



2002 SYRAH “BIEN NACIDO”

This wine is 100% Syrah from two different blocks at Bien Nacido Vineyard in the Santa Maria Valley. Roughly, half comes from the older “X” Block, which was the original Syrah plantation at Bien Nacido. The other half is from a newer hillside planting, Block Eleven, a west facing hill opposite the winery. For years, I watched the sun drenching that hillside until early evening and just know it was a perfect place to plant Syrah. Block Eleven is also the spot where our Reserve Chardonnay originates.

The grapes from Block Eleven were destemmed, the “X” Block grapes included 33% whole clusters with stems. Fermentation was done in small open-top fermenters, punched down manually twice a day. After pressing the wine was aged in French oak barrels, including 25% new François Frères, for 16 months. It was lightly egg white fined and 2,199 cases were bottled without filtration in February 2004.

2002 was an outstanding vintage. Warmer than 2001, the ‘02’s tend to be more forward with softer, rounder acidity. At a time when most California Syrahs are between 14.5% and 16% alcohol, I take special care and pride in keeping my alcohols at a reasonable level. This wine is 13%.

This is a rich, juicy Bien Nacido Syrah, reminding me a lot of the outstaying 1996. Unmistakably cool climate with great acidity and spice. I would drink this vintage and put the 2001 in the cellar. The ‘02 does have good aging potential, but it tastes so good now, why wait?