



2022 CHARDONNAY

BIEN NACIDO

SANTA MARIA VALLEY

TASTING NOTE

With ripe exuberance and focused freshness, this 2022 Bien Nacido Chardonnay makes sure strides on a tight rope. This vintage challenged us with September heat; we worried our Chardonnay might be on the blousy side. But no, we captured wonderfully expressive Chardonnay with the great balance that the Santa Maria Valley provides. The aromatics are familiar for Bien Nacido: meyer lemon, bee pollen, and sea breeze all mingle with a super enticing florality, with scents of orchard blossoms and acacia flowers. The palate is voluminous and elegant; there's a rich lemon curd flavor that almost reminds us of our old Solomon Hills Chardonnays. Notes of citrus, firm pineapple, and salinity keep the wine lively and refreshing. It's the perfect foil for a proper roast chicken, or rich creamy seafood dishes.

VINTAGE & WINEMAKING

This wine is a great testament to the virtues of Clone 4 Chardonnay, which tenaciously holds onto acidity, and to the resilience of the mature vines at Bien Nacido. Yields were down about 40%, leaving a small margin for error with getting the pick right. Then a week into September a heat dome came and hovered over the region for nearly two weeks. We fretted a bit when the fruit came in. It wasn't aberrantly ripe in sugar, but it was golden Chardonnay, without the bit of greenery we like to capture. But after sampling the settled juice, we were delighted to see the acidity was good.

We filled mostly neutral French oak barrels with the juice, then inoculated with our house-cultured native yeast (derived from fruit picked during sampling). We stirred the lees regularly during primary fermentation, and occasionally while the wine went through its slow and spontaneous malolactic fermentation. Ultimately the wine spent 11 months on its lees, and was bottled in August after gentle fining and filtration. Only one modest addition of sulfites was used prior to bottling.

BLEND 100% Chardonnay

VINEYARDS Bien Nacido

AVA Santa Maria Valley

ALCOHOL 13.0%

VINIFICATION barrel fermented, aged on lees until bottling

BARREL AGING 11 months in French oak barrels, 18% new

TOTAL PRODUCTION 521 Cases

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THE
OJAI
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