

PALMINA



2005 Mattia Santa Barbera County

Palmina focuses on wine as an enabler of great conversation, a way to bring people together in companionship, as a part of a meal and a celebration of the attitude of friends and family that they love so much in Italy. Chrystal and Steve Clifton travel frequently to Italy, and have an “adopted family”, the Scarbolos, who live in the Friuli region and who have become very much a part of their lives. For many years, the Scarbolo’s son Mattia traveled to California to stay with the Clifton’s during the summer, learning about our region and Palmina’s winemaking. Continuing the family connection, Chrystal and Steve were married in Friuli, and were presented with wedding wine that had been crafted for them by Joe Bastianich and Valter Scarbolo. That wedding wine was a harmonious blend of Refosco, Cabernet Franc and Merlot. Steve and Chrystal decided to recreate the blend each year from Santa Barbera County grapes, and to honor the Scarbolos, have named this wine *Mattia*.

Well known throughout Italy and Europe, Refosco is not widely planted in California, which makes *Mattia* even more interesting as a wine! Refosco is known as Mondeus Noir in France and is actually the most widely planted red wine grape in Friuli, where it is known for producing wines with deep color, hearty body and bold acidity and tannins. It is very often blended with Cabernet Franc and Merlot in Friuli to create a wine that showcases the best of all three varietals.

Mattia brings together the heartiness and black currant fruit notes of Refosco with the structure and elegant tannins of Cabernet Franc and the softness and mid-palate of Merlot. All three grape varietals were harvested by hand, and then vinified separately. The Refosco hails from the Bien Nacido Vineyard in the Santa Maria Valley while the Cabernet Franc and Merlot are grown in the Alisos Vineyard in the warmer Los Alamos Valley a few miles south. Each varietal was destemmed, fermented in small open top containers and punched down by hand several times each day to fully extract flavor, color, tannins and texture from each varietal. Upon completion of fermentation, the new wines were placed into neutral French oak barrels. A final blend of 50% Refosco, 35% Cabernet Franc and 15% Merlot was made, and then returned to barrel to marry and provide a few more months of barrel aging before being bottled with no fining nor filtration in August of 2006.

This is a beautifully integrated wine, with depth and breadth. The dark ruby color has edges of garnet and deep maroon and foretells of the intensity of flavors and aromas in the glass. Spice notes abound on the nose, along with concentrated, dried raspberries, violets and dark plums. A first sip reinforces the bouquet, and adds layers of boysenberry, pomegranate and more spice, along with a hint of earthiness and smoke. Beautiful soft tannins envelope the palate, and a hint of very pleasing amaro lingers on the finish. The 2005 release of *Mattia* will benefit from decanting.



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