



2003 SYRAH “CENTRAL COAST”

This wine is 84% Syrah, 6% Grenache, 4% Counoise, 3% Mourvèdre and 3% divided between Mondeuse, Cinsault, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Tempranillo. The grapes come from 13 different vineyards in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties with the largest percentages coming from Bien Nacido Vineyard (Santa Maria), French Camp Vineyard (Paso Robles), and Rancho Arroyo Grande Vineyard (Arroyo Grande). The wine is roughly 70% Santa Barbara County, 24% Paso Robles and 6% Arroyo Grande Valley.

You’ve heard this before, but this is yet another step up in quality for our Central Coast Syrah. The reason is the grape sources. We continue to use more and more high quality, cool climate vineyards in the blend. We have 2 sections of Syrah at Bien Nacido dedicated to the Central Coast program that are now in full production. We are getting more grapes each year from great vineyards like Alisos, Colson Canyon, Purisima Mountain, Rancho Arroyo Grande, Stolpman, and our own Ibarra-Young. In '03 we got some wonderful Syrah and Grenache from a new source on Paso Robles’ west side called Hearthstone Vineyard— we already make too many wines, I had no place else to put it, it went into the Central Coast Syrah.

The various lots were mostly fermented in small, open top fermenters, punched down manually twice a day. All lots were aged separately in French oak barrels for about 10 months. Most of the blending was done at the first racking in February, with the blend finalized at the second racking in June.

The wines were fined with egg whites and given a light filtration for clarity just before bottling. 11,500 cases were bottled (fulls and halves) in August and November 2004.

This is a pretty big Central Coast Syrah. 2003 was a warm vintage and most of the components were on the ripe and fleshy, forward side. Luckily, we had a lot of Bien Nacido to put in the blend, which was picked late in the season at reasonable sugars (23 – 24) with good acidity. The aromas are classic Syrah: hardspice, black pepper, berries with hints of lavender and licorice. It’s rich and forward in the mouth with a bit more tannin than normal. The finish is juicy with fresh, balanced acidity, and an alcohol below 14% so you can actually drink it... a big yummy factor!