

WAIPARA VALLEY

PEGASUS BAY

Owners: The Pegasus Bay Family

Fast Facts

Vineyard surface:
120 acres (48.5 hectares)

Owner:
The Donaldson Family

Winemaker:
Matthew Donaldson

Established:
1985

Location:
Amberley

Region:
Waipara Valley



THE HISTORY

The Donaldson Family have been seriously involved in wine since the early 1970s and were pioneers of local grape growing and winemaking. Associate Professor and Consultant Neurologist, Ivan Donaldson, was also a wine writer and wine judge. Today, he oversees viticulture. His wife, Christine, was responsible for establishing the winery's breathtaking garden and still spends much of her time maintaining them.

Their eldest son, Matthew, graduated with an enology degree and a postgraduate diploma in viticulture from the Roseworthy College in Australia. Matthew is the winemaker at Pegasus Bay and has worked many vintages in other parts of the world, with a focus on Burgundy winemaking.

Edward Donaldson is the Marketing Manager, and his wife Belinda manages the award-winning Pegasus Bay Restaurant. Paul Donaldson, the youngest son, has an MBA degree and works as General Manager for the company. Middle son, Michael, is the latest to join the business as local sales manager. Pegasus Bay is an entirely family-owned and operated enterprise.

Winemaking philosophy: Pegasus Bay aims to grow grapes of the highest quality which fully expresses the features of the vineyard, and to handle these with the utmost respect. Natural methods and as little intervention as possible at all stages, from vine to bottle, typify their approach. They believe in sustainable viticultural management, organic techniques, low crop levels, minimal handling of fruit during processing and

gentle pressing. They allow wines to go through natural malolactic fermentation and clarify by settling. Their red wines are bottled without filtration. They aspire to capture the unique flavors of the vineyard in their wine.

THE TERROIR

The vineyards' location next to the Teviotdale Range provides maximum protection from easterly breezes. The heat of the day is trapped by smooth stones and gravels left behind by an ice age glacier. This soil is free draining and has low fertility, resulting in naturally reduced vine growth. North Canterbury is known for unsettled weather during flowering resulting in low yields of highly concentrated fruit. Long dry Autumns allow for extended hang time when desired.

This produces high quality, flavorful grapes, which fully express the qualities of this unique setting. An unusually large vineyard staff allows operations such as shoot thinning, crop thinning, bunch exposure and fruit selection to be performed with meticulous detail.



CHARDONNAY: 100% Chardonnay from 30-year old, estate-grown North Canterbury vineyards. The grapes are gently pressed (60-70% whole bunch) and the nonclarified juice is put into large French oak barrels (70% old). The grapes ferment primarily by their indigenous yeasts. The wine ages in the same barrels sur lie for about 12 months to bottling. The color is deep lemon. On the nose there are aromas of citrus, as well as honeydew melon and hints of peach/nectarine. There are also some underlying savory notes (toast and brioche) as a result of the secondary fermentation and lees contact in the barrel.



PINOT NOIR: 100% Pinot Noir from 30-year old, estate-grown North Canterbury vineyards. About 25% of the grapes were put at bottom of fermentation vats with the balance being destemmed on top. The grapes cold soak for seven days before undergoing wild fermentation and then are plunged twice daily. The wine ages in French Oak Barriques (40% new) for 22 months. The wine has a vibrant ruby appearance. On the nose, there is a selection of red fruit aromas (raspberry, pomegranate, and cherry), as well as pepper and clove. The palate is satisfyingly concentrated with fine-grained tannins.



RIESLING: 100% Riesling from 30-year old, estate-grown North Canterbury vineyards. The free run juice ferments slowly at cool temperatures while the wine undergoes no oak aging. The color is straw yellow. On the nose, there is an abundance of citrus, particularly the orange zest that so defines North Canterbury Rieslings. There are also hints of red apple and apricot, layered with honeysuckle and guava. The extended hang time has added a concentration to the palate, together with ripe phenolics that give structure and length.



PINOT NOIR "PRIMA DONNA": 100% Pinot Noir from 30-year old, estate-grown North Canterbury vineyards. About 33% of the grapes are put at the bottom of the vats as whole bunches, with the balance being destemmed on top. During fermentation, the floating cap of grape skins is gently plunged twice daily. After fermentation, the grape remnants steep in the wine for a week. The wine ages in French oak barriques (30% new) for 18 months. Deep ruby in color. The nose has vibrant strawberry, raspberry, and pomegranate notes. Beneath this is a savory underlay, evoking impressions of roasted game, spicy pepper, and black olive tapenade.



SAUVIGNON SEMILLON: 70% Sauvignon and 30% Semillon from estate-grown North Canterbury vineyards. The varietals ferment separately, with the Sauvignon in stainless steel to retain the pure fruit character, and the Semillon in oak barrels to add texture. About 20% of the overall wine ferments and ages in new French barrels to give extra length and complexity. The Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon ages sur lees for 10 months prior to bottling. The color is pale gold with aromas of citrus fruit, greengage, gooseberry, and passionfruit. There is also a hint of struck match and freshly crushed thyme.