



# IDLEWILD *Wines*

## *2012 Nebbiolo, Fox Hill Vineyard*

### *Vineyard*

Fox Hill Vineyard is without a doubt one of the most unique vineyards in Northern California. One of its true beauties is that it has remained relatively unknown. Located southeast of Ukiah on Mendocino's Talmage Bench, the soils are well drained with high concentrations of gravel and sandstone, and the farming is as old fashioned and straight forward as it gets. What makes this site so unique though is the fact that Lowell Stone decided to follow his passion, to buck every market trend, and to simply plant what he was interested in planting. Many trips to Italy turned to inspiration and the wild spectrum of varieties began to take root. The cooler tree sheltered and northwest facing blocks that I source from are appropriately planted with varietals that originate in Italy's Piemonte. Nebbiolo is said to be one of the most difficult varietals to grow outside of its original home, but the balance, grace, and power shown on the soils of Fox Hill Vineyard point to a new future.

### *Vintage*

Nebbiolo thrives in a vintage free of extremes. The hills of the Langhe are neither cool nor hot; instead, they are tempered and balanced both by the proximity to the warm Mediterranean to the South and the cold Alps to the North. On our shores, 2012 was a great vintage, and not enough can be said about the moderate temperatures and lack of climatic obstacles, both of which aided in even and gentle ripening. A perfect year in my mind is the combination of next to no human intervention and resulting beautiful fruit, which is to say natural balance. Moderate vintages like 2012 allow gentle ripening, which leads to depth of flavor and structure while still retaining grace.

### *Winemaking*

Since Nebbiolo is a difficult grape to both grow and make into wine, it seemed for the first vintage that exploration of various practices would make sense. So, three small lots (each yielded a little over a barrel) were made. The first was left whole cluster and pressed a touch early. The second was destemmed and pressed right at dryness. The third was destemmed and then left on skins for two months of extended maceration. In the end, all three had positive attributes, but it was the blend that was most intriguing. The different pieces were racked and blended half way through their 20 months in neutral oak.

### *Wine*

The first indication of the varietal is the appropriateness of the color: pale red to garnet with brick and orange edges. The nose is expressive with loads of layers including dried cherry, rose water, anise, macerated roses, soft potpourri like spices, forest leaves, and tar like earth. Perhaps the aspect of the wine I love the most is the structure. It is light, pure, and graceful and then slowly transitions into very tight and persistent yet soft tannin and acidity.

98 cases produced.

