

PALMINA

2004 *Undici*

There's a reason that both a grape varietal and a location are noted on a wine label, for it is the combination of place and vine that create the character and quality of the wine inside. In order to create a wine of distinction, the union of grape, soil, climate and farming must be in perfect alignment. Such a place exists in the Santa Ynez Valley for Sangiovese, the ancient and noble grape of Tuscany. It should not be surprising that the Eleven Oaks Vineyard is located in the "Alamo Pintado Corridor", an area of the Santa Ynez Valley that is quickly becoming known for the quality of Italian grape varietals grown there. But this is an exceptionally intense vineyard.

Selected Tuscan clones, specific to the vineyard's terroir and unique to Santa Barbara County, were grafted to the property's old vines. The steepness of the hillside and the closeness of the high-density plantings mean that this three acre vineyard must be completely tended and farmed by hand. To ensure an authentic and exceptional product, the Clifton's good friend Maurizio Gily traveled from Italy to Eleven Oaks to consult on the vineyard. Maurizio is chief executive of the technical services and applied research programs of Vignaioli Piemontesi, the biggest winegrowers organization in Italy. Working closely with owner Paul Albrecht and vineyard manager John Krska, Maurizio and the Clifton's have fine tuned pruning and trellising practices specifically for Eleven Oaks. The resulting first vintage of Sangiovese for Palmina is an extraordinary wine, proudly bearing the name "Undici" (*oon dee chee*), which translates to Eleven – an indication that the marriage of place and vine has harmoniously occurred.

A deep ruby red color with darker crimson highlights and a radiant brilliance first attests that this is a Palmina vinification of this classic grape. There is a mentholated sense of the outdoors on the nose, with aromas of eucalyptus and rose petals beckoning the senses. On the palate, *Undici* shows layers of complexity. There is a bottom base note of baker's cocoa complete with complementary dusty textural components, followed by a mid-palate experience of pomegranate, dried cranberry, robust dark fruit and a hint of passion fruit. The bittersweet cocoa notes continue, along with subtle reminders of kirsch and Moroccan spices. The wine is full bodied and beautifully balanced – there is a true bitter/sweetness to the wine, soft tannins, lively acid and a lingering and changing finish.

