

# PALMINA

## 2008 Arneis Honea Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley



There is so little Arneis planted in California that it doesn't even show up on the state's annual acreage report, but rather is unceremoniously grouped with "other white wine varieties". Hardly an "other" varietal, Arneis can be traced back hundreds of years in Italy's Piedmonte region and boasts over 1500 acres of vineyard plantings there. Known in the past as "Barolo Bianco", Arneis can be as difficult to grow as this namesake and indeed the word Arneis translates to "little rascal" in the local dialect due to its stubborn nature.

Perhaps the grapevine's fastidious and persnickety personality is what first attracted owner/winemaker Steve Clifton to it, and in 2002 based on his advice, Arneis was planted at the Honea Vineyard in the heart of the Santa Ynez Valley. The sandy alluvial soils, warm sunny days and crisp cold nights here seem to suit Arneis, and it produces a lush crop of golden-green clusters with rich flavor and bright acidity. To ensure perfect ripeness in each cluster, the Arneis was harvested on four different days in the month of September, and then immediately whole cluster pressed upon delivery to the winery.

Continual experimentation with oak vs. steel aging in the cellar led to the 2008 vintage's combination of 1/3 stainless steel and 2/3 neutral oak used in the barrel protocol. Still medium bodied as with previous vintages, this 2008 release is leaner than previous years to allow the varietal's exotic fruit notes to shine.

The 2008 Arneis is a light golden green color, shining from the glass with a brilliant clarity. On the nose, a rich and creamy citrus character is evident, almost like a key lime pie. A first sip reveals a smooth and broad mouthfeel that still zings with lively acidity, with ripe Bartlett pear and kumquat flavors interlaced with fresh lemongrass and mace spice. Hints of honeydew melon linger with a whisper of white almonds on the pleasing finish. This medium-bodied wine is a superb wine for all seasons, but particularly with hearty foods of the late summer and autumn. Arneis can definitely hold its own and complement strongly flavored seafood dishes, and it is delightful with pasta.

Our featured recipe is *Pasta alla Carbonara*, prepared for us by Gionata Ottogalli, who has joined us from Italy to help with the 2009 harvest. A great pairing!

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