



2006 SYRAH – CENTRAL COAST

Amazingly enough, this is our 25th vintage of our Central Coast Syrah bottling (first one 1982)! The wine has evolved tremendously over those 25 years. The first six vintages were 100% from Paso Robles, from the old Estrella River/Meridian Vineyard. Then, starting in 1988, I began blending in some Bien Nacido and Zaca Mesa fruit. As demand for our Syrah increased in the late 80s & early 90s, we experimented with adding small amounts of Syrah, Zinfandel and Carignane from Lodi. We even added small amounts of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Pinot Noir in some vintages. We also got our first Syrah from the French Camp Vineyards in Paso Robles in 1990. French Camp is owned by the Miller family that also own Bien Nacido.

From 1994 to 2000, many Syrah vineyards in the Central Coast came into production. We started working with Lonesome Oak in Paso Robles, and Alisos, Stolpman, Purisima Mountain, and Colson Canyon in Santa Barbara Counties during this period.

In 2001, we settled into a style and blend that pretty much remains. This 2006 is 94% Syrah, 5% Grenache, and 1% Counoise. It comes from Santa Barbara County (54%), Paso Robles (34%), San Luis Obispo County (8%), and Arroyo Grande Valley (4%). The prominent vineyards in order of percentage are: Bien Nacido 19%, Lonesome Oak 15% and French Camp 14%, Chabot 13% (a cool climate Santa Barbara site); Alamo Creek 8% (another cool climate site in southern SLO county); Carriage in Paso Robles 6%; Vogelzang in Santa Ynez 5%; Rancho Arroyo Grande in the Arroyo Grande Valley 4%. The other 16% is divided among Alisos, Colson Canyon, Black Oak, Purisima Mountain, Ibarra-Young, Stolpman, Nielson and Premier Coastal Vineyards all in Santa Barbara County.

Roughly half of the lots were fermented in small open top fermenters and manually punched down twice a day. The other half was done in larger closed top tanks and pumped over twice a day. The wines were aged in neutral French oak barrels for eleven months. It was fined with four egg whites per barrel and given a light filtration before bottling.

This is one of our best bottlings yet of this wine. The relatively cool vintage in 2006 allowed long hang time and great acidity. The riper, forward fruit aspects of the Paso Robles fruit are balanced by the acidity and spiciness of the cool climate Santa Barbara fruit.

This wine is made with early consumption in mind, but if you are so inclined, and since this is a special anniversary vintage, you can certainly put in the cellar for 8-10 years.