

PALMINA

Nebbiolo

Honea Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley, 2005



There is just “something” about Nebbiolo that captivates those who grow it, vinify it, drink it, and savor it. It has charmed and mesmerized for ages, with recorded mention dating back to the 13th century. So revered in those times, in fact, that the Bishop of Turin demanded that his tenants pay him in barrels of Nebbiolo rather than in the traditional manner. At Palmina, Nebbiolo is the “king of wines” in the cellar, with a continual quest to capture the essence of this noble grape.

The grape itself is particular about where it is grown, finicky about vineyard practices and requiring patience and care in the cellar. At the Honea Vineyard, a combination of climatic conditions, soil and aspect are in perfect alignment for growing exceptional Nebbiolo. Maritime morning fogs, warm afternoons and cool evenings combine with limestone laden soils, the Michet clone of Nebbiolo and fastidious farming practices. A decision to drop fruit for a number of years prior to a first harvest allowed the vines to mature and reach deep into the soil. A first harvest from Honea occurred in the stellar 2005 vintage, and although that was known as a year of abundance, the inaugural pick yielded a scant .78 ton of this precious fruit.

Having overseen the growing of the vines and grapes those five years from planting to harvest, Palmina owner/winemaker Steve Clifton then nurtured the wine in the cellar. From crush to bottling, the Honea Nebbiolo has seen the hand of a patient craftsman and artist. Aged for 30 months in Gamba™ barrels prior to bottling, only 45 cases of this first release were produced. It is no coincidence that each year Steve and Chrystal Clifton are invited to represent the United States at the International Convention on Nebbiolo, held each year in Italy. They live Nebbiolo.

Complex, intriguing, alluring and enticing – this wine is a superb example of the charm and entrancing characteristic of Nebbiolo. A liveliness seems to shine from the maroon/garnet color of the wine, and a swirl first produces red fruit aromas of cranberry overlaid with blackstrap molasses. The wine dances across the palate with notes of red currant, a hint of fig and spicy notes of sandalwood and cardamom. Weaving throughout the flavors and texture is a flinty, graphite minerality overlaid with brambly, savory garden herbs. The 2005 Nebbiolo, Honea Vineyard has great breadth and depth – firm acids, balanced tannins and rich fruit all melding and mingling together. A beautiful bright and charismatic food wine, this Nebbiolo can be cellared and enjoyed for the next ten years. A classic.