

PALMINA

Savoia SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, 2007



“Savoia” is a reference to the ancient House of Savoy, a melding of a kingdom made of parts of modern day Germany, France and Italy. Savoia was the longest reigning royal house in Europe – ever. And the wine named after this peacable realm? Winemaker Steve Clifton’s passions for tradition and history, challenging tradition and history, and crafting wines made for the table.

Trios seem to have a recurring pattern. Savoia is a blend of three wines; Nebbiolo (50%), Barbera (25%) and Syrah (25%). Although unusual in many ways and traditional in others, history at Palmina has shown that there is power in this blend. There are three vineyards in Savoia – Honea Vineyard in the Santa Ynez Valley, Rancho Sisquoc in the Santa Maria Valley and Alisos Vineyard in the Los Alamos Valley – all in Santa Barbara County’s diverse winegrowing region. All, as in the Savoia region of old, influenced by both maritime influences from the nearby sea and competing influences spilling over the neighboring mountains. Three years from harvest to bottle. Three big-picture descriptors; sophisticated, intriguing, ageworthy.

Truly, good things do come in threes.

Add in the 2007 vintage as another extraordinary component to this wine, having been hailed by critics and collectors alike as the vintage of the decade. Each of the three varietals were harvested in the Autumn of 2007 at their peak ripeness - that point of balance of all key maturity factors. Vinified separately in the winery, a selection of the three wines that most complemented each other was made, blended together and put back to neutral 500 liter Slovenian barrels. There, the wine matured for another two years before being bottled in the first months of 2010. Each bottle bears not only the “black label” that heralds distinctive Palmina releases, but also is hand waxed as a mark of its prestige.

Three more adjectives: smooth, integrated, captivating. The depth of the character of the wine can be seen in the garnet-scarlet-maroon color, which although dark, still shines with a vivacious glint upon a swirl. A cornucopia of ripe berries leap from the glass, with cherries, boysenberry and rhubarb mingling with blackcurrant. A first taste envelopes the palate with soft and velvety texture, leaving additional earthy flavors of tobacco leaf and both porcini and shitaki mushrooms in the wake of blackberry and brambleberry highlights. Although the three different varietals of Nebbiolo, Barbera and Syrah are discernible, it is the sublime and complex interaction of the three that is so remarkable in this wine. Lasting, lingering, enduring and durable flavors, acids, tannins and spicy notes make the finish as enjoyable as the first sip.

As enjoyable as Savoia can be on its own, the “power of three” is only enhanced by the addition of a good meal and good friends around a table. Our featured recipe is *Steak Tartare Palmina*.