

# PALMINA

## 2007 Barbera Santa Barbara County



In northern Italy's Piedmont region, Barbera is prized for its ability to ripen easily, pair beautifully with food, and be ready to drink and enjoy relatively early. It is a wine to drink and enjoy while those same winemakers coax and cajole their more finicky Nebbiolo. It is no wonder then, that the wave of Italian immigrants to California in the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought with them canes of their native Barbera vines to establish the hundreds of backyard vineyards of the age. And as these new Americans became winemakers, vineyard owners, restaurateurs and viticulturists, Barbera became an important part of the wine culture in California.

As a grape, Barbera adapts to a wide range of soils and climates, but particularly likes a cool climate and calcareous, clay loam and sandy soils which limit its vigor and concentrate the robust flavors, bright acidity and dusty tannins in the long, bluish-purple clusters. The 2007 Barbera, Santa Barbara County is a blend from three vineyards in three cool climates – the Alisos Vineyard in the Los Alamos Valley, the Honea Vineyard in the Santa Ynez Valley, and the Zotovich Vineyard in Sta. Rita Hills. Each of these cool-climate vineyards delivers a bit of their own personality to this charming food wine.

Just because Barbera is a relatively easy-going grape does not mean that winemaker/owner Steve Clifton is willing to rest on his Barbera laurels. With the 2007 vintage, whereas the Barbera from Alisos and Zotovich were aged in neutral French and Slovenian oak barrels, the Barbera from Honea was aged in a 7000 litre traditional "upright". Once the final blend was determined and assembled, it was then moved into the upright for an additional six months of aging. The result, according to Clifton is "more authentic", "spicier and darker fruit" and "his best effort" to date.

This *is* more of a European styled wine than a big, jammy Californian version. The dark amethyst color shows depth and clarity, brimming with indigo highlights. The bouquet is somewhat floral, with violets and lavender mingling with herbs d'provence, a hint of tobacco leaf and black raspberry crumble. Barbera's flagship characteristic jumps out at first sip – bright and brilliant acidity lifts the pomegranate, deep red plum fruit, black plum skin and currant. After a bit of swirling and air, intriguing "wild berry" flavors of olallaberry, huckleberry and blueberry emerge, all surrounded by gentle tannins and that beautiful, liling acidity. This wine loves food, so enjoy with anything 'rustica' – spaghetti with meatballs, lasagna, risottos and just about anything with tomatoes and herbs!