



QUPÉ 2004 BIEN NACIDO VINEYARD SYRAH

This wine is 100% Syrah from the Bien Nacido Vineyard in the Santa Maria Valley. Believe it or not, this is our 18th vintage of Bien Nacido Syrah! It comes from two vineyard blocks at Bien Nacido – “X” Block, which is the original syrah block grafted in 1986 on to Riesling roots that were planted in 1973; and a block we call Block Eleven Baja, a hillside planting on the hill opposite the winery, planted in 1997.

2004 was the earliest we ever harvested syrah at Bien Nacido (did I mention hot year, September heat wave?) We brought in the first grapes on September 25 and finished on October 8. Sugars ranged from 23.0° to 25.4° with low pH's from 3.3 to 3.5 and acidity averaging 7.3 – amazing stuff! The Block Eleven portion (60%) was destemmed, the “X” Block portion was fermented with 1/3 stems with whole clusters. Fermented, as usual, in small open top fermenters, manually punched down twice a day and pressed at dryness. Aged 15 months in François Frères Burgundy barrels (about 25% new). The wine was fined with egg whites at 4 per barrel in November 2005, and then bottled without filtration in January 2006. 2000 cases were produced.

The '04 reminds me very much of the 2003, warm vintage with spicy, ripe aromas. Of older vintages, this reminds me of the 1988, 1993 and 1996 wines, all of which have aged beautifully.