

PALMINA



2006 Nebbiolo, Sisquoc Santa Maria Valley

Considered one of the great grape varieties, Nebbiolo's origins are traced to the early 14th century from an east-west running valley in the northeast of Italy. It's a difficult grape to grow – sensitive to soil, climate and geography – and yet very expressive of where it's grown. Perhaps Pacific sea fog (*nebbia* in Italian) rolling through the early hours of the east-west Santa Maria Valley contributes to the character of the grapes grown here. Or perhaps it is the gravelly red clay soil, or its position at the cusp of a hill. For whatever combination of factors, the terroir is evident in this Nebbiolo, planted specifically for Palmina at Sisquoc in 1998.

2006 was one of the "drought years" in the Santa Maria Valley, producing a small and intense crop. The cool climate of Rancho Sisquoc allowed the grapes extra time on the vine, with harvest a few weeks later than usual. The grapes were finally hand-harvested in November and de-stemmed to small open-top fermenters. After an initial cold-soak, meticulous attention and care was taken during primary fermentation and extended maceration. Just before the holiday break in December, the young wine was moved to neutral French and Slovenian oak barrels, where it aged for one year. In its second year, the wine was moved to 7000 litre uprights, continuing to gain complexity and maturity for another two years. The selection was racked to three 500 litre puncheons for a fourth year of barrel aging. The 2006 Nebbiolo, Sisquoc was bottled in 2010 and cellar aged for an additional year before release. This winemaking protocol is just one indication of Palmina's dedication and passion for crafting age-worthy and classic Nebbiolo, and it is evident why owners Steve and Chrystal Clifton are each year invited to represent California at the *Convegno Internazionale Sul Vitigno Nebbiolo* (International Convention on the Nebbiolo Grape) in Italy.

A cornucopia of aromas, flavors and textures are present in this wine. Aromas reminiscent of holiday baking are present, with inviting notes of vanilla bean, dried orange peel and red cinnamon spice mingling with sour cherry and a savory hint of purple basil. The wine dances across the palate with a bright acidity, bringing baked cherry and black plum skin flavors that mingle and meld with mocha tannins, mulberry brightness and damson plum flavors. There is a hint of bittersweet dark chocolate on the pleasing finish. This wine can stand up to food that might overwhelm other wines – hearty stews, braised meats and hard, aged cheeses. Sisquoc will continue to age well and become even more complex and compelling with up to 10 years of cellaring. We recommend decanting the wine prior to enjoying with friends. Our featured recipe is *Beef with Venetian Herbs*.

...flat-out stunning. Sweet red cherries, flowers and spices are some of the notes that flow from this vibrant, beautifully delineated wine. This shows fabulous Nebbiolo typicity and tons of style. It is frankly an eye-opening wine that shows what Nebbiolo is capable of in California. This is a dazzling effort from Steve Clifton. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2016. 93 points Wine Advocate # 196.