



WINEMAKER: Ken Brown

VINEYARD SOURCE: Bien Nacido Vineyard, Santa Maria Valley. Founded in 1973, Bien Nacido produces some of California's most sought-after cool climate wine grapes. The vineyard has a gently sloping southern exposure that allows maximum sunlight to ripen the fruit—especially important considering the region's long, cool growing season. Soils are well-drained sandy loams and shaly loams. While some plantings of the original Martini clone still exist, many blocks were replanted in 1996 to newer clones, including Pommard and 2A, which were sourced for this Pinot Noir.

VINTAGE: Harvest 2003 was Santa Maria Valley's warmest vintage on record and one of our earliest harvests ever. The growing season began with unseasonably warm winter temperatures that triggered budbreak in late January, nearly a month ahead of normal. Rain, wind and cool weather experienced during the May bloom period caused poor fruit set in some clusters and lightened yields. Summer temperatures were above average, but the warm conditions helped promote better balance in the naturally high acid Pinot Noir grown at Bien Nacido.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS: Although I have logged many vintages in Santa Maria Valley, I continue to be inspired by the Pinot Noir grown here. Grapes brought in from Bien Nacido were hand sorted before being de-stemmed and gravity fed to fermenters. The must was immediately chilled for a pre-fermentation cold soak where the most beneficial extraction of color, aroma and flavor occurs. During fermentation, concentration was enhanced by gently punching down the cap, taking care not to break any skins or seeds and risk harsh tannins. The wine aged nine months in French oak barrels with 30% new French oak.

This wine displays classic traits of Bien Nacido Pinot Noir. Lush aromas of dark cherry, rose petal and leather blend with hints of clove and white pepper. The wine is multi-dimensional on the palate with dark cherry and spice flavors, lush, rich tannins and a luxurious texture.

TECHNICAL DATA

T.A.: 5.60 g/l

pH: 3.73

Alcohol: 14.7%

Sugg. Retail Price: \$30.00

Production: 392 cases