

PALMINA

2010 Moscato Honea Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley



The Muscat grape is probably one of the oldest known wine grape varieties still in existence, with written descriptions of wines made from Muscat grapes going back to ancient times in Greece and Rome. In Italy, it was known as *Apiane*, due to the fondness of bees for the sweet nectar of the grape. Its popularity, though, does not mean that this is an easy grape to grow. It buds out early in the season and requires a long, even and temperate growing climate. In Italy, some of the most revered wines hail from the Piemonte area, particularly around the town of Canelli. The similar climate in the Santa Ynez Valley and specifically the Honea Vineyard led to a small planting of Moscato Bianco grapes for Palmina. At the lower part of the vineyard, a small triangular block of Moscato di Canelli is planted on the gravelly, ancient riverbed soils. The warm, sunny days and cool nights allow this late-ripening grape to fully develop intense and rich flavors, while still maintaining a refreshing acidity in the berries. True to its heritage and ancient reputation, bees gravitate to the nectar-like clusters as harvest nears!

Harvest occurs in the first hours of the day, to preserve the natural freshness of the grape (and to avoid the bees). In the winery, the golden clusters were pressed to stainless steel and slowly fermented at cool temperatures to uphold the perfume and exotic characteristics of this alluring grape. Malo-lactic fermentation was inhibited for the same reason, and the young wine was bottled in the first months of the New Year. Stylistically, owner/winemaker Steve Clifton decided that a beautifully balanced, completely dry wine best showcases the grape and the Honea site. And, in the Palmina way, is the most food-friendly style!

Bright and brilliant, the pale gold color of the wine foretells of the fresh character of the wine. But, it does not predict the delicate and enveloping floral aromatics that waft from the glass with a first swirl. The bouquet teases into tricking the palate that this will be a sweet wine, but it is completely and beautifully dry. The pear blossom, jasmine and honeycomb bouquet merges with a creamy texture at first sip that delivers Asian pear, lychee and garden herb notes. The aromatics of the wine meld with flavors on the palate, with orange peel and hints of golden raisin and cantaloupe layering into the finish. Pretty, balanced and totally pleasant, the 2010 Moscato should be lightly chilled for maximum enjoyment.

Although it is tempting to simply enjoy the perfume of this wine, the balance and acidity makes it a superb food wine. We have paired this with *Springtime Tarragon Gnocchi*, simply sublime!