



Pegasus Bay Reserve

VIRTUOSO

Chardonnay 2020

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 now involved.

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

Settled weather over flowering provided a healthy fruit set, which was then thinned back to desired levels. The ensuing summer was dry with very little rain, resulting in perfectly ripened small berries full of intense flavour and concentration. Thankfully, our harvest was able to proceed during the Covid-19 lockdown, and an unbroken autumn full of warm days meant the fruit was picked at its optimum ripeness.

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 the second half of March 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 10 months maturation prior to bottling.

THE WINE

Shimmering bright lemon in colour, the nose is multi-faceted, fruit driven yet intriguingly savoury. Impressions of grapefruit, grilled pineapple, and melon, nestled on an underlay of smoky bacon, buttered popcorn, and pie crust, fused with hazelnuts, creamy caramel, and a puff of gunpowder. In the mouth it is vibrant and energised, with sophisticated concentration and exhilarating acidity combining to create a formidable tension. Strapping, yet oozing with finesse, it accelerates towards a long, racy finish.



HARVEST DATE	BRIX AT HARVEST	ALCOHOL CONTENT	R.S	T.A.	AGING POTENTIAL
16th - 29th March 2020	24	13.5%	Dry	6.7 g/l	7+ years