

TASTING NOTE

PEGASUS BAY



MAESTRO

MERLOT
MALBEC

2003

14.5% Vol

e750ml

PRODUCED & BOTTLED BY DONALDSON FAMILY LTD
WAIPARA CANTERBURY NEW ZEALAND

MAESTRO 2003

Cool weather during flowering reduced the set on the vines, which resulted in a smallish crop. The rest of the season, however, was excellent with a long, warm autumn. The grapes were thus picked in optimal condition and the reduced crop ensured excellent concentration in the wine. As the wine is made from classical Claret varieties it was vinted in the traditional Bordelaise manner with the juice being regularly drained from the bottom of the vat, aerated by splashing and then pumped back over the floating cap of grape skins and pulp to help keep it moist and aid extraction. When fermentation had stopped the grape remnants were left steeping in the wine, the exact period for each batch being determined by regular tasting. After the wine had been separated from the skins, it was matured in French oak barriques, 30% of which were new, and remained there for 18 months. During this period, it was raked 4-5 times so that it clarified without requiring filtration. When the

weather warmed in the barrel cellar in the early summer following harvest, it went through natural malo-lactic fermentation by the action of its own microorganisms. Because the wine was so rich and robustly structured it was taken out of the barriques and put into very large old oak vats to give it a further period of maturation in cask without gaining oak character. It remained there for a further 18 months so that it had a period of 3 years aging before bottling.

We have 6 clones of merlot, 3 clones of malbec, 2 clones of cabernet sauvignon and 1 clone of cabernet franc. Each of these was made and matured separately, the final wine being carefully blended according to taste just prior to bottling.

The merlot (75%) provides a core of plump, rich, mouth-filling fruit with impressions of purple-fleshed plums and peaches. The malbec (15%) adds a backbone of fine, grained tannins, which give muscularity, structure and length, preventing the wine from being too flabby or fat. An ethereal, lifted aroma and freshness come from the cabernet franc (5%), while cabernet sauvignon (5%) provides zesty, cassis and wild blackberry hints. There are also underlying savoury impressions of black olives, grilled meats and the like, which will become more prominent as the wine mellows with age. While ready to drink on release it can be expected to develop a range of different, fascinating nuances as it integrates and matures over the next 5-10 years and should live well beyond.



Wine is a natural health food

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