

PALMINA

2006 Malvasia Bianca Larner Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley



Crystal and Grandpa Bill harvesting Malvasia Bianca

There is something inherently exotic about Malvasia Bianca. Perhaps it relates to its far-flung origins and introduction to Italy by Venetian adventurers and merchants.

Malvasia Bianca is an ancient Greek varietal, and more than likely brought to Italy in the 14th century during the Venetian exploration of the Aegean and colonization of that region. Seven hundred years later, this aromatic and intriguing grape is revered throughout the Mediterranean and -- in one unique spot in Santa Barbara County.

Malvasia Bianca needs a classic Mediterranean climate to epitomize the essence of this classic grape, and the Larner Vineyard in the Ballard Canyon area of the Santa Ynez Valley is such a place. Warm, sunny days, well-draining soils, cool nights and fanatical farming allow this one-acre parcel of Malvasia Bianca to ripen to perfection. Hand harvested at dawn's first

light, the grapes are immediately whole-cluster pressed to translate the pure essence of the grape. A cool, slow fermentation in stainless steel is followed by a few months of aging in neutral French oak barrels to preserve the astounding character and complexity of this intriguing varietal.

A seductress, Malvasia Bianca first beckons with a gorgeous glint of honeyed gold in the straw-colored wine. A virtual garland of elderflower, honeysuckle and night-blooming jasmine leaps from the glass with a swirl, teasing into a belief that this is a sweet wine. But no - a first sip surprises with tangy essence of quince, key lime, Meyer lemon zest and newly picked white peaches. The most complex of all Palmina white wines, Malvasia Bianca pulses across the palate with notes of lime marmalade, kumquats, membrillo and loquats and then lingers and lingers with a pleasing and uplifting piquant finish.

Just 187 cases produced.

The 2006 Malvasia Bianca just screams for oysters. Our very simple recipe for this wine is to find the best, most fresh raw oysters available. Shuck. Serve with fresh lemon and the usual oyster accoutrements. Repeat.

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