

# QUPE

Santa Barbara County

In 1985 Bob Miller of Bien Nacido Vineyard in the Santa Maria Valley approached Bob Lindquist with a proposal. If he were to graft a few acres of vines over to Syrah, would Bob be interested in buying the fruit? Hard as it is to imagine today, back then that was a pretty audacious question and Lindquist among the few vintners crazy enough to have answered in the affirmative.

The quest to craft California wines from Rhône varieties was as yet scarcely more than an itch in the nose of a few curious wine-makers. Only three California wineries Phelps, Estrella River, and McDowell had bottled a modicum of Syrah – and one of them didn't even know it! But Lindquist was about to change the landscape. "There comes a defining moment in the history of any movement," says neighbor John Alban, "when someone says, 'Oh my gosh, I've got to sell all this stuff!' Bob Lindquist was that person." "At first we couldn't give it away," says Lindquist, "but gradually it got easier and soon we couldn't keep up with demand!"

Bob Lindquist's first Syrah efforts had been with fruit from relatively warm vineyards in Paso Robles, but the first fruits of Bien Nacido in 1987 convinced him that a cooler site made more sense. Since then, countless other vintners have become similarly convinced and Syrah has played a formative role in building the reputation of Bien Nacido's now huge vineyard tracts.

In time, Lindquist's initial vision of Côte Rôtie or Hermitage in Central California was tempered, but also enriched, by the realization that his own wines could achieve a dominance and a sheer quality of fruit that those of the Northern Rhône seldom approach. Today, Qupé's reserve and "Hillside" bottlings from



Bien Nacido set a stylistic and qualitative benchmark not just for California, but for anywhere that Syrah is grown. And soon Qupé will craft other small lots from individual vineyards.

Syrah was not the entire story. From the beginning, Lindquist was drawn to the rare white Rhône varieties as well (one of which, Viognier, has nowadays become anything but rare!). Chardonnay, too, has a modest-sized but qualitatively impressive place at Qupé.

Eventually, Lindquist built their own winemaking facility in Los Olivos and undertook a management role in the neighboring Ybarra-Young Vineyard. Several other important wineries, most notably Au Bon Climat, share that facility which has become, in Taylor Antrim's words, "a kind of epicenter for solid Santa Barbara winemaking."

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"The wines of Bob Lindquist, the owner/winemaker of Qupé, continue to go from strength to strength ... This is a winery dedicated to the rich, bold personalities of Rhône varieties."

**Robert Parker,**

*The Wine Advocate* [6/93]

"... Bob Lindquist knows Syrah. Qupé's Hillside Estate is making a solid argument for itself as one of the great syrahs of California."

*Qupé – Regional Winery of the Year*

Ray Isle, **Wine & Spirits** [10/02]

Varieties: *Viognier, Chardonnay, Roussanne, Syrah, Grenache, Mourvedre.*

Total acreage: *All of Qupé's fruit is purchased, primarily from Bien Nacido Vineyards in the Santa Maria Valley; Ibarra-Young and Stolpman Vineyards in Los Olivos (in the Santa Ynez Valley); Alban Vnyd. (Edna Valley). The Ibarra-Young vineyards are farmed by Qupé.*

Average production: *20,000 cs.*

**Chardonnay Santa Barbara**

**Chardonnay Bien Nacido**

**Roussanne Santa Barbara**

**Roussanne Alban Vineyard**

**Marsanne Santa Barbara**

**Viognier Ibarra-Young Vineyard**

**Bien Nacido Cuvée**

[2/3 Chardonnay; 1/3 Viognier]

**Syrah Central Coast**

**Syrah Bien Nacido**

**Syrah Bien Nacido Hillside Estate**

**Los Olivos Cuvée** [ca. 2/3 Syrah; 1/3 Grenache & Mourvedre]