



2010 BARBERA SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

As a grape varietal, Barbera has a long history, thought to perhaps be the “Grisa” grapes of medieval times and first documented as “Barbera” in the 1500’s. It is a hardy and affable grape that is much beloved in its homeland of the Piemonte region of Italy and indeed a part of everyday life there. There is an old saying that the grape impersonates the character of the Piemontese who cultivate it — robust and yet unassuming.

Easy-going, yes. Yet, in order to produce superior wine, Barbera has definite preferences to climates and soils. Santa Barbara’s long growing season, rocky soils and ocean-influenced climate is such a place. A true representation of the region, the 2010 Barbera is a blend from four vineyards in three cool climates — the Alisos Vineyard in the Los Alamos Valley, the Honea Vineyard and Walker Vineyards in the Santa Ynez Valley, and the Zotovich Vineyard in Sta. Rita Hills. Each of these cool-climate vineyards delivers a bit of their own personality to this charming food wine.

In order to preserve the special character of each vineyard, winemaker/owner Steve Clifton vinifies each separately. The Barbera from the Walker Vineyard was aged in 100% Slovenian oak barrels. The Alisos Vineyard Barbera in 100% Gamba barrels made from French oak. The wine from Honea Vineyard was aged in a large “upright”, and Zotovich Vineyard Barbera saw mostly neutral oak. Once the final blend was determined, the wines were racked from barrels to tank and allowed to marry, intermingle and meld for an additional month prior to bottling. The result is a wine that is truly representative of Santa Barbara County and layered with a cornucopia of flavors and bright acidity.

A deep ruby color with amethyst highlights shines in the glass, and the first swirl leads to aromas of blackberries, black currant and toast with jam. These dark berry notes are mirrored on the palate, and joined by interesting nuances of blood orange, a hint of dried cherry and spicy components — Chinese Five Spice, white pepper and a suggestion of violets. Young mission figs, black cherries and a bit of black strap molasses are balanced by firm and bright acidity. The wine is mouth-filling and yet refreshing, with a crisp acidity and a pleasing finish replete with soft mocha-like tannins. 2010 Barbera is delightful on its own, but craves a meal! The balance of fruit and natural acidity make this wine an extension of the plate, enabling you to feel satisfied and happy during and at the end of a meal. Our featured recipe is *Summer Eggplant*.

