

PALMINA

2006 *Alisos*

Alisos Vineyard, Santa Barbara County



This is the wine that started it all. This is the wine that owner/winemaker Steve Clifton has always envisioned as a flagship wine for Palmina. It combines tradition with modernity, approachability with complexity and techniques from Italy's Veneto with those of California's Santa Barbara County. Most of all, it reflects a winemaker's love of the ultimate food wine.

This is the eleventh release of Alisos. It was the first wine crafted under the Palmina brand back in 1995. Since 2001, the Sangiovese and Merlot that make up the blend both hail from the Alisos Vineyard in the Los Alamos Valley, and as the wine is an expression of where it is grown, it is named after its place.

There is both passion and patience interweaved throughout Alisos. The vines and grapes are meticulously farmed throughout the growing season by vineyard managers Wayne and Loren Collahan. At ultimate ripeness, they are hand harvested at night to preserve freshness, and delivered to the winery at dawn's first light. A small percentage of the Sangiovese is placed onto drying racks, where it remains for over 100 days – a winemaking method passed down through generations in the Veneto and known as *apassimento* (drying of the grapes). The balance of the Sangio-

vese, and the Merlot (which is harvested later) are fermented in small, open top containers over a 2-3 week period of time before being moved to barrel to complete their evolution. In January of 2007, the dried Sangiovese grapes were re-hydrated and then fermented to dryness. These three distinct, contrasting and yet complementary components were blended as if they were a 'spice cabinet', with the resulting wine comprised of 4% *Apassimento* Sangiovese, 80% Sangiovese and 16% Merlot. The wine then spent twenty months in barrel to allow the layers to marry, tannins to lengthen and fruit and acid to integrate. The result is pure style, and pure Palmina.

The first sensation is visual – a deeply colored ruby with glints of intriguing crimson shining through in the beautiful clarity of the wine. Next, the aromatics... pomegranates, pecans, and cherry cola at first, followed by wafts of dried plum, high-note red currant, and herbal notes of bay leaf and laurel. A sip confirms the nose, but is additionally rewarded by a smooth and silky texture as Alisos glides across the palate, leaving remembrances of dried raspberry and cherry from the Sangiovese, earthy and meaty dark notes from the Merlot and herbs d'provençal nuances from the *apassimento* Sangiovese. The lively acidity, barrel aged tannins and layered structure allow the soft fruits to show through in this superbly balanced wine. Ah, poor sense of hearing, so deprived! But, the chorus of happy sighs from those at the table adds to the sensory equation. Enjoy with food, friends, family!

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