

PALMINA

2008 Barbera Santa Barbara County



Barbera originally hails from the hills of Monferrato in Piemonte, Italy and dates back to the 13th century. It has thrived there on the warm hillsides and loves the cool nights, and in fact there are century-old vines still in production. Treasured for its drinkability, versatility with a meal and its easy going nature in the vineyard, waves of Italian immigrants brought cuttings to California as prized possessions in the 19th century, where Barbera soon became well established as a wine for the table.

Those warm, sunny Piemonte days influenced by the Adriatic Sea and cold, crisp nights from the nearby Alps are the perfect environment for Barbera, which like all winegrapes produces stellar wines only in those places perfectly suited for its temperament. Compare and contrast that environment to Santa Barbara County, where warm sunny days are the result of desert winds wafting over the San Rafael Mountains and crisp, cold nights due to the maritime influence from the nearby chilly Pacific Ocean. Completely reversed geography that produces the same environment as Piemonte and a resulting Barbera that struts its stuff.

A trio of vineyards, each imparting its own imprint to the wine, contributed to the 2008 release of Barbera, Santa Barbara County. Grapes from the Zotovich Vineyard in the Sta. Rita Hills and the Alisos Vineyard in the Los Alamos Valley were separately hand-harvested when perfectly ripe, and then aged in neutral French and Slovenian oak barrels. The harvest from the Honea Vineyard in the Santa Ynez Valley was aged in a 7000 litre traditional oak "upright". In 2009, blending trials produced a wine that winemaker/owner Steve Clifton calls "authentically wonderful". The final blend was aged for an additional six months in the upright before being released in the early summer of 2010.

Known for its deep color, the 2008 Barbera is no exception. Garnet and amethyst jewel tones lead to a ruby rim, and foretell of both richness and youth. A swirl produces black cherry aromas mingling with hints of tobacco leaf and rose hips. The texture on the palate is lively, with dancing acidity beautifully married with very soft cocoa-like tannins that deliver berry flavors – black berry, very ripe raspberry, black cherry and boysenberry. Even a little ollalaberry on the palate, and beautifully balanced with cool-climate minerality and herb/spice. Exceptionally enjoyable now, and an incredible food wine. Barbera pairs beautifully with tomato based foods, so enjoy with marinara sauces, barbecued ribs, ravioli, meatloaf! Or, simply enjoy a glass before a meal, while creating a meal, or after a meal because Barbera is a wine to sip and enjoy!

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