

**Au Bon Climat****2002 Nuits-Blanches au Bouge Chardonnay (Who Says?), Bien Nacido Vineyard (Block K) (Santa Maria Valley)**

Winemaker Jim Clendenen makes a number of different Chardonnays, but his Nuits-Blanches au Bouge is specifically designed to show off Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay, with grapes drawn from [Bien Nacido Vineyard's](#) Block K and the remainder from his own vineyard, Le Bon Climat.

Two passes through Bien Nacido yielded grapes at 23 brix and 26 brix, while the Le Bon Climat grapes came in at 22 brix. After pressing the juice went directly into barrel dirty and was inoculated; fermentation occurred in (75 percent new) Francois Frere barrels, where the wine remained for one year (on the lees) before racking and returning for another six months. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered, it is aged in bottle another year before release.

Why drink a nearly five year old California Chardonnay? Because it is a delicious example of Burgundian style in California. The nose is creamy and nutty at the same time, showing secondary and tertiary aromas that come with age. In the mouth, there is plenty of buttercream and sweet, sweet ripe fruit that is very vibrant and not at all oxidized. Plenty of citrus and tropical fruit flavors, along with anise and lavender, combine with a well integrated lees/barrel component to take this Chard to another level. Bracing acidity pairs up well with the framework and body of the wine. Stylistically, this is the type of Chard that I favor: rich, delicious and nearly profound.

Purchase this wine as part of the [Bien Nacido Vineyards Collector's Case](#), a unique offering of 12 vineyard designated wines from 12 different winemakers.

Reviewed March 26, 2007 by [Dennis Schaefer](#).

THE WINE**Winery:** [Au Bon Climat](#)**Vineyard:** [Bien Nacido Vineyard \(Block K\)](#)**Vintage:** 2002**Wine:** Nuits-Blanches au Bouge Chardonnay (Who Says?)**Appellation:** [Santa Maria Valley](#)**Grape:** [Chardonnay](#)**Price:** \$45.00**THE REVIEWER****Dennis Schaefer**

Dennis Schaefer has been tasting and writing about wine for over 30 years, propelled by a continuing curiosity and burgeoning enthusiasm for discovering what's in the bottle. Blessed with catholic tastes, he enjoys everything from the obvious to the sublime. A

major requirement is that the vineyard, winery and winemaker consistently perform well and fulfill their potential. Balance, concentration and complexity are key to the tasting experience but, in the end, the purpose of wine is simply to give pleasure.