

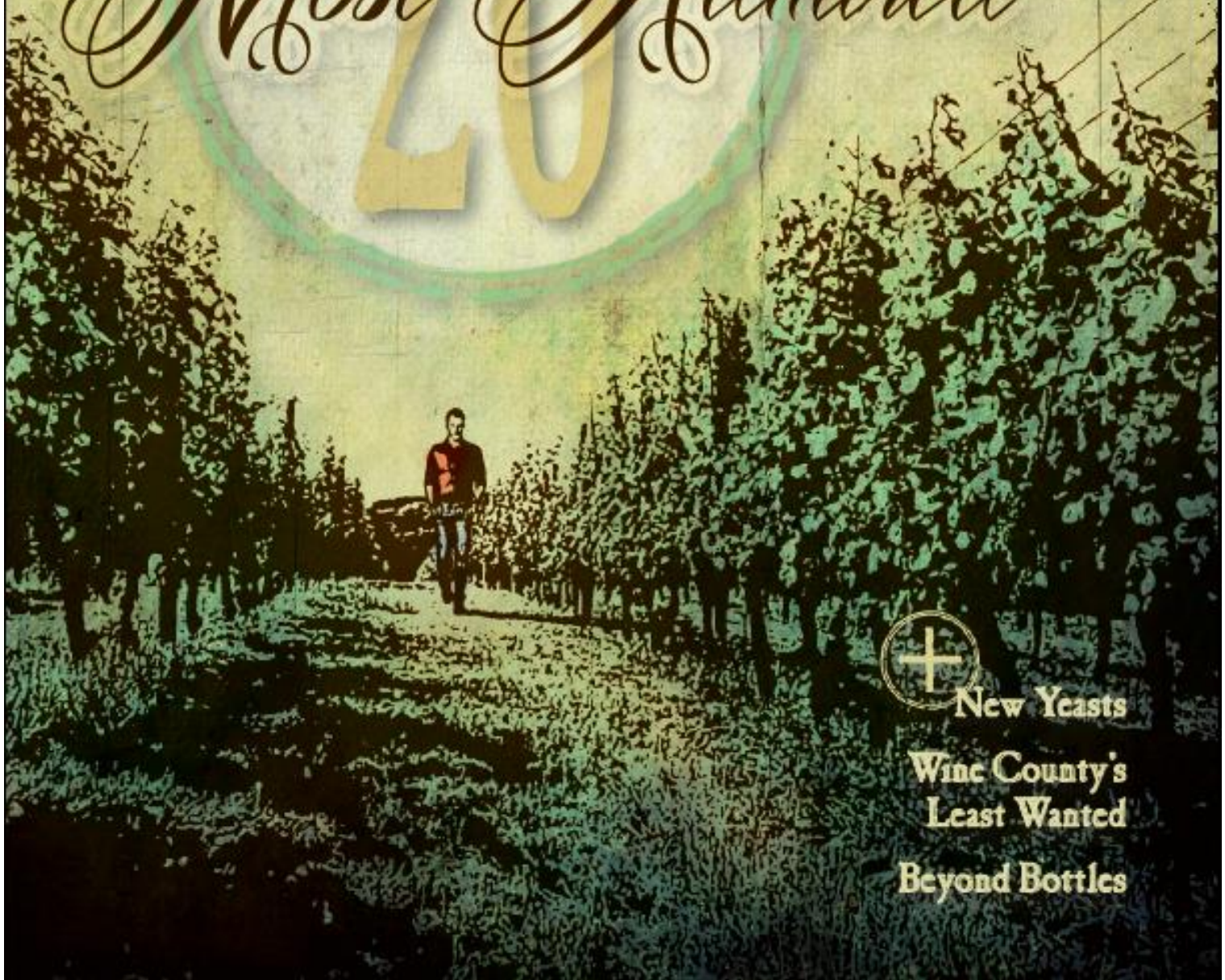
# Vineyard & Winery Management

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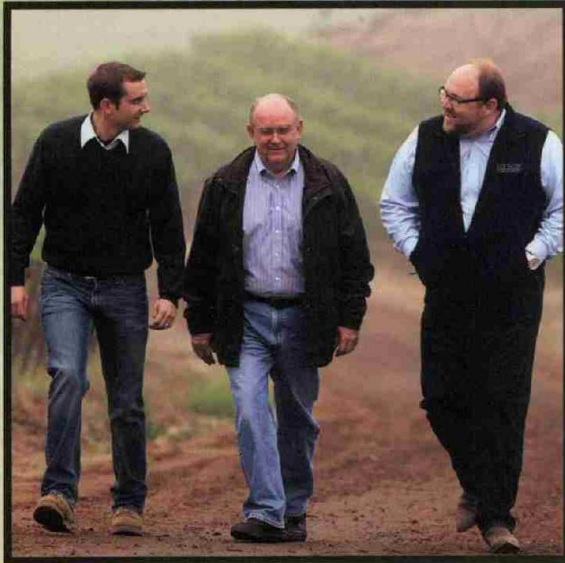
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# The Miller Family

## Bien Nacido Vineyards



**Nicholas, Steve and Marshall Miller.**

In 1969, the Millers, a fifth-generation California farming family, purchased the property now known as Bien Nacido, in the Santa Maria appellation of Santa Barbara County. The family also purchased an adjacent parcel that had been part of the same 1837 land grant, and reunited the two properties as a single 2,000-acre ranch.

Although the Millers had previously grown avocados and lemons in Ventura County, they had no particular crop in mind for Rancho Tepusquet, as the property was then called. However, in the early 1970s, they realized that the soils and climate were ideal for growing grapes; and from that point on, they dove head-first into the winegrowing business.

While the mentality of the time favored quantity over quality, the Millers took a different approach: From the outset, they sought to create a top-quality vineyard, planted to pre-

mium Burgundian varieties. In 1973, brothers Stephen (Steve) and Bob Miller founded Bien Nacido Vineyards.

Rather than relying on North Coast buyers, the Millers worked to incubate the wine industry in Santa Barbara County and the Central Coast, partnering with artisan winemakers such as Qupé's Bob Lindquist to champion the region. They also launched two custom crush facilities in Paso Robles – Central Coast Wine Services and Paso Robles Wine Services – to help the local wineries thrive.

Their strategy worked, and today Bien Nacido is known as one of California's finest vineyards. Planted primarily to Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Blanc and Syrah, the vineyard covers nearly 900 acres. The Millers also own Solomon Hills Vineyards in the Santa Maria Valley AVA and French Camp Vineyards in the Paso Robles AVA.

The company today is run by Steve Miller, president and CEO; Marshall Miller, Steve's son, who works in the family operations connected with wine grapes, lemons and avocados; and Steve's other son, Nicholas Miller, vice president of sales and marketing.

Along with the family's vision and dedication to quality, one of the keys to the company's success has been its "white glove" approach to farming, in which everything from clones to vine spacing to vineyard practices gets tailored to clients' specifications.

"I've worked with the Millers since 1986 when we worked out a deal to graft some Riesling at Bien Nacido to Syrah," said Bob Lindquist of Qupé. "We got the first crop of true cool climate Syrah in 1987, and I've been making it every year since. In 1989, Jim Clendenen of Au Bon Climat and I formed a partnership to build a winery at Bien Nacido with the Millers' support. Been there since! They've always put quality first and have done what it takes to constantly improve."