

PALMINA

Savoia SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, 2005



Unusual. Eclectic. Unique. Extraordinary. Remarkable. Uncommon. Just a few adjectives that come to mind with “out of the ordinary” combinations of components. And so – Savoia. An exceptional wine created as a result of a challenge from respected colleagues in Italy. A wine with perhaps unanticipated interplays of aromas, textures and flavors. A wine that just may be a fusion of more than the sum of its parts.

Savoia is a wine that speaks of the best of coming together. Of tradition and modern times. Of Chrystal and Steve Clifton. Of Italy and California. And of Nebbiolo, Barbera and Syrah. Not surprisingly, Savoia resulted from a suggestion – perhaps a challenge – posed to Chrystal and Steve while on an annual trip to Italy. Their friend and colleague, Luciano, proposed that they craft a wine made of these three varietals to meld the red and dark fruit flavors, acids and tannins of each varietal into a complex and multi-layered wine. And perhaps there are few places where each grape varietal can ripen to perfection other than the east-west valleys of Santa Barbara County. The first release of this notable wine was introduced in 2002, and immediately sold out.

Proprietor/Winemaker Steve Clifton named the wine Savoia to reflect a sense of place and history. In the 1400’s, the House of Savoy reigned over both the Piemonte region of Italy and the Rhone valley, and so perhaps the noble Nebbiolo and French Syrah had met before during that long and peaceful dynasty of yore. This harmonious historical aspect is reflected in the mingling of the shield of Savoy with the Palmina logo and the naming of this unique wine.

Add in an extraordinary vintage to the mix. 2005 was a year that saw plentiful rains in winter that replenished soils and vines and then led to a long, cool growing season with picture-perfect ripening for all three varietals. The Nebbiolo, Barbera and Syrah were all vinified and barreled separately. A selection of the most intriguing barrels for the blend was made, and the Savoia blend of 50% Nebbiolo and 25% each of Barbera and Syrah made after two years in barrel. The blend was then returned to barrel and determined to be ready for bottling in the Spring of 2008. “I believe this may be the best Savoia to date”, states Steve Clifton. “It truly is a harmonious blend of the best of each varietal, each playing off each other and overlaid with a stamp of the superb 2005 vintage.”

Savoia is clearly an artisanal display of the best of all three varietals and the power of the blend. The tannins, lilted acidity and wild herb, cherry, truffle characteristics of Nebbiolo merging with the beautiful dark color and red fruit notes of Barbera, assimilating with the smooth texture, rich flavors and spice of Syrah. Yet, each varietal also stands on its own, with peaks and reminders of their own unique characteristics. The 2005 Savoia is a bit of a changeling – the dark maroon color with brick edges first invites a swirl. A swirl unleashes floral notes of violets and rose petals and then a remembrance of tart, baked cherries. The first sip is velvety and bursts with dark plum, earthy porcini mushrooms and clove, a hint of tobacco, a reminder of fresh-picked blackberries. On the palate, a bright acidity surrounds nuances of a warm summer afternoon, framboise, and red plums and then leads to a long, enduring finish of black cherry and dusty, tea-like tannin. Yet – wait another hour and this wine continues to unveil layers and layers of complexity.

One of Palmina’s finest, the 2005 Savoia is finished with a traditional wax seal. It is delightful upon release and will continue to evolve and integrate with 5-7 years of cellaring. Please enjoy with food and a full table of friends and family!