

PALMINA

2005 *Nebbiolo*, SISQUOC Nebbiolo, Rancho Sisquoc Vineyard, Santa Maria Valley



When a Palmina wine bottle proudly bears the “black stripe” on its label and a propriety name, the wine is indeed something special. The wine is Nebbiolo, “the passion project” at Palmina. The place is Rancho Sisquoc, a vineyard with which winemaker/owner Steve Clifton has a long history and a special affection.

Nebbiolo can trace its heritage back to the 14th century in Italy’s renowned areas of the Piemonte. The vines are planted only in places supremely suitable to this notoriously finicky grape. Sloping vineyards of calcareous-clay soils, a growing environment influenced by a continental climate tempered by river valleys and nearby hillsides. As a grape that definitely speaks to a sense of where it is grown, these wines are generally named for their region – Barolo, Barbaresco. Thousands of miles away, Rancho Sisquoc has its own history. Part of an 1852 Spanish land grant, the hillside vineyard looks down on the Sisquoc River, both located in a transverse valley that opens directly to the nearby Pacific Ocean. Cool nights, warm days, gentle breezes and morning sea fog at Rancho Sisquoc spell the perfect environment for the Michet clone of Nebbiolo. No question that this wine should be also be named after place, and hence – Sisquoc.

Nebbiolo is a grape that takes its time to ripen, and along the way to a late October harvest needs constant pampering. Once hand harvested at dawn’s cool temperatures and swiftly brought to the winery, the same care and attention is required. A long fermentation and extended maceration takes the wine into the early winter time frame, when it was transferred to French and Slovenian oak barrels for a year of initial aging. The youthful wine was then racked to a 3000 liter French Oak vertically staved upright cask, which allowed the wine to gracefully age with minimum oak or oxygen influence for the next 40 months. Bottled in early 2010, the wine was given a ten months rest in bottle to integrate prior to release.

The 2005 Sisquoc has a youthful, vivacious look with deep garnet/purple color and almost indigo edges. Darkly hued for Nebbiolo, a swirl unleashes intriguing aromas of chocolate with dried orange peel, anise, soy and a potpourri of dried herb - rose petals, herbs d’provence, tobacco and a hint of grated vanilla bean. On the palate, the wine is a concentrated conglomerate of flavors, acids and tannins. Dried plums merge with mulberries and deep red summer rhubarb. Cranapple tanginess, white truffle richness and an earthy finish. A complex, intriguing wine that only begs some friends and food. After all, “Sisquoc” is a native American word for “gathering place”, and isn’t that what Nebbiolo is about? Sharing a glass of exquisite wine over a meal with friends and family. Sisquoc is a place, a wine, a philosophy!

Sisquoc will continue to age well and become even more complex and compelling with up to 10 years of cellar-ing. We recommend decanting the wine prior to enjoying with friends. Our recommended recipe is *Harvest Quail*.

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