



BIRICHINO

NV HOMMAGE A GEORGES BESSON GRENACHE

During a very late, cold vintage in 2012, back when Birichino was a vagabond winery without a permanent Salinas industrial park home, we found ourselves relegated to a tank out in the parking lot, without insulation or any way to warm it. We knew we'd be challenged to build up enough heat in that tank to reach the even modest levels we seek for our reds as they finish fermentation. As luck would have it, John had recently met a Barolo producer who hand-harvested his Bussia fruit into small boxes, and dried it for a couple of weeks before fermentation. Being Italian, and colorful, he talked in terms of the necessity of the grapes to *die* and go through *rigor mortis*. Crazy aside, the net effect of this "resting" was to concentrate the amazingly floral qualities of the site, allow the stems to mature, and provide a bit more backbone and grip. Faced with such a cold, late vintage, we adapted his technique to Besson and Grenache. While most of this fraction is now included as 5-10% of the main bottling of Besson grenache, the Hommage is a multi-vintage blend of solely that appassimento fraction of Besson Grenache. In the appassimento process, we personally pick grapes into small, perforated boxes and let them "rest" in George Besson's barn for 9 to 12 days, the relatively cool air circulated by fans. What physiological alchemy actually occurs remains a mystery to us. The net organoleptic effect, however, is now well documented. That alpine, aromatized, amaro-like perfume is amplified, while the other elements of the wine find themselves kicked to the curb. This Hommage bottling V.2 contains exclusively this appassimento wine from old barriques put down from vintage 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. One might say the regular Besson grenache bottling expresses 60% variety, 35% vineyard and 5% technique. Here, grenache fades into the background a bit. One experiences with the Hommage bottling, 60% vineyard, 30% technique, and perhaps 10% variety.

-Alex and John

Harvest Dates: Sept-Oct 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018

Composition: Grenache 100%

Appellation: Central Coast

pH: 3.64 **TA:** 5.47 g/l **Alc.:** 14.5%

Press: 94 pts, Vinous, Oct. 2020,

92 pts, Editor's Choice, Wine

Enthusiast, Mar. 2021

Total Production: 38 cases

