



MALVASIA BIANCA **Larner Vineyard** **SANTA YNEZ VALLEY, 2004**

One of the popular grapes planted in Italy, Malvasia Bianca has its roots in ancient Greece. It is widely planted throughout the country and then made into a variety of different styles. On Sardinia and Sicily, it makes rare, rich and wonderfully aromatic *passito* wines, it is prominent in light, dry wines such as Frascati from central Italy and Malvasia Istriana from Friuli, and the legendary Vin Santo of Tuscany, which can be quite dry or very sweet. It is an interesting and intriguing grape.

The grapes for Palmina's Malvasia Bianca are grown on the intensely farmed Larner Vineyard, which lies on the gentle slopes of Ballard Canyon between the towns of Solvang and Los Olivos. Rapidly becoming known locally as "the Ballard Corridor", this small viticultural area produces some amazing Italian varietals. The Larner Vineyard has just one acre of Malvasia Bianca, so we are very fortunate at Palmina to be able to continue to obtain this beautiful fruit.

As mentioned, the vineyard is intensely farmed – and we picked the grapes at midnight to preserve the natural flavors and acidity maintained with cool temperature. Malvasia Bianca has very thick skins and strong skin tannins. For this reason, this wine was whole cluster pressed, then put into neutral oak barrels in order to soften these strong tannins and enhance the aromatic floral and nut qualities this varietal has to offer. To preserve the fruit flavors of this captivating wine, malo-lactic fermentation was inhibited.

The first impression is visual – this wine looks like liquid 14K gold – a newly placed wedding ring! The aromatics are sensual – nectar, ripe apricots, jasmine, white flowers and lycees. In a word, the wine is "fragrant". A hint of surprise is evident on the first taste – this is an elegant, dry wine that has honeyed characteristics and a silky texture. A bit of nuttiness is complemented by flavors of spun clover honey, with a hint of pear with allspice. The finish is l-o-n-g and lingering and rich. It needs a long, lingering meal for its full potential! No doubt about it – this is a sexy wine.

An ultimate pairing for this wine is Ricotta Gnocchi with Orange Butter Sauce. Insanely delicious!
Only 65 cases of 2004 Malvasia Bianca were produced.