



WINEMAKER: Ken Brown

VINEYARD SOURCES: 57% Bien Nacido Vineyard, Santa Maria Valley, 43% Watch Hill Vineyard, Los Alamos. This wine is a blend from two outstanding, but contrasting Syrah vineyards in Santa Barbara County. Fruit from the cooler Bien Nacido Vineyard contributes deep, dark fruit characteristics and fuller tannins to the blend, while grapes from the slightly warmer, Watch Hill Vineyard lend rich, soft tannins and lush plum components.

VINTAGE: The 2005 vintage was characterized by plentiful winter rainfall, mild temperatures and a gradual ripening of the grapes, which allowed us to pick each block at optimum maturity. Above average rainfall resulted in vigorous spring vine growth and healthy canopies. Growers helped keep yields in balance with careful farming, including shoot and cluster thinning and leaf pulling, to ensure excellent flavor development and concentration in the grapes. Syrah from Bien Nacido was harvested on October 14; fruit from Watch Hill was picked on October 12.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS: After many years of working with the remarkably diverse Syrah grape, I have found that an adaptation of Australian winemaking techniques brings out the best expression of this grape. The goal is to maximize extraction prior to the midpoint of fermentation to preserve the unique fruit character and avoid the possibility of harsh tannins. The grapes were crushed into tanks and given a four day cold soak. A saignée was immediately drawn off to further enhance concentration. During the most active days of fermentation, we performed 'rack and returns' for additional extraction. The wine was pressed immediately at the conclusion of fermentation, then aged 18 months in 60-gallon French oak barrels with 35% new oak in the mix.

This Syrah is superbly balanced and rich, with a velvety texture and elegant tannins. Aromas of dark plum and black pepper are accented by a hint of cinnamon stick. Lightly toasted French oak nicely complements the intensity of the fruit on the palate. The wine's rich texture and layers of complexity will only be enhanced with additional time in the cellar.

TECHNICAL DATA

T.A.: 6.63 g/l

pH: 3.44

Alcohol: 14.6%

Sugg. Retail Price: \$30.00

Production: 272 cases