



## BIEN NACIDO BRANDS ITSELF

December 30, 2011 | Steve Heimoff

Another iconic name also has started a brand: **Bien Nacido**. Everybody knows them as one of the greatest vineyards in California, if not the New World. The designation “**Bien Nacido Vineyard**,” on dozens of wines from some of the state’s most prestigious wineries, is as close to an assurance of a very good wine as any vineyard designation can be. But the Miller family, who own **Bien Nacido**, have decided to launch their own brand, under the same name.

They faced similar but slightly different challenges from Wilson Daniels. For starters, should they call the brand **Bien Nacido**, or something different? Calling it **Bien Nacido** could cause some confusion out there in the marketplace, and might be seen as competing against the clients they sell grapes to. But they decided to call it **Bien Nacido**, and who am I to argue with that? It’s a fine name, and it would have been silly not to take advantage of it, in my opinion.

The Millers, however, did what Wilson Daniels didn’t: they came out with expensive wines. I’ve reviewed only two so far: the Syrah and the Pinot Noir, both from 2007. Both cost \$52. The Syrah is awesome; I scored it 96 points. I gave the Pinot 90 points, but the truth is, it could be better today than when I reviewed it, last March. **Bien Nacido** also took the bold, ambitious step of **hiring one of the foremost winemakers in California, Trey Fletcher**, whom they lured away from Littorai. I think that testifies to their ambition to play at the highest level of which they’re capable, which is a very high level, indeed. After all, they won’t have any problem obtaining the best **Bien Nacido** fruit! There’s this consideration, too: having decided to brand the wines under the **Bien Nacido** name, the Millers certainly could not have released ordinary wine; that would have tarnished the **Bien Nacido** name they’ve spent so long burnishing.