



2001 SYRAH “20TH ANNIVERSARY”

The idea behind this wine was to make a wine to celebrate our 20th vintage and last another 20 years. This is a very special bottling. It is 100% syrah from “X” block at Bien Nacido, which is the oldest syrah block on the vineyard. This is a block that was planted to Riesling, on its own roots, in 1973 and grafted to syrah (Estrella clone) in 1986. I made our first Bien Nacido Syrah from the first crop in 1987 and it was a giant step up in quality from our previous Syrahs.

For this wine we cut down the yields of part of “X” block to 2½ tons/acre. The grapes were harvested on October 25th at 24.0 brix, 3.24 pH and 7.3 acidity. We used 33% whole clusters with stems in the fermenter, which adds a noticeable spice character and additional tannin. The fermentation was done in a small open top fermenter and was punched down manually twice a day. Fermentation lasted 14 days with an additional soak on the skins for 5 days. After pressing, the wine went into French oak barrels for aging. For this wine I decided to use neutral barrels so that the Bien Nacido terroir could really show through. It was kept in barrel a total of 20 months, racked twice, lightly fined with egg whites and bottled without filtration. Twelve barrels (290 cases) were produced.

As I mentioned before, this is a wine meant to go another 20 years. It is an intense wine, not nearly as approachable as our other 2001 Syrahs. The aromas show tar and leather with smoked meats, blueberries and hard spice. The flavors are intense with firm tannins and grip. Please don't drink this wine now, but if you must, decant and aerate it to help open it up.