

Birichino

From one of California's rare pre-Prohibition Grenache sites, this 2023 release is all about place: sandy, gravelly soils, late-season picking, and a perfume that feels almost "mountain air" in a low-altitude vineyard.

BIRICHINO

Besson Vineyard Old Vines Grenache 2023

California, USA



Region and Vineyards

Besson Vineyard sits on California's Central Coast and is celebrated by Birichino as one of the state's last remaining pre-Prohibition Grenache vineyards, **planted in 1910** and farmed by the Besson family since the **late 1940s**. The site is described as warm, but emphatically not scorching, giving Grenache enough heat to ripen fully while preserving aromatic nuance and shape.

Its soils are a major part of the story: **sandy, gravelly, rocky, loamy** ground that invites you to think about texture as much as flavour. At a modest **100 m** elevation, the vineyard still manages to produce a signature the winery calls unmistakable: a sense of "somewhereness" that reads as both sunlit fruit and unexpectedly fresh, almost alpine -toned lift.

Winemaking

This is a single-vineyard, varietal Grenache: **100% Grenache Noir**, harvested on **26, 27 and 30 October 2023**. Birichino positions 2023 as a standout vintage of its flagship, deliberately allowing extra time for the wine's site expression to clarify before bottling.

Ageing lasts **13 months** across a mix of **228 L barrels** and **450 L puncheons**, building complexity while keeping the wine's perfume front and centre. In professional assessment, the wine is noted as being fermented using a combination of puncheon and barrique, underlining a cellar approach aimed at shaping texture and aromatic precision rather than overt sweetness or weight.

Alcohol :13,50 %

Composition: 100% Grenache

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Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Bright garnet through ruby, with a clear, luminous rim that hints at freshness more than sheer extraction.
- **Aroma:** Botanical tinctures, red-fruit liqueur, and fresh floral tones, moving into savory accents and a striking, "unaccountably alpine" lift for such a low-altitude site.
- **Palate:** Lithe and lifted in the attack, then staining and saturated through the core, finishing long with grippy, fine-textured tannins and a poised line of energy.

Did you know?

Besson is among California's rare surviving Grenache vineyards from the pre-Prohibition era, **planted in 1910** and cared for by the same family since the **1940s**. Birichino also notes the broader Besson sites are farmed organically and without irrigation, an old-California approach that helps explain the wine's natural intensity and clarity.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Herb-roasted lamb rack:** Grenache's fragrant red fruit and savory edge love rosemary, thyme, and browned, juicy meat.
- **Duck breast with cherry jus:** The wine's floral, liqueur-like fruit notes echo cherry while tannins handle the duck's richness.
- **Grilled tuna with olive tapenade:** A classic "red-with-fish" match when the red is lifted and aromatic, and the dish brings umami and salt.
- **Spiced pork shoulder:** Gentle heat and warm spices amplify Grenache's botanical complexity without overpowering its finesse.



Robert Parker (RP) : 95 Points (2023)

From vines planted in 1910 and fermented in a combination of puncheon and barrique, the 2023 Grenache Besson Vineyard Old Vines is an unusually high-toned, perfumed and expressive version of the varietal, opening with an enticing mix of red fruits, fresh flowers, curry leaf and bay laurel aromas. The palate is both lithe and lifted yet staining and saturated, transitioning into a glacial, intense finish propelled by grainless yet intensely grippy tannins. This is a fantastic expression of California Grenache that should perform well beyond its first decade.



Jeb Dunnuck (JD) : 91 Points (2023)

Given a Central Coast designation, the 2023 Grenache Besson Vineyard Old Vines comes from a corner of the Santa Clara Valley not far from Santa Cruz. Tightly wound in cool-climate intensity, it delivers layers of wild strawberry, cracked white pepper, and chalky tannin, with a chewiness that reiterates its youth.