

# PALMINA



## 2006 Nebbiolo, Stolpman Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley

Many believe that the name of the ancient Nebbiolo grape came about because it made its home in fog-shrouded vineyards in Piemonte. Others think the name is rooted in the Italian word for “noble”. Both apply equally at Palmina, where the wine is rightly treated regally. The Stolpman Vineyard provides the fog, as that Ballard Canyon site is caressed each morning by sea fog from the nearby Pacific Ocean.

It looks like a typical vineyard on oak-studded, rolling hills, but closer inspection reveals the secret to this quality Nebbiolo. Below a thin 2-foot topsoil lies a clay layer and then a thread of limestone. Because it is so adaptive to soil, the Lampia clone of Nebbiolo was chosen for this site, and the vineyard is farmed organically and meticulously. Even given this incredible raw material, there is still a need for a skilled winemaker to coax greatness from the grape. Palmina winemaker/owner Steve Clifton has such passion, dedication and success with Nebbiolo that each year he has been invited to represent California at Italy’s *Convegno Internazionale Sul Vitigno Nebbiolo*. Truly a serendipitous combination of factors go into this wine.

Nebbiolo characteristically buds early and ripens late and 2006 was no exception. A lack of substantial rain in the springtime resulted in small clusters that were hand-harvested in late October. Carefully vinified in small open-top fermenters with extended maceration, the young wine was placed into neutral oak. After a year, the wine was racked to 7000 liter French Oak “uprights” where it peacefully aged with little oak or oxygen influence for another two years. In year four, the selection was gently moved to three 500 liter puncheons prior to being bottled in the early summer of 2010. In order to ensure an integrated wine, an additional year of bottle aging occurred before release.

This is an elegant beauty, rewarding the winemaker’s patience and care with personality and verve. This wine first shows off its “oh so Nebbiolo-ness” with its deep baked-brick color highlighted by glints of ruby red. From start to finish, this wine has personality that evolves and entices, revealing layer after layer of concealed loveliness. A swirl produces a seductive perfume of sweet caramelized rhubarb, rosemary, lavender, pomegranate, blood orange rind and a hint of tamari. Hibiscus and blood orange notes are first evident with a sip, melding to dried blueberry mingling with Niçoise olive and finishing with complex Mexican chocolate.

Definitely a wine to be enjoyed with good food and good company, decant one hour prior to serving. This wine will continue to evolve and mellow for 7-10 years. Our featured recipe is a *Fall Crostini*.

*...emerges from the glass with dark cherries, tobacco, licorice, smoke, leather, and cocoa. It spent 4 years in cask, which may have been a little on the long side considering how forward some of the aromas and flavors are.*

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