

Au Bon Climat



2023

Chardonnay, Bien Nacido Vineyard

Bien Nacido Vineyard is the benchmark and crown jewel of the Santa Maria Valley AVA. One of the oldest, cool-climate vineyards in California, Bien Nacido Vineyard (Spanish for “Well Born”) has been an acclaimed source of world-class grapes since its founding in 1973. It is now acknowledged as among the elite vineyards of the world. Au Bon Climat has a special relationship with the vineyard. In addition to having our winery located on the property, we have custom blocks of fruit with long-term contracts for quality hillside vines dating back to the early 1990s. For being instrumental in elevating Burgundian varietals on the Central Coast, we pay homage to Bien Nacido by designating this wine as part of our “Historic Vineyards Collection” on the label.

AT A GLANCE

APPELLATION:

Santa Maria Valley

VINEYARD:

Bien Nacido Vineyard

VARIETAL:

100% Chardonnay

COOPERAGE:

18 months, 100% new François Frères French oak barrels

HARVEST:

Multiple pickings in September, 2023

ALCOHOL: 13.5%

ACIDITY: 6.2 g/L

pH: 3.42

RESIDUAL SUGAR: <0

SUGGESTED RETAIL: \$50

Tasting Notes

This wine shows exciting beauty even in its youth, with a nose that will only grow more expressive with time. Aromas of white cherry, French vanilla bean, and toasted macadamia nut are layered with undertones of Meyer lemon and citron. On the palate, vibrant freshness shines through, carried by distinct limestone minerality and a hint of spicy fresh-milled cedar.

Food Pairings

Pair this wine with dishes that highlight its elegance and layered character. Options like seared, sea-salted scallops with lemon & capers, roast pork tenderloin with apple and fennel, or a creamy lobster risotto will bring out its depth and freshness.

From The Winemaker

Au Bon Climat has an evergreen contract for the best blocks of Chardonnay at Bien Nacido. The original plantings date back to the founding of the ranch in 1973, but unique Chardonnay blocks have continued to be planted into the early 2000s. The 2023 vintage incorporates fruit from the “old vine” Chardonnay from blocks planted both in 1973 and the mid-90s, and from younger 2006 plantings that are showing great vibrancy in their prime years.

Harvested and handpicked throughout September, the 2023 growing season was unusually cool, allowing for gradual ripening and a harvest nearly a month later than usual. The extended hang time preserved the fruit’s natural acidity while maintaining excellent concentration. Burgundian winemaking practices were employed to make this wine complex and balanced. The grapes were whole cluster pressed, fermented in 100% new François Frères French oak barrels, completed malolactic fermentation, aged for 18 months, then bottled unfiltered.

Au Bon Climat & Clendenen Family Vineyards

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