

# 2015 BARBERA

## RICH VINEYARD UPPER OJAI, VENTURA COUNTY

We learned quite a bit about Barbera while making the 2014 debut release. That was a fun and widely appreciated wine, but man, did it have acidity! If you've been following along for awhile you've become familiar with my evangelizing for more acidity in California wines; well, Barbera might be the only varietal where even winemakers like me have to consider balance from the other side of the coin.

This thought is shared even in Piedmont, where it's not unusual to add calcium carbonate into the must (grape juice) to de-acidify and thus soften the feel of their Barbera. That works but it's a bit too heavy-handed for my tastes. Using whole clusters in the fermentation can also work to soften acidity (the stems contain potassium that's released during fermentation, which raises the pH of the wine), while also lending some spicy and herbal complexity. I'd used twenty-five-percent whole clusters the first time for that reason, and felt in 2015 that this fruit could gobble up sixty-percent with no problem.

That tweak worked out beautifully! The peaks and valleys in this wine are nearly as dramatic as the debut bottling, but benefit from more roundedness. And with so many whole-clusters there's lots of carbonic effect, that unique aromatic lift that comes with fermenting un-crushed clusters and augments the fruity character of this wine. Expect effusive red cherry, pomegranate and blood orange flavors, all hanging on a fine framework of minty stem tannins. There's still plenty of varietal zippiness, but this 2015 is a more versatile drink for sure.

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**BLEND** 100% Barbera  
**VINEYARDS** Rich Vineyard  
**LOCATION** Upper Ojai, Ventura County  
**ALCOHOL** 14.5%  
**VINIFICATION** Open top fermentation  
**BARREL AGING** 18 Months in Neutral French Oak  
**TOTAL PRODUCTION** 69 Cases

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### Antonio Galloni's Vinous

"Ojai's 2015 Barbera Rich Vineyard is plump, juicy and forward – in other words, exactly what Barbera is supposed to be. Inky red and purplish-hued stone fruit, spice, leather, mint and lavender flesh out in a supple, midweight Barbera loaded with personality. The 60% whole clusters are not especially perceptible in the wine's flavor profile, although they are a bit more evident texturally" – AG **92 points**

### Robert Parkers Wine Advocate

"I was very impressed by the 2015 Barbera Rich Vineyard, a lovely wine that wafts from the glass with a generous bouquet of black cherry, balsamic reduction and plum preserve. On the palate, it's full-bodied, layered and velvety, with the bright acids typical of this variety underpinning a lavish core of dark fruit. 2018-2026" - William Kelley **92 Points**

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