

# PALMINA

## 2008 Moscato Honea Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley



As one of the oldest known grape varieties in the world, Muscat continues today to be revered and adored for its enthralling bouquet and beguiling taste. Ampelographers (those who study, identify and classify grapes) have traced the Muscat grape back to Ancient Rome, where it was planted as *Apiane*, or loosely translated from Latin as “bee vine”, since honeybees have such a fondness for the succulent and aromatic berries! This noble grape goes by many names throughout the world, but when crafted in Italy or in the Italian style is known as Moscato Bianco, or simply Moscato.

And because Moscato has been around for so many centuries, there are many different variations of the grape, and many different styles of winemaking. This inaugural release of Palmina Moscato hails from the Honea Vineyard in the heart of the Santa Ynez Valley. At the lower part of the vineyard, a small triangular block of Moscato di Canelli is planted on the gravelly, ancient riverbed soils. The warm days and cool nights allow this late-ripening grape to fully develop intense and rich flavors, while still maintaining a lilting acidity in the berries. True to its heritage and ancient reputation, bees gravitate to the nectar-like clusters as harvest nears!

Harvest occurs in the first hours of the day, to preserve the natural freshness of the grape (and to avoid the bees). In the winery, the golden clusters were pressed to stainless steel and slowly fermented at cool temperatures to uphold the perfume and exotic characteristics of this alluring grape. Malo-lactic fermentation was inhibited for the same reason, and the young wine was bottled in the first months of the New Year. Stylistically, owner/winemaker Steve Clifton decided that a beautifully balanced, completely dry wine best showcases the grape and the Honea site. And, in the Palmina way, is the most food-friendly style!

The pale straw color of the wine is a bit misleading, teasing into an unsuspecting swirl and sniff. The vibrant, heady and lovely perfume of 2008 Moscato entices and entrances, leading to the complete understanding of why wine aromas are known as “bouquet”. Floral notes of jasmine, orange blossom and honeysuckle are overlaid with a hint of lily and bakers spice. The palate is rewarded as well by a lilting and lively acidity that dances across the taste buds, bringing pear, vanilla bean, lemon verbena and orange peel to the wine’s profile. A hint of clove, a touch of melon and a palate-pleasing zest of lime round out the finish of this elegant wine.

Although it is tempting to simply enjoy the perfume of this wine, the balance and acidity makes it a superb food wine. We have paired this with *Sweet Potato Gnocchi with Leek/Thyme Sauce*. Heavenly!