

PALMINA

2006 Barbera Zotovich Vineyard, Sta. Rita Hills



An old saying is that the Barbera grape impersonates the character of those Piedmontese who cultivate it – robust and yet unassuming. It is an ancient varietal, with its historical roots in Italy, particularly the Piedmont regions of Alba and Asti. Barbera is so deep-rooted in Italian tradition that it was among the possessions brought to the United States in the wave of immigration in the early 1900's. In addition to the thousands of backyard vines of that time, Barbera also became a popular quality commercial winegrape in California, due to its easy-going nature, ability to adapt to different soils and climates, and its superb compatibility with food.

That adaptation to soils and climate allows, perhaps compels, bottlings of vineyard designated Barberas from Palmina. The Zotovich vineyard is located in the cool climate, fog-laden Sta. Rita Hills appellation. Sandy soils provide superb drainage, and the afternoon breezes and sunshine result in an extended growing season that produces complexity, concentration and charm.

2006 brought little rain, but an even growing season with cool temperatures throughout the summer months. Harvest was a bit later than “normal”, and yields were smaller than previous years. After being harvested by hand in the last weeks of October, twice daily hand punch downs during fermentation and a bit of extended time in fermenter to extract all the goodness from the skins, the new wine was placed into French oak barrels, 30% of which were new Gamba barrels, where it aged for one year. The wine was then gently racked into 100% neutral Slovenian oak barrels for an additional year of cellar aging, before being bottled in the Spring of 2008.

The 2006 Barbera, Zotovich Vineyard, is a reflection of its “place”. A deep crimson color with indigo highlights visually depicts the cool climate of the Sta. Rita Hills. Almost brooding, the bouquet of dried dark plum, blackberry, baked black cherry and smokiness is released with swirling. On the palate, the interaction of fruit and acid plays across the mouth; wild fennel, fruit compote, and currants intermingling with acidic brightness and fine barrel tannins. Nuances of porcini and spice fuse with a jolt of juicy red berry on the crisp, long and layered finish. Bold and elegant at the same time, this wine pairs exquisitely with hearty food like duck. We also love it with those hard cheeses aged in red wine – the saltiness of the cheese perfectly complements the structure and firm acids of the wine.

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