



2015 CHARDONNAY

BIEN NACIDO SANTA MARIA VALLEY

441 CASES PRODUCED

Since 1991 I've purchased Bien Nacido chardonnay from I block, which is down in the flatter part of the site closer to the riverbed, so the vines there are planted on sandier alluvial soil. It's planted to "California clone" 4, a productive, high acidity and fruit infused clone that was selected by UC Davis from old French stock brought to this country in the 1880's. The 40-year-old vines rows planted 12ft on center alternate with rows of younger vines of the same clone but on rootstock.

Because of this, our chardonnay block is farmed like two vineyards, really. The younger vines on rootstock have struggled to compete with the more established roots of the older vines, so the two are harvested on different dates, watered differently, and the fruit has a different profile. This gives our Bien Nacido chardonnay great tension; the old vines bring richer, fatter fruitier facets while the younger vines keep the wine taut and driven. Bien Nacido gives a deliciously unique expression of California chardonnay, and to keep that expression uncluttered and food-friendly we ferment and age this chardonnay in neutral French oak barrels.

The 2015 vintage marked the fourth year of warm drought weather, so again we picked our Bien Nacido chardonnay about 3 weeks earlier than in years past. The big difference in 2015 was that the vines produced a tiny crop, and that gave us a particularly intense wine. The fruit here is exuberant, it's no doubt the most punchy of our 2015 chardonnays, yet it's beautifully balanced. In warm years like these the biggest issue is picking the fruit in time to preserve delicate salty aromas and a lively structure—and that's just what we did. It's powerful in a brisk way, and should age exceptionally well. We've recently poured beautiful 15-20 year old examples of this wine on our tasting room's library flights.

BLEND 100% Chardonnay
VINEYARDS Bien Nacido
AVA Santa Maria Valley
ALCOHOL 13%
VINIFICATION 100% Neutral French Oak
BARREL AGING 11 Months
TOTAL PRODUCTION 441 Cases

PRESS REVIEWS

Jeb Dunnuck

The 2015 Chardonnay Bien Nacido is pure class, with plenty of ripe apple, brioche, hints of buttered apple, and even a hint of exotic green citrus, on the nose. Fresh, concentrated and layered, with bright acidity, it will be even better in a few years and keep for a decade or more. This is a true white Burgundy lover's Chardonnay." - JD 94 Points

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