



2005 SYRAH “BIEN NACIDO “X” BLOCK”

This is one of the most significant wines I’ve ever made. There are a number of factors that went into the decision to make and bottle a separate wine from this block in 2005:

- The Vineyard – planted in 1973 to Riesling (on its own roots) and grafted to Syrah in 1986. After more than 30 years, these vines are starting to behave like older vines... naturally low vigor, naturally small crops and small berries. I started to notice this change in 2001 and the vines just get better each year.
- The vintage – I’ve never worked a better vintage than 2005. The weather was perfect from bud break to harvest. The vines were beautifully balanced, yielding some of the best Syrah grapes I’ve seen.
- Biodynamics – 2005 was the first vintage that X Block was farmed using biodynamic farming methods. One year of biodynamics in itself doesn’t make a big difference, but it all helps. As this block keeps moving forward with biodynamics it will just get better.

This wine is made 100% from Syrah grapes from this special block and this special vintage. The grapes were harvested on October 24th at 25.5° brix, 3.46 pH and 6.4 acidity. Those of you reading this and still paying attention may think this is on the ripe side for a Qupé wine... and you’d be right. This was the last of three picks off X Block (in house we called it X-3) and it simply yielded the most interesting wine.

We used 50% whole cluster with stems as the stems were nicely ripe. In fact, I regret not using 100% whole clusters. Traditional fermentation was done in small open top fermenters and punched down manually twice a day. Aging was 20 months in French oak, of which 25% were new Ermitage barrels. A rigorous barrel selection of the best 12 barrels yielded the final wine.

This is an intense wine, but with the classic structure and elegance you find in cool climate Syrah. The aromas show spice, dried berries, herbs and hints of smoked meats. The flavors are appropriately rich with smooth if persistent tannins... it’s a big wine but carries its size well. It was bottled without fining or filtration in June 2007. 360 six packs of 750ml and 100 cases of magnums were made.