

PALMINA

2005 *Santità* Late Harvest Malvasia Bianca, Larner Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley



“Santita” is a wine and a word in Italian that translates to “saint-like”, because this dessert wine is simply... heavenly. A very limited release, Santita is a labor of love from Palmina and only produced every two or three years. Like a drop of nectar or a sublime taste of honeycomb, Santita is proof that good things do come in small packages!

A “Vin Santo” dessert wine is said to be the “wine of saints”, particularly in Tuscany but also throughout other regions in Italy. Some say it was named because it was never pressed until Holy Week before Christmas. Others claim it is because it is such an ethereal wine. But, the generally held theory is that the name dates from the Ecumenical Council held in Florence in 1349, when a Greek bishop commented that the wine served tasted like the sweet wine made on the island of Xantos – hence Vin Santo. Whatever the true origin of the name, a Vin Santo wine is not only an example of the skill of the winemaker, but also traditionally given as a gift of hospitality in Tuscany. It is

traditionally served with biscotti, a “twice baked” almond pastry (sometimes dunked into the wine!), grilled peaches (in season) and in Palmina’s case, with Chrystal’s *Pumpkin-Spice Cannoli*!

Malvasia Bianca grapes from the Larner Vineyard in the Santa Ynez Valley were hand harvested and field sorted about a week earlier than those for the standard bottling of Malvasia Bianca, and then carefully placed on traditional drying mats and imported drying racks from Italy to dehydrate. This “passito” style of winemaking retains the flavors and sugars of this big, juicy grape and dries out the natural waters in the grape, resulting in delicious raisins 120 days later. These golden Malvasia Bianca raisins were then moved to the winery in January of 2006, rehydrated with a bit of dry Malvasia Bianca wine and then pressed and partially fermented, in a traditional Vin Santo style of winemaking. Approximately 50 gallons of this sweet, new wine was placed into 60 gallon neutral French oak barrels, allowing a headspace for the wine to age with slow oxidation for almost two years. In the late summer of 2007, this saintly wine was lightly filtered and bottled (375ml) with a traditional wax seal. Just 800 bottles were produced.



An amber color reflects glints of burnished gold, and although your aperitif glass may not allow a generous swirl, there is an intense nutty, honeyed aroma rising from the glass. A bouquet of orange blossom combines with a glycerin-like coating of the glass to invite a first sip, which delights in an “agrodulce” sensation – sweet and tart at the same time. Orange peel, clove spice, dried apricots, a hint of vanilla, a wisp of almonds and a bittersweet, satisfying finish Santita is a beautiful after-dinner wine that is not too heavy, not too sweet and nicely balanced with a light acidity to perfectly complement dessert dishes and round out a great meal. Heavenly....

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