

PALMINA



2009 Barbera Alisos Vineyard, Santa Barbara County

Barbera is a hardy and easy-going grape that is much beloved in the Piemonte region of Italy and indeed a part of everyday life there. It is a very old varietal, thought to perhaps be the “Grisa” grapes of medieval times and first documented as “Barbera” in the 1500’s. The vines were brought to California by the wave of Italian immigrants who settled here in the mid-1800’s as a bit of their homeland, since Barbera was their everyday wine of the table. Indeed, the California wine industry owes much to this “wine of the people”, and is still today one of the most widely planted Italian grape varietals in the state.

But, as with all winegrapes, excellent wine can only be made from vines that are planted in the right place. Although Barbera is an easy-going and vigorous vine that will grow almost anywhere, wines of balance and flavor are only grown where the days are warm and sunny and the nights crisp and cool. The Alisos Vineyard, in the Los Alamos Valley of Santa Barbara County is such a place – the morning sea fog from the Pacific Ocean retreats mid-morning and is followed by warm, sun-filled days and cold, clear nights. This is the nature of Santa Barbara County’s transverse mountains, the only place this geological condition exists in California.

Alisos is meticulously farmed, and the harvest is no exception. The grapes are picked by hand at night and delivered to the winery at dawn’s first light to retain the natural coolness of the evening. De-stemmed and cold soaked to extract all the color, flavor and tannin from the dark skins, the grapes were placed into 100% Gamba barrels post-fermentation. Gamba is an Italian cooper that crafts barrels from tight-grained French oak specifically for Italian varietals such as Barbera, and the young wine aged and gained complexity in these barrels for eighteen months prior to bottling.

The result is Old World/New World - a classically made wine in the Italian fashion that showcases the superb quality of grapes grown at Alisos. The wine struts its traditional dark color in the glass with a blood-ruby color and amethyst highlights inviting a swirl. Bright red fruit aromas of Bing cherry and raspberry mingle with a hint of highest-quality vanilla bean on the nose. A first sip brings a cornucopia of fruit and spice to the taste buds, delivered with a smooth and bright mouthfeel. Deep red plums, redcurrant, tart cherry and mulberry fruit notes are interlaced with a lively acidity and soft, fine tannin. A beautiful food wine, the 2009 Barbera from Alisos is great with barbecue, fresh tomatoes and hard cheeses like reggiano. Our featured recipe is *Stuffed Pork Spiedini*.

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