

PALMINA

2004 SISQUOC Nebbiolo, Rancho Sisquoc Vineyard, Santa Maria Valley



The noble Nebbiolo, when grown in its most cherished and best suited place, is often named after that particular spot on earth that yields such a captivating wine. Barolo. Barbaresco. And so it should be, as Nebbiolo is a grape that is accordingly sensitive to soil, the climactic environment, seasonal growing conditions and most particularly “place”. It is not for the faint of heart – neither the grower nor the winemaker – and will not, even with the most extreme coaxing, grow well in an unsuitable site. One of those serendipitous places where favorable conditions for Nebbiolo converge is the Rancho Sisquoc Vineyard in Santa Barbara County’s Santa Maria Valley. It is so perfectly suited for this finicky grape that the resulting wine from Palmina is fittingly known simply as “Sisquoc”.

In addition to the calcareous/clay soils and south facing hillsides at Rancho Sisquoc, the vines are of the Michet clone of Nebbiolo, considered among the local Piemontese to be the highest quality biotype. Meticulous farming is required for every stage in the growing season, and once harvested and delivered to the winery, the grapes are nurtured from fermenter to bottle. A long fermentation period with extended maceration then leads to one year in French oak barrels (50% of which are new). From there, the wine was gently transferred to three 500 liter neutral upright tonneau for two additional years of aging before bottling. Even then, winemaker/owner Steve Clifton decided that the youthful tannins of the wine needed resolve, and so the wine was aged an additional year in bottle before release. This

determination for releasing a wine that, although still youthful, is now ready to enjoy with a meal, is a hallmark of Palmina’s philosophy.

Even after four years in the cellar, the 2004 Sisquoc should first be decanted and allowed to breathe before even a sip. This is a wine full of intrigue, complexity and intricacy. A brick red color with russet/maroon edges foretells of the depths of layered delights to follow. After so many years of restrained aging, a breath of air releases sophisticated notes of heady wildflower, caramel, pomegranate and earthy, garden spice. A hint of bacon from the barrel aging, a wisp of dried sage, a trace of orange zest – all leading to deeper flavors of cranapple, hazelnut, a suggestion of truffle, a hint of black strap, a reminder of the earthiness that is Sisquoc. Fine dusty tannins and a bit of smoke infused cider on the captivating finish ensnare you into the charm of Sisquoc.

Perhaps holding the Palmina banner for food with wine, and wine with food, enjoy the 2004 Sisquoc with a meal. Our featured recipe, *Tacchino Rustico*, can be found on our website. Sisquoc will continue to age well for the next 7-10 years, so please reserve a spot in your cellar for this 2004 release!

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