

Palmina

By [Josh Reynolds](#)

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The methods here are moving as close as possible to those of traditional Italian producers, Steve Clifton told me. "But we are absolutely not trying to make imitations," he said. "We have our own unique terroir and fruit expression, but I'm drawn to wines that are unadorned and pure, which is what I find in the best old-school Italian wines." To that end Clifton is using larger casks (botte, in Italian) to minimize oxidation during barrel aging, and extending the time his nebbiolos spend in barrel, "hopefully, to get finer tannins and more aromatic complexity." This is certainly the most impressive set of nebbiolos I've ever encountered outside of Italy, and finer than many from inside it.

[2007 Palmina Tocai Friulano Honea Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley](#)

(\$24) Light yellow. Smoky lemon zest, orange and herbs on the nose, with a suave mineral undertone. Juicy citrus and apple flavors are complemented by thyme and coriander, with tangy mineral bite on the back end. Nervy, sharply focused and refreshing, with excellent finishing bite and persistence. This will be extremely flexible at the table; I'd try it with a shellfish pasta dish. 90

[2007 Palmina Tocai Friulano Subida Honea Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley](#)

(\$28) Pale yellow. Highly aromatic nose offers musky citrus pith, yellow plum and minerals. Impressively focused and pure, with vibrant citrus and pit fruit flavors underscored by dusty minerals. Firm and clean on the strikingly energetic and long finish. 91

[2007 Palmina Malvasia Bianca Larner Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley](#)

(\$28) Light yellow. Exotically perfumed bouquet of dried pear and pit fruits, waxy honeycomb and yellow rose. Brisk lemon zest and pear skin flavors display a pleasantly bitter personality, with dusty minerals adding cut. An intriguing floral note lingers on the long, stony finish. "This will be great with oysters," said Clifton. 90

2007 Palmina Dolcetto Santa Barbara County

(\$20) Vivid purple. Aromas of black cherry, cassis, botanical herbs and licorice. A sappy, luscious example of the variety, offering sweet dark berry and bitter cherry flavors along with a subtle herbal undertone. Finishes with refreshing bitterness and a strong echo of licorice. Very impressive for this variety in the New World. 90

2006 Palmina Barbera Santa Barbara County

(\$22) Bright ruby. Spicy, vibrant scents of black raspberry, flowers and baking spices. Sappy and fresh, with racy red and dark berry flavors, good mineral snap and a late note of candied licorice. Finishes with bright minerality and very good persistence. 89

2006 Palmina Barbera Honea Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley

(\$36) Saturated ruby. Pungent, strikingly complex bouquet of cherry, anise, espresso and smoky minerals. Lively dark berry flavors are given depth by bitter chocolate and are framed by fine-grained, subtle tannins. A strong mineral note builds with air and carries through the long, spicy finish. This spent 20 months in barrels made by the Italian cooper Gamba. 91

2006 Palmina Barbera Zotovich Vineyard Santa Rita Hills

(\$36) Full red. Darker berries on the nose than the Honea. More brooding and slower to open, eventually revealing blueberry and anise scents. Then surprisingly fresh on the palate, showing red berry and dark cherry qualities and a good jolt of refreshing acidity. Lively berry skin notes linger on the focused, youthfully tangy finish. This will need more time than the Honea. 90(+?)

2004 Palmina Nebbiolo Stolpman Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley

(\$40) Light amber-red color. Sexy floral bouquet of red berries, rose, smoked meat and minerals. Light and precise, offering sweet strawberry and dried cherry flavors. The finish is sweet, focused and refreshing, with silky tannins and slow-mounting minerality. An alluring, elegant wine that I'd have never guessed as coming from anywhere but Piedmont. 91

2004 Palmina Nebbiolo Sisquoc Vineyard Santa Maria Valley

(\$50) Medium red. Strikingly pungent nose displays dried red berries and an intense floral quality. Rich and sappy red berry flavors stain the palate and are complicated by candied rose and anise. Seamless and pure, with excellent finishing energy and a lingering floral note. Very pretty, and balanced to age. This is all michet clone, planted on clay. 92

2005 Palmina Nebbiolo Honea Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley

(\$70) Light, bright red. Powerful cherry and dark berry aromas are complemented by smoked meat, licorice and potpourri. Lush cherry/berry flavors are firmed by chewy tannins and take on a spicy quality with air. More restrained than the Sisquoc right now, but there seems to be even greater concentration. The floral note carries through the finish, which is sweet and impressively persistent. This is also michet, but planted on limestone. Give this some air, or time in bottle. 91(+?)