

PALMINA

2006 Pinot Grigio Alisos Vineyard, Santa Barbara County



One might say that Pinot Grigio is an ambassador for white wine. Its roots go back to the middle ages, where it probably originated in northern France before migrating to Germany's Alsace and to Italy, particularly the Alto-Adige and Friuli-Venezia. Its affable nature and food friendliness has led to increased plantings in Germany, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and here in California's Central Coast. As with many settlers, it adapts nicely and takes on a regional style, from the rich, honeyed versions of the Alsace to the lean, crisp and bone-dry style of northern Italy. It is Italy's most popular white wine, and expected to become the fourth most popular wine consumed in the United States by the end of 2007.

Of course, Pinot Grigio does have a preference for "place", favoring warm soils, chilly evenings and a long, cool growing season. The chert-laden soils, hillside location and marine-influenced climate at Alisos Vineyard are close to Pinot Grigio paradise. Vineyard managers Loren and Wayne Colahan meticulously farm the property for low yields and perfectly ripe fruit. Sunny, warm days and cold nights result in flavorful grapes with zingy natural acidity. Once again,

Alisos Vineyard produced grapes of such distinction as to be rewarded with the vineyard designated "Black Label" from Palmina.

The grapes are harvested at the coldest point of the day, right before dawn and then immediately transported to the winery. They are then whole-cluster pressed to allow just the right amount of skin contact to extract a hint of spice and then slowly fermented at cold temperatures in stainless steel over the next month. Malolactic fermentation is inhibited to preserve the pure characteristic of the Pinot Grigio varietal, and the unique distinctiveness of the Alisos Vineyard. The 2006 Pinot Grigio, Alisos Vineyard was bottled in the Spring of 2007.

It's not the color so much, which is a light shade of flaxen, but the brilliance of the wine that is so visually appealing. Swirling releases not only aromas of fresh meyer lemon and tangerine, but also jewel-like highlights of white gold. "Terroir" is evident in the 2006 bottling, as the stony minerality and focused notes of lime zest, guava and just ripe white peach is again present at first sip. There is a racy acidity and a steely underpinning to this wine, which glides across the palate with a silky, slightly oily texture. An unmistakable hint of clove lingers on the finish.

Delightfully refreshing on a hot summer day by itself, this Alisos Vineyard designated Pinot Grigio is a superb complement to fish or pasta dishes with a creamy white sauce.

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