

PALMINA

2006 Dolcetto Santa Barbara County



Dolcetto is an easy-going, table friendly, “pull-the-cork-and-have-a-glass” wine. In wine speak, it is often labeled as “approachable”, but that really is too formal a descriptor for this genial varietal. Dolcetto, whose name translates as “little sweet one” is a wine full of youthful exuberance, but also a wine with structure and balance. There is no clear explanation of how the Piemontese gave Dolcetto its name, but the most popular is that there is a perception of sweetness in this easy-drinking wine, although Dolcetto’s are almost always vinified as completely dry wines. And the Palmina version is not only completely dry, but also not little! But as robust and bursting with flavor as it is, the 2006 Palmina Dolcetto is true to the varietal and a wine to be enjoyed in its youth – a delightful wine for foods of almost all seasons, but particularly an outdoor summertime meal with friends.

The varietal hails from the Piemonte region of Italy, where there are seven different DOC’s for Dolcetto, because the vines are highly influenced by soil type and climate and reflect “terroir” in the resulting wine. Although there is not a lot of Dolcetto planted in the United States, we are fortunate at Palmina to source Dolcetto from two exemplary vineyards here in Santa Barbara County that also reflect

their sense of “place”. The Honea Vineyard, which is planted entirely for Palmina, is located in the “Alamo Pintado Corridor”, an area quickly becoming known for the quality of Italian varietals grown there. Further to the west, in the cool climate of Sta. Rita Hills, lies the Zotovich Vineyard. Each vineyard contributes to the final blend, with Honea lending bright fruit notes, roundness and soft tannins and Zotovich filling in with dark fruit and lively acidity. Delightful nuances of each vineyard shine forth in the 2006 vintage.

Upon delivery to the winery, the Dolcetto grapes were de-stemmed, and the whole berries allowed to cold soak for a few days to extract color, spiciness and the delightful soft tannins from the grape skins. After fermentation had completed, the young wines were aged for five months in neutral oak barrels. The final blend was then made and moved to a stainless steel tank for a month to integrate and marry the different components from the two vineyards. The 2006 Dolcetto was bottled the end of May, 2007 and released in July.

Fresh summer fruits come to mind with the 2006 Dolcetto – a reflection perhaps of those meals with which it pairs so well. A dark ruby color with amethyst highlights foretells of the character in this wine, which with a swirl produces aromas of raspberry and cherry, a bit of toast and a hint of violets. At a first taste, the smooth texture caresses the palate with summertime notes of red currant, black cherry, fresh red plums, and those wild berries we all picked in our youth – blackberry, huckleberry and dark raspberries. Yet with all the intense fruit flavors, there’s a nice underlying bright acidity in the wine and soft, almond-like tannins on the finish. Enjoy Dolcetto as in Italy - *da pronto bere* – a wine to drink now. We love it with a slight chill!

Our featured recipe with delightful, delectable Dolcetto is Grilled Pizza (with a variety of toppings!).

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