

Wine & Cheese by TCC's October 2011 Wine Club

In following with an October "Hallowine" theme, we are featuring two obscure, "scary" grapes. Our first selection is Finca Os Cobatos Mencia from Monterrei Denominación de Origen (DO), Spain ("scary" grape from a little featured wine making region). The second wine is Arneis from Palmina Winery in Santa Barbera County, California (Italian grapes in Santa Barbera - scary!). OK, we'll stop with the scary. One significant note - Palmina is one of the tasting rooms in the Lompoc Wine Ghetto we visited on our Wine Coastal Cruise in May and they were the consummate hosts!

Finca Os Cobatos Mencia is produced by the Adegas Pazo do Mar Winery. They are located in Monterrei, Spain. The winery was founded in 2002 after the Mendez family was in the wine making business for 30 years. They believe in incorporating the traditional wine making style of the region with more modern wine making processes giving their wines a freshness and unique 'personality'. The Monterrei DO is the youngest DO in Galicia, achieving its status in 1994. It is also the southernmost DO in Galicia, bordering Portugal in the Douro River Basin. As a result, the vineyard temperatures have a huge differential between day and nighttime allowing for full ripeness while maintaining acidity in the grapes - the perfect equation for beautiful wines.

Palmina Winery was founded in 1995 by winemaker, Steve Clifton. It is named after Steve's close friend and "spark in his life", Paula, who passed away after battling breast cancer. During the time they were together, Paula was responsible for teaching Steve a love of cooking, wine, and the Italian lifestyle. After her passing, Steve discovered that her real name was Palmina and decided to name the winery in honor of her. Steve and his current wife, Chrystal Seals, operate the winery. Chrystal, fluent in Italian, provided translation services to Steve when he was hosting Italian visitors. She soon became very involved in Steve's life and the winery and they were married in 2004 in Friuli, Italy. They treat wine as an "extension of plate" to be shared with friends and enhance meals, much akin to Italy. However, they do not try to copy Italian wines but allow the grapes to benefit from the unique conditions of Santa Barbara.

In the following pages, there is some information regarding the wine club selections. First, you'll find maps* showing the regions where the wines were produced. Next, you will see a description of each wine, some technical information on the wines, and food pairing suggestions. As always, your feedback is encouraged. Please call us or stop by with your comments regarding our selections.

The Gang at TCC



Wine & Cheese by TCC



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Palmina

Arneis

Type:	White
Varietal composition:	100% Arneis
Vineyard Location:	Santa Ynez Valley, California
Vintage:	2009
Country:	United States
Alcohol:	12.3%
Age-ability:	Drink now or within two years

Winemaking Philosophy and Vinification Details

The Arneis grape has its origins in Piemonte, Italy, dating back to the 1500's. It is known to be a difficult grape to grow and its name translates to "rascally" or "whimsical one". The Honea Vineyard is one of the only two vineyards in California planted to the Arneis grape. It has alluvial soils, sunny days, cool nights and early morning fog keeping the grapes very happy!

In 2009, the grapes were hand harvested and aged in one-third stainless steel vessels and two-thirds neutral oak barrels for six months. This gives the wine a complexity which is crisp, yet full bodied. It is still considered a medium bodied wine but has more balancing acidity than previous vintages which "allows the varietal's exotic fruit notes to shine".

Tasting Notes

This wine is a light golden color and has aromas of pear, citrusy lime and floral. On the palate, crisp key lime flavors offset the rich mouthfeel and ripe lychee fruit flavors. Medium bodied yet fresh with a touch of minerality on the finish.

Pairing Suggestions

Pair this wine with chicken and dishes with sweet, spicy, or buttery sauces. Also great as an aperitif. Try with our Antipasto and Hummus plates or use this wine to make the Arneis Butternut Squash & Sausage Risotto recipe from Palmina you'll find included in this packet.

For this month's cheese selection, pair with the Gooda® with Mustard Seeds. The ripe pear and lychee notes balance out the sharp tangy mustard notes of the cheese.

Finca Os Cobatos

Mencia

Type:	Red
Varietal composition:	100% Mencia
Vineyard Location:	Monterrei, Galicia
Vintage:	2010
Country:	Spain
Alcohol:	13%
Age-ability:	Drink now or cellar for 3 years

Winemaking Philosophy and Vinification Details

The Mencia grape is grown almost exclusively in northwestern Spain. Contrary to the myth, it is not an ancient clone of the Cabernet Franc grape although the same name can be used for a local strain of Cabernet Franc introduced to Galicia in the 19th century. We know, confusing! The climate and soils of the Monterrei provide optimal growing conditions for this grape.

The Mendez family utilizes modern, temperature controlled, stainless steel tanks, and a fully automated bottling system along with traditional methods and a dedicated & knowledgeable staff to produce quality wines. They strive for the ideal balance between modern technology and traditional winemaking methods.

Tasting Notes

This ruby red colored wine has a nose of strawberry and fresh red fruit. It is light to medium bodied and has flavors of red and dark berry fruits with a hint of toasted oak on the finish. Soft and drinkable, yet complex.

Pairing Suggestions

This wine pairs well with cured meats, roasted turkey, tangy feta and nutty cheeses. Try it with our Roasted Chevre or Baked Brie with Olive Tapenade.

For this month's cheese club selection, pair with Double Cream Gouda. The dark fruit notes and the toasted oak are a delicious complement to the butter, creamy and savory notes of the cheese.

Enjoy!