

2016 CHARDONNAY

BIEN NACIDO SANTA MARIA VALLEY

870 CASES PRODUCED

Over the course of 30 years working with these vines, Bien Nacido chardonnay has provided me many epiphanies in winemaking. Perhaps the most seismic one came back in 2000, when I realized how much better off this wine is without the influence of new oak barrels. The wine-making hasn't changed, we continue to barrel ferment and age this wine in French oak, but now we use almost exclusively older ones. The cool, fog laced Santa Maria Bench provides gently ripened chardonnay with great intricacy of mineral underpinnings and finely etched fruit. I found the new barrels I'd been using to ferment this wine in just clouded the soul of this site, and I pivoted toward the more transparent and zesty expression that you'll find in this 2016.

What's fantastic about Bien Nacido chardonnay is how shapely, broad and full of flavor it can be, while also possessing terrific thrust and focused, minerally freshness. This 2016 is a textbook expression of the site in that sense. To open it soon would be to enjoy it for its racy and energetic character, but experience has taught me there's no hurry with this wine: we've poured 20+ year old bottlings recently at our tasting room that still boast lots of spine and great elegance, so do with this what you will, but know the 2016's chardonnays will develop well with time.

BLEND 100% Chardonnay

VINEYARDS Bien Nacido

AVA Santa Maria Valley

ALCOHOL 13%

VINIFICATION 100% Neutral French Oak

BARREL AGING 11 Months

TOTAL PRODUCTION 870 Cases

PRESS REVIEWS

Jeb Dunnuck

"Leading off the Chardonnays, the 2016 Chardonnay Bien Nacido comes from unquestionably one of the Grand Cru sites in Santa Barbara County. This powerful, rich, rockingly textured effort offers loads of ripe orchard fruits, pineapple cream, and white flowers as well as that distinct salinity and minerality that's the hallmark of this site. Beautifully layered, medium to full-bodied, with vibrant acidity, drink it any time over the coming decade or more." Jeb Dunnuck – **95 Points**

Robert Parker's Wine Advocate

"The 2016 Chardonnay Bien Nacido Vineyard is a very classy wine, unwinding in the glass with notes of citrus zest, crisp orchard fruit, fresh peach, citrus blossom and subtle honeycomb. On the palate, it's medium to full-bodied, bright and pure with a delicately glossy attack, deceptive mid-palate depth, and a long, focused finish. While this is quite understated in style, it reveals more and more dimension and nuance the longer it sits in the glass, and possesses the balance and structure to evolve gracefully for seven or eight years. 2018-2026"- WK **94 Points**

Antonio Galloni's Vinous

"Ojai's 2016 Chardonnay Bien Nacido Vineyard is beautifully layered and expressive, with so much of the nuance that makes wines from this Santa Maria site so distinctive. Bright floral notes infuse the polished, nuanced finish in a Chardonnay endowed with terrific energy, cut and verve." AG **94 Points**

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