

PALMINA



2008 Lagrein Honea Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley

This is a wine whose origin is the Alpine region that transverses Italy and Austria, and whose character shows a typicity of such a mountainous region. Bold, hearty and rich, it is a fitting partner to the warming dishes of such an area.

The Alto-Adige (aka Südtirol) in northern Italy nestles beneath the towering Alps and Dolomites. The Alto-Adige summers are long and warm, with cool, starry nights which allow Lagrein to ripen to perfection and still retain a lively acidity that makes the wines so balanced and perfect for those hearty meals of “snow time”. Palmina’s Lagrein hails from the Honea Vineyard in the Santa Ynez Valley, and as in Italy, Lagrein is planted to a hillside block. After the morning fog lifts, the vineyard enjoys long, sunny and warm days with cool, crisp evenings – a perfect spot for a new-world interpretation of Lagrein.

One of the later ripening grapes from Honea, the grapes spent almost a month of the beginning winter months in fermenters, allowing tannins to soften and the beautiful, dark color and spice of the varietal to integrate into the new wine. Moved into neutral oak barrels for over a year to continue its evolution, 2008 Lagrein was bottled in July of 2010 and then cellared in bottle to assimilate flavors, acids and tannins prior to release.

The first pour is astonishing for its dark and deep color. There is a reason that the wine is often called “scuro” in Italy, which means dark. So rich in color, it is almost black – a swirl produces glints of indigo, amethyst and garnet jewel tones. Perhaps as expected, the bouquet of the wine is a bit brooding and reticent, but gradually wafts from the glass with aromas of dried mission fig, cassis and a slight meaty/earthy thread. Soft tannins and bright acidity prepare the palate for black cherry and rhubarb, more fig and zesty highlights of marmalade and orange pekoe tea. The persistent finish reminds of dark, bittersweet chocolate covered cherries. .

Although Lagrein has definitely been enjoyed with summer barbecues, it is so definitely a “fireside wine”. Take it with you on your skiing holiday, and try it with our featured recipe, *Mincemeat with Pecorino Crostini*.