

# PALMINA

## 2007 Lagrein Honea Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley



Lagrein hails originally from Italy's Trentino-Alto Adige region, and probably is named for the Lagarina Valley of Trentino. This valley is framed by the Dolomite Mountains, which push cold air down the slopes as the Adriatic Sea sends warming sea breezes into the valley. This confluence provides a micro-climate wonderfully suited for Lagrein, a thicker skinned Tyrolean grape varietal. Thousands of miles away, the Honea Vineyard sits nestled in the transverse Santa Ynez Valley, where cool sea fog and breezes from the Pacific meet warm desert airs flowing down the San Rafael Mountain hillsides.

These similar conditions between northeastern Italy and Santa Barbara County create microclimates that are superbly suited for growing food wines, and Lagrein is no exception. However, similarity of site is not enough, as Lagrein needs careful supervision in the vineyard to ensure a crop size small enough to ripen each cluster. And then, skilled winemaking is required to manage the tannins and skin flavors from this hardy, mountain grape.

At Honea Vineyard, Lagrein is planted on a small hillside block where the soils are laced with limestone. It is a late ripening grape, needing a long growing season to ensure fully developed and mature flavors. At the winery, the dark indigo clusters are de-stemmed into small bins for fermentation and carefully tasted during vinification to manage the tannic profile. Malolactic fermentation occurs in the neutral French oak barrels where the wine ages for 10 months prior to bottling.

A deep, dark color – scarlet/cobalt, almost black, alludes to the depth of the 2007 Lagrein, and a swirl produces a glycerin-like veneer in the glass. Aromas of pipe tobacco and leather, spice and bramble waft from the wine. The 2007 Lagrein might be sub-titled “Bogart”, as it is an elegant masculine wine with dark plum, “old spice”, Havana cigar leaf and dark spice notes. Layers of sour cherry mingle with the plum and a thread of cedar, and lead to a finish that lingers with hints of bittersweet dark chocolate. This slightly mysterious, intriguing and robust wine benefits from aeration, and we suggest decanting. Beautifully balanced fruit, acid, tannin and structure, Lagrein is best enjoyed with rich and robust foods. We have paired it with *Stuffed pork Shoulder with Polenta stuffing with Currants*.