

PALMINA

2010 Malvasia Bianca, Lerner Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley



There is something inherently exotic about Malvasia Bianca. Perhaps it relates to its far-flung origins and introduction to Italy by Venetian adventurers and merchants. Malvasia Bianca is an ancient Greek varietal, and more than likely brought to Italy in the 14th century during the Venetian exploration of the Aegean and colonization of that region. Seven hundred years later, this aromatic and intriguing grape is grown and revered throughout the Mediterranean and -- in one unique spot in Santa Barbara County.

Malvasia Bianca needs a classic Mediterranean climate to epitomize the essence of this classic grape, and the Lerner Vineyard in the Ballard Canyon area of the Santa Ynez Valley is such a place. Warm, sunny days, well-draining soils, cool nights and fanatical farming allow this one-acre parcel of Malvasia Bianca to ripen to perfection. Hand harvested at dawn's first light, the

grapes then spent 18 hours on the skins during a cold soak to extract deep and heady aromatics. This skin contact also resulted in a native yeast fermentation, which was allowed to continue to completion in neutral French oak barrels to preserve the astounding character and complexity of this intriguing varietal.

This year's Malvasia smells of all the wonderful aromas that fill the air as Spring gives way to Summer. Soft smells of white flowers such as honeysuckle, night jasmine and citrus blossoms mingle with lemon grass and spice. Soft notes of cinnamon and mace lilt over and under the sweet smells of flowers and citrus. The palate is an immediate yin-yang dance between the bright acidity of lemon, lime and mandarin with the creamy depth of flavors, viscosity and richness one would associate with passion-fruit, cantaloupe and green papaya. The wine changes with every sniff, swirl and taste.

Enjoy this wine from a large, Nebbiolo / Pinot Noir style glass whenever possible as the depth and complexity will be enhanced dramatically with a little extra space to get its groove on. Pairs beautifully with big, savory dishes and our featured recipe is *Polenta Panino*.