

# 2010 SYRAH

## BIEN NACIDO SANTA MARIA VALLEY

187 CASES PRODUCED

Here at The Ojai Vineyard we love the 2010 vintage. It was the year with no summer, a heat blast in September and then rain afterwards. Difficult? Yes, but there is no arguing with the results—wines with sharp, clear focus that are on a course to age gracefully for years. And one of the stars of the vintage is the 2010 Syrah Bien Nacido because it catches that elusive peppery nuance that is the hallmark of great syrah. This wine possesses an early drinkability that is delightful, and yet it has all the attributes necessary to age gracefully for another 20 years.

Although we've been making Bien Nacido Syrah since 1994, vintage 2010 taught me some valuable new lessons about ripeness and balance. Since 2000 we have been discussing and experimenting with what constitutes the ideal moment to harvest a vineyard, however 2010 forced my hand with our late ripening syrah because we were faced with the choice of picking healthy grapes at lower sugar levels or waiting and picking rotten fruit. Fortunately Bien Nacido is farmed meticulously so the grapes were better able to tolerate the late season rains without the threat of rot, but the point still came when we had to make a harvest decision. We chose to pick healthy fruit and produced a wine of a modest 13.0% alcohol.

The shock came when we first tasted the new wine. Our expectations were not high because most of the Bien Nacido Syrahs we've made have measured over 14.5%. But low and behold it was obvious we had a winner on our hands. It had an explosive aroma of pepper and cranberries, a thick dense texture, and best of all, there was a deliciousness and lightness of being that was irresistible. That was the lesson; in California, most years you can have all the ripeness needed to make a thick, raisin-y Amarone like wine, but it doesn't mean that extreme ripeness makes the best wine. California is sort of the opposite of Europe—there they struggle to get grapes ripe enough, but here we need to focus on capturing the fruit before it becomes dull, raisin-y and over-ripe.

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**BLEND** 100% Syrah

**VINEYARDS** Bien Nacido

**AVA** Santa Maria Valley

**ALCOHOL** 13%

**VINIFICATION** 20% New French Oak

**BARREL AGING** 18 Months

**TOTAL PRODUCTION** 187 Cases

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### PRESS REVIEWS

#### Antonio Galloni's Vinous

"Distinctly ferrous, savory notes meld into dark red and black fruits in the 2010 Syrah Bien Nacido Vineyard. A host of dark, meaty aromas and flavors hit the palate in a dense, concentrated Syrah endowed with tons of depth and pure power. In 2010, the Bien Nacido is a wine of real gravitas and intensity." - AG **94 Points**

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