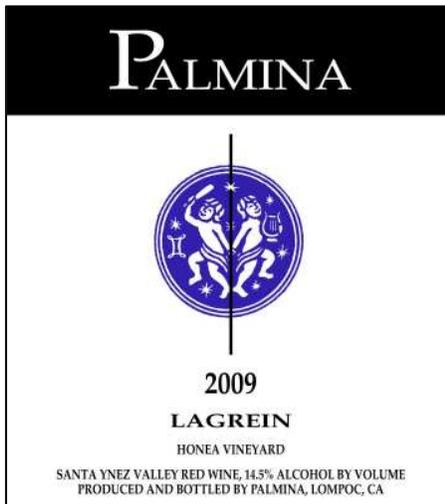


# PALMINA

## 2009 Lagrein Honea Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley



Like the winegrowers in the alpine region where Lagrein originated, this grape is a sturdy, hardy varetal that enjoys cool breezes and warm days to ripen its thick skins. Lagrein hails 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. 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.

Lagrein is planted on a small hillside block where the soils are laced with limestone. Canopy management is key to farming, as Lagrein is a late ripening grape, needing the Santa Ynez Valley's 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.

It is difficult to even call Lagrein a red wine, as its hue is so dark as to be almost black! Dark and brooding, a swirl foretells of the conundrum lurking in the wine as lively indigo highlights hint to Lagrein's rather voluptuous nature. Aromas of cherry plums mingle with flinty-stone and sandalwood, underlaid with black fruit notes. The care that winemaker/owner Steve Clifton takes in the cellar is evident in the texture of the wine from the first sip, with velvety tannins perfectly balanced with lifting acidity mingling with a cornucopia of berry flavors – blackberry, huckleberry and currant. The finish is silky and lingering with lasting reminders of perfectly ripe plums. It is no wonder the 2008 Lagrein has been graced with the Palmina black stripe – this is a wine of extraordinary deliciousness.