



## 2009 Chardonnay- Bien Nacido Reserve Block Eleven

This wine is 100% chardonnay from Block Eleven, a 6 acre custom block planted exclusively for Qupé in 1997. Bien Nacido planted this for us on a north by northwest facing hillside which reduces the amount of direct sun and brings out more of the citrus and mineral aspects of the grapes. I think, at least so far, that this is the best chardonnay block at Bien Nacido. 2009 was a cool vintage, but after much cooler vintages in 2010 and now 2011, 2009 seems like a "normal" vintage. These grapes were harvested on September 19th and 21st at an average of 24.0° brix, 7.9 acidity and 3.26 pH. Traditional winemaking protocol...whole cluster press, chilling overnight, straight to barrel the next day for fermentation and aging (we used about 50% new and 50% 1 year old Francois Freres Burgundy barrels), complete malo and lees aging for the first year in barrel. After a year, the wine was racked from the new barrels, and then returned to neutral barrels for another 7 months of aging (19 months total barrel aging time).

I like oak in chardonnay, as long as its good oak and as long as the chardonnay has balance. This wine carries its oak perfectly. The aromas are classic cool climate chardonnay with hints of lime, pears and wet stone with a strong underpinning of creme brulée and sweet oak. The flavors are rich but nicely balanced by clean, fresh acidity...mouthfilling with a long finish. This stands with 2001, 2005, 2006 and 2008 as among the best chardonnays I've made from Bien Nacido. If you like it and you like to age it, please put some in the cellar for at least 10 years, I certainly will.