashing and pumped back over the floating cap of grape skins to keep them moist. After the fermentation ceased the new wine was kept in contact with the remnants of the grapes for a period, the optimal duration for each vat being determined by daily tasting. The wine was then pressed and put into oak barriques, 30% of which were new. In the spring after harvest, when the barrel cellar began to warm, the wine underwent natural malo-lactic fermentation by the action of its own indigenous organisms. It was matured in these barriques for a period of 2 years and during this time, 4-6 rackings were carried out so that it achieved clarity without filtration.

The wine has a deep ruby hue. The merlot provides plump, plummy characters in a framework of ripe tannins, while the malbec supports this structure and adds an aromatic, rose-petal-like element. Black currant and cassis hints come from the cabernet sauvignon and the cabernet franc adds an elegance.

These are integrated by a savoury overlay suggestive of cigar smoke, coffee beans and black olives. It seems to expand in the palate becoming mouth-filling and rich, but yet has velvety tannins and a lingering after-taste. Although it is ready to drink on release, with careful cellaring it should continue to develop additional layers of complexity.

Wine is a natural health food

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