

PALMINA

2007 Arneis Honea Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley



White winegrapes tend to be easier to grow and more hardy than their red colleagues in the vineyard. Although sometimes thin skinned and delicate, white grape varieties are rarely thought of as finicky, difficult or temperamental. Not so with Arneis, which has such a reputation in its native Roero hills region of Italy's southern Piemonte, that its varietal name locally translates to "stubborn" or "little rascal" for its demanding viticultural characteristics.

And so perhaps it was with good reason that Arneis was almost extinct as a varietal, until a handful of vintners in Barolo revived this grape just thirty years ago. For generations, Arneis had been vinified with Barolos to tame the tannin and acidity in Nebbiolo, and was often referred to as "Barolo Bianco". Perhaps as stubborn as the grape itself, these Piemontese growers believed that Arneis could stand on its own as a wine and so it can! The "little rascal" is a wine full of character and personality, and as it requires as much attention in the winery as the vineyard, includes a thread of the winemaker's skill and persona in each vintage.

Naturally, Arneis is also very particular about where it is planted and seems perfectly suited to the alluvial, well draining soils at the lower part of the Honea Vineyard. Maritime fog from the nearby Pacific Ocean blankets the vineyard in the early morning, leading to warm, sun-filled days and cool, crisp nights, a microclimate

that allows Arneis to fully ripen and yet retain a lively acidity. Once delivered to the winery, the grapes are whole cluster pressed to 1/3 each stainless steel, neutral French oak barrels and Gamba 500-liter puncheons. This provides winemaker/owner Steve Clifton the ability to layer the intriguing characteristics of Arneis into the finished wine; the delicate aromatics are preserved by the stainless steel vinification, the orchard fruit qualities showcased by the neutral barrels and a creamy texture is brought forth from the Gamba puncheons.

The 2007 bottling of Arneis is astoundingly aromatic. A bouquet of honeysuckle and violets is laced with a hint of lavender and talc. This feminine nose is delicate in a forthright way and is unleashed from an inviting pale gold hue in the glass. Lifting acidity and freshness wakens the palate and envelopes the taste buds with harmonic layers of kaffir lime, wild fennel and then red Anjou pear, Fuji apple and the characteristic marzipan, almond and wild herb finish. Full bodied and ageable, as one might expect from this individualist grape, Arneis will pair beautifully with savory dishes, seafood and hearty fare. We recommend serving just slightly chilled to fully enjoy both the sensory essence of the wine. Our featured recipe is Steve's *Butternut Squash Risotto* – enjoy!

PALMINA

1520 E. Chestnut Court ~ Lompoc CA 93436
tel: 805.735.2030 ~ fax: 805.735.2693 ~ email: info@palminawines.com
www.PalminaWines.com