



Qupé 2003 Bien Nacido Vineyard Syrah

This wine is 100% Syrah from two distinct blocks at Bien Nacido Vineyard, 60% from Block Eleven “Baja” and 40% from X Block. Block Eleven is a custom hillside planting on the hill opposite the winery, planted in 1997. X Block is the original syrah planting at Bien Nacido – planted to Riesling in 1972, then grafted to syrah (on the Riesling roots) in 1986.

2003 was a warm vintage and this wine is a bit bigger, riper and higher in alcohol than I normally make. We started picking X block on October 7, which was our earliest harvest at Bien Nacido until 2004, when we started on September 25th! We also picked out first lot of Block Eleven “Baja” on October 7, which was the earliest for that until 2004 which, coincidentally, was started on September 25! My point in noting all of these dates is early, warm vintages – warmer and earlier than we’ve ever seen... global warming in Santa Barbara County! The wines from these warmer vintages are not my favorites, but damn, they sure are good!

The grapes for this wine were made into wine the same way we always do... open top fermenters, manual punch down, 33% whole cluster with stems for the X block, aging for 16 months in Francois Frères French oak barrels (25% new), light fining with egg whites and bottling without filtration.

The color is quite dark with a beautiful magenta-black robe. The aromas show traditional berries and spice with a bit of meat and smoke. There is a lot of juice and weight in the mouth with softer than usual acidity and developed tannins. The pH’s were quite low as well so the finish is still very refreshing.

This wine will probably hold nicely for 5-8 years, but why wait? Drink this while you wait for the ‘01’s and ‘02’s, and for that matter the ‘98’s and ‘99’s to come around.