

PALMINA

2009 Malvasia Bianca Larner Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley



An ancient grape varietal, Malvasia Bianca can be traced back to the 13th century in Greece. Venetian traders in the Middle Ages were responsible for introducing this esteemed wine to Europe, and indeed merchant wine shops in the Veneto were even known as malvasie. Cuttings made their way to the Veneto and Malvasia vines became prized possessions, with wines varying in regional character throughout Italy. The enchanting characteristics of Malvasia Bianca brought it to California and eventually to a boot-shaped, 1-acre block at the Larner Vineyard in Santa Barbara County's Santa Ynez Valley.

The only Italian varietal planted at Larner, it is not surprising that this grape that hails from maritime influenced climates thrives here. Located in the heart of the Ballard Canyon, the Larner Vineyard experiences the same morning marine fogs, warm sunny days and cool, crisp evenings as that of its Piemonte home in Italy. This "cool-warm-cool" environment results in perfectly ripe grapes that retain their astounding aromatics and natural acidity.

After the golden clusters are harvested in the very early hours of the morning, the grapes are whisked to the winery while still firm and cold from the nighttime temperatures. Kept in the cold room on their skins for 24 hours to extract flavor and texture from the skins, the grapes were then whole cluster pressed to stainless steel to complete both primary and malolactic fermentation and to capture Malvasia Bianca's entrancing aromatics. The young wine was then moved to neutral oak barrels to meld flavors, acids and textures before being bottled in early summer of 2010.

A pale golden color brilliantly shines in the glass, and that first heady bouquet wafts forth with even a small swirl. Floral and fragrant, the exhilarating nose of the wine is perfumed with jasmine, lemon blossom and honeysuckle aromas. The sweet-smelling nose of the wine misleads and the palate is surprised with a first sip, as the 2009 Malvasia is a bone-dry wine with hints of ruby grapefruit mingling with apricot and lychee. Round and rich on the mid-palate with hints of honeycomb, and enhanced with textural reminders of Hibiscus tea, the wine finishes with a crisp, stony minerality and briny character suggestive of Malvasia Bianca's seaside history.

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