



2005 SYRAH “BIEN NACIDO HILLSIDE ESTATE”

This wine is 100% syrah from Z Block at Bien Nacido Vineyard, a 5 acre block planted exclusively for Qupé in 1992. Z Block is situated on a southwest facing hillside about 800 feet above the valley floor below... a perfect place for grapes, a perfect site for our top syrah.

The 2005 vintage was one of the very best vintages I've worked on the Central Coast, and this bottling stands along with the 1998 and 2001 as our best bottlings of this syrah. Not only did we have great quality in 2005, but we had good quantity as well – 3.75 tons/acre (normal is about 3 tons per acre).

We started harvesting X Block on October 6th and picked four different lots, finishing on October 20th. These dates are a little earlier than normal but we just had perfect weather during Harvest. Average sugar at harvest was 24.8° brix with 3.3 pH and 7.68 acidity... incredible numbers for those wines geeks that care.

The grapes were destemmed into small open top fermenters. Cold soaked for 3 days with pump overs and then manually punched down twice a day for the duration of the ferment. On day five we drained off a little saignée from each fermented (about 12%) into new François Frères barrels (Bertranges, Tronçais, and Vosges) for barrel fermentation. This saignée barrel fermented portion was later added back to the final blend. I've used this technique every year for the Hillside Estate and it's become an important part of the style, adding a toasty-mocha dimension to aroma and flavors. The wine was aged 20 months total in barrel with about 2/3 being new François Frères. 940 cases were bottled without fining or filtration in June 2007.

This is one of my favorite syrahs— an amazing combination of power, complexity, and balance. This wine is built for the long haul if you keep a cellar. The great thing about the 2005s, though, is how juicy and enjoyable they are already but, if so inclined, this should age beautifully for 15-20 years.