



# MADROÑA

## 2009 Nebbiolo – Hillside Collection

### Nebbiolo

Winemakers throughout California have tasted the great Barolos and Barbarescos of Northern Italy wondering if the variety could ever grow here. Known for its peculiar growing issues as well as making wines of harsh tannins, high acidity and light color, most wineries have steered clear of Nebbiolo.

However, our family's high-elevation vineyards provided us an opportunity in 1997 to plant Nebbiolo in two locations that provided a cool climate and rich soil conditions—something not yet tried in California. The result has been to produce a wine with good color and a palate with rich texture and an identifiable strawberry/plum fruit.

### The Vineyards

In 1997, we had the opportunity to try something new. We had noted that Nebbiolo from California seemed to lack the wonderful complexity and aspects of great Barolos and Barbarescos, and perhaps the climate at 3,000 feet here in Pleasant Valley would produce a spectacular wine. With two small plantings (1 acre each) in the Sumu Kaw and Enyé Vineyards grafted on to the devigorating rootstock 101-14, the deep Aiken clay loam provides plenty of leaf area for this variety. Diligent leaf removal on the north side of the vines gives us grapes with ripe cherry and hints of spice. The one challenge is (and always has been) the aggressive tannins in the fruit. This makes Nebbiolo the most educational and experimental variety in our vineyards.

### The 2009 Vintage

As most people may already know, the 2009 vintage had almost picture-perfect weather for producing amazing wines. The fruit characters are focused, ripe and intriguing. For Nebbiolo (especially the 2009 vintage), the characters are bright, youthful and wonderfully complex. The color, with a slightly earlier bottling (only 10 months in barrel) is a brilliant garnet, staying clear of the brickish hue often seen in the variety. The nose is filled with elegant floral aromas of rose and lavender, but beneath lies a structure of dark cherry, ripe boysenberry and a hint of fresh raspberry. There is no mistaking the palate for anything but Nebbiolo. Full-bodied and textually enveloping, the wine grabs the taste buds and won't let go! Very intense black cherry weaves its way through plum and berry characters, finishing with classic Nebbiolo dryness and "rustic" tannins. The wine is destined for food, and you'd be a crazy to use this as your "sipping" deck wine (although I've heard this done before!).

### Suggested Food Pairings

Garlic!!! And after that, more garlic. But mix in some classic starches (pasta, potatoes, rice) to marry with the young tannins. And then add just a hint more garlic!

### Facts

Appellation: El Dorado, Estate Grown

Blend: 82% Nebbiolo, 18% Barbera

Aging: 10 months in neutral oak barrels

Bottled: July 29, 2010

Alcohol: 15.3%, pH: 3.69, TA: 0.53 g/100ml, Residual Sugar: 0.02%

Production: 322 cases, Suggested Retail Price: \$20.00