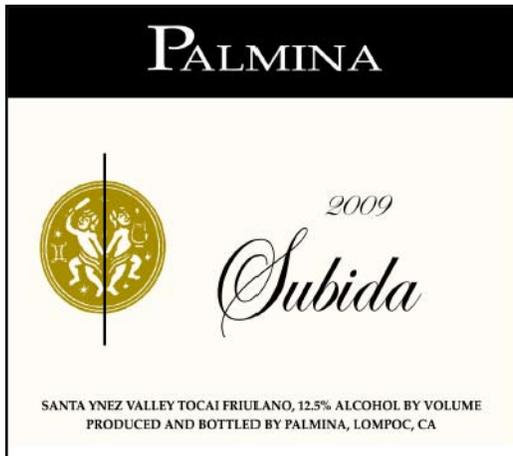


PALMINA

2009 *Subida*

Tocai Friulano, Honea Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley



In the Friuli region of Italy, Tocai Friulano (now called Friulano there due to a European Union regulation), is the wine of the people. Ask for a glass of wine in this region, and you will be served Friulano. It is a grape that has its own unique persona, traits and character. And it is a grape that has gotten under owner/winemaker Steve Clifton's skin.

Clifton started experimenting with Tocai Friulano winemaking with the 2006 vintage, making a small-lot barrel fermented version as well as the popular Palmina stainless-steel fermented release. In 2007, he explored even farther afield, and crafted a small lot of Tocai Friulano as if it were a red wine. The 2009 vintage continues the tradition of experimentation of this limited release, named after the restaurant in Friuli where Steve married Chrystal, his partner in wine.

Hand harvested from the Honea Vineyard at dawn's first light, the fruit was de-stemmed and transferred to 1.5 ton fermenters where it was allowed to ferment on its own yeast. There was no cold soak involved as to encourage natural yeast to kick-off. The fermenting must was punched down twice a day throughout fermentation. After primary fermentation finished, the fruit remained in the fermenter for an additional 2 weeks for a total of 36 days. The wine was stirred once a day for those final 2 weeks, but not "protected" with CO₂ or any other gas, but rather allowed contact with oxygen. Malo-lactic fermentation definitely started in the fermenter naturally.

After the 36 days of contact, the wine was pressed directly to barrels. The wine was then allowed to mature on its lees for 18 months before being racked and bottled. The wine was never topped during those 18 months, nor were there any additions of preservatives of any kind. It was not fined, filtered or settled after its primary racking. It has never seen an addition of SO₂ of any kind. The result is both outrageous and astounding.

This is a wine for the true connoisseur, who wants to taste the total essence of the grape. All the color and goodness from the golden-hued Tocai Friulano skins is integrated into the wine. A deep straw like golden color with tinge of green and a slight haze first states that this is not a wine for the masses. Aromas of apricot and just ripe pear are coaxed from the glass, which enjoys time and swirling to fully strut its stuff. The texture is rich and round, bringing nut-like flavors of almond and hazelnut, a hint of beeswax and more stone fruit – white peach and poached pear – before a lingering garden herb component adds another layer of complexity. The finish has a pleasing and palate cleansing note of almond bitters.

"There is absolutely nothing in this wine that did not come directly out of the vineyard," notes Clifton. "It is rock-solid stable and will age indefinitely. It drinks well for up to 4 weeks after being opened. While different in flavor profile from most popular, modern white wines, the wine is beautiful on its own and with food. Truly a "Natural" wine. I find it interesting that the above reads as a list of things that were not done to the wine instead of what was."

We recommend serving at cellar temperature. The robust character of this wine will nicely complement a hearty seafood antipasti or a simple plate of prosciutto.

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