



2019 SYRAH BIEN NACIDO SANTA MARIA VALLEY

When we first started making Syrah from Bien Nacido's Z-block in 1994, the vineyard was a revelation for what we could do with cool-climate Syrah in California. Decades ago, the conventional thought was that good Pinot Noir vineyards would be too cool to ripen Syrah, so most plantings were in warm locales that produced an indistinct (or distinctly Californian) expression of Syrah. Cool vineyards like Bien Nacido have a way of preserving the wild and spicy charms that you find in Syrah from the Northern Rhone, its homeland.

2019 was another cool vintage with a long, leisurely growing season—much like 2018—the perfect kind of year to harness the complex earthy perfume of Syrah. What's surprising is that despite so much similarity between the 2018 and 2019 vintages, you find utterly different textures between the two wines. The '18 is dense and brooding with brawny tannins. This 2019 bottling is also densely flavored, yet in a more friendly and elegant way.

You can see its intensity in the glass, where you find a striking depth of black crimson with purple edges. That purpleness extends to the aromas, where there are big wafts of violets and lavender, along with spices, dark berries, and savory scents of peppery grilled beef. Upfront the palate is deliciously rich and glossy with a subtle frame of French oak. There's lots of spicy and deeply hued stone-fruits that mingle with leather and dried herbs. Then it glides into a sleek, lively finish with a very fine peppery resonance. It's not a Bien Nacido Syrah that screams "Age me!" It will age as well as ever, we're sure, but out of the gate it is open and delicious.

BLEND 100% Syrah
VINEYARDS Bien Nacido
AVA Santa Maria Valley
ALCOHOL 14.0%
VINIFICATION 16% whole cluster fermentation, pumped over
BARREL AGING 20 months in French Oak, 28% new
TOTAL PRODUCTION 160 Cases

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