

# PALMINA

## 2003 Nebbiolo, Stolpman Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley



Considered one of the great grape varieties, Nebbiolo's origins are traced to the early 14<sup>th</sup> century from an east-west running valley in the northeast of Italy. It's a difficult grape to grow – sensitive to soil, climate and geography – and yet very expressive of where it's grown. The Stolpman Vineyard is unique on its own, and lies in the east-west Santa Ynez Valley. Planted on a very thin layer of topsoil, the Nebbiolo roots reach down through a layer of clay and then one of soft, white chalk. Combined with the maritime influence of the nearby Pacific, a long growing season and the immaculate care given to the vineyard, Nebbiolo from Stolpman fully ripens late in the season into grapes that are distinctive and complex. The 2003 harvest was low-yielding, with small berries and clusters and concentrated flavors.

Upon delivery to the winery, Nebbiolo demands the utmost care and attention. If the thin-skinned nature of the grape was unpredictable in the vineyard, it is downright finicky in the cellar. This is where the Clifton's relationships with growers and winemakers in Piemonte and their continual study of Nebbiolo is evident. The grapes were harvested in late November, and then fermented in small open top bins, with an extended maceration of four weeks. Each small lot was punched down by hand 2-3 times each day to fully extract color and flavors. The new wine was then aged for the first year in a combination of Slavonian oak barriques (228liter) and French puncheons (500liter), of which 25% were new. In the second year, the wine was transferred to a 3500liter botte – a traditional oak upright – to further integrate the wine and soften the tannins. The wine was then further aged in bottle for six months prior to release.

As you look into the depths of the ruby color of this wine, the sublime and complex bouquet begins to unfurl, first with a piercing earthy quality of quinine, then followed by smoky, meaty and white pepper spicy notes. Not a shy wine, after decanting or aggressive swirling in the glass, the 2003 Nebbiolo bursts forth with briary flavors, spicy notes of anise, wild thyme and herb d'provence and a layering of dried cranberry and red currants. Beautifully integrated tannins and a balanced acidity manifest themselves in the bold, rich and pleasurable mouthfeel and tangy finish of the wine.

This is a wine that will continue to improve with age, and can be cellared for at least ten years. It is also a wine that demands food! We like it with roast meats, dishes with truffles and hard, bold cheeses.