



2011 MALVASIA BIANCA SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

There is something inherently exotic about Malvasia Bianca. Perhaps it relates to its far-flung origins and introduction to Italy by Venetian adventurers and merchants. Malvasia Bianca is an ancient Greek varietal, and more than likely brought to Italy in the 14th century during the Venetian exploration of the Aegean and colonization of that region. Seven hundred years later, this aromatic and intriguing grape is revered throughout the Mediterranean and... here in Santa Barbara County.

Perhaps due to its seafaring roots, Malvasia really only struts its captivating character when grown in a maritime climate. The 2011 release hails from two sloping vineyards in valleys influenced by the nearby Pacific Ocean; the Alisos Vineyard in the Los Alamos Valley and the Larner Vineyard in the Santa Ynez Valley. Both experience the same morning marine fogs, warm sunny days and cool, crisp evenings as that of its Friuli-Venezia roots in Italy. This “cool-warm-cool” environment results in perfectly ripe grapes that retain their astounding aromatics and natural acidity.

After the golden clusters are harvested in the wee hours of the morning, the grapes are whisked to the winery while still firm and cold from the nighttime temperatures. Kept in the cold room on their skins for 24 hours to extract flavor and texture from the skins, the grapes were then whole cluster pressed. A natural fermentation began with indigenous yeasts, and the wine was then transferred to neutral oak barrels to complete fermentation. The young wine then aged in barrel to meld flavors with textures, and was bottled in the spring of 2012.

Malvasia Bianca first beckons with a gorgeous glint of pale gold in the straw-colored wine. A virtual garland of orange blossom, night-blooming jasmine and a grassiness reminiscent of fresh olives leaps from the glass with a swirl, teasing into a belief that this is a sweet wine. But a first sip surprises with tangy essence of quince, key lime and newly picked white peaches. This lean and bone-dry wine pulses across the palate with light and lively nuances of lime marmalade, kumquat, membrillo and loquats and then lingers with a crisp, stoney minerality and briney character suggestive of Malvasia Bianca’s seaside history.

