



True Believer 2012 Offering Letter

“For a songwriter, you don't really go to songwriting school; you learn by listening to tunes. And you try to understand them and take them apart and see what they're made of, and wonder if you can make one, too”

- **A purple quote by a famous songwriter.**

Dear Friends,

First, let me thank you for your interest in this project that is, essentially, part of *me*. I have the pleasure of knowing some of you already, and the rest I look forward to getting to know.

No matter what brought you here, please take a moment from your busy schedule and allow me to introduce myself, and explain this project with a bit of Q&A...

Who is Chris Hammell?

Some of you already know me through my association with **Bien Nacido Vineyards**, which I manage for the **Miller Family**, whom I thank for making this idea a reality. I am only one of many that these good people have helped over the years. Their contribution to our Central Coast Wine Industry cannot be overestimated. My family & I have lived on the vineyard for 15 years working with and learning from some of the West Coast's great winemakers while fine tuning, and *listening* to this **GREAT TERROIR**.

What is this mysterious “Alliance”?

I can't do this alone. It's all who have helped, believed, encouraged, and inspired along the way.

What is the 5th Underlying Dimension?

According to Charles Morris,

“The 5th and final dimension “stresses sensuous enjoyment... self-enjoyment - the simple pleasures of life in abandonment to the moment, in relaxed openness to the life of value”

This has traditionally, in the best expression of our western culture, been manifested through the synergistic combination of **wine, food and friends** (our venerable motto) at table.

What is a **True Believer**?

*“You've got to believe in yourself
Or no one will believe in you,
Imagination like a bird on the wing
Flying free for you to use...”*

The concept: do what *you* do - learn from the greats and be inspired by them - but do your OWN THING YOUR OWN WAY – good enough for Ozzy - good enough for me.

“**True Believer**” also carries the connotation of a carried-away fanatic – which I tend to be at times.

The real **TRUE BELIEVERS** are you, my supporters– very small now & should make the big jump to quite small within the next few years...

Why True Vigneron? Do you think that you're the best, or the only true one?

No, but I may be the luckiest - to be able to do what I do today on such great land with wonderful friends and family to support & guide. To me, a **true vigneron** is simply a grower at heart who is passionate about the wine being produced from his grapes (a woman can, of course, be a true vigneron, but she would probably be called something different in French – I'll have to ask).

True Vigneron is, of course, a play-off of **True Believer**, and is what I aspire to be. There are many great people who fit the descriptor better than I, but I want to be ONE OF THEM.

What is the Hammell Winemaking System™?

I prefer extremely low yields. 2013 was a bumper crop for us. I harvested 5 tons off 9 acres, that's about 7 hl/h for my Eurocentric friends...

I want fully ripe, concentrated grapes, without raisins, mean greenies or imperfections.

I like precise canopy management. I'm sustainably certified & proud of it, largely organic (not terribly important to me), and spiritually biodynamic – we have sheep, goats, ducks, geese, chickens & cows, and use Biodynamic Preparations taught to me by my friend, Philippe Coderey. I've read Steiner. He wasn't a hippie and neither am I (but I do have some whom I count among my close friends). I compost & cover crop, and I drive my ATV & F150 to the blocks –they are DEFINATELY NOT biodynamic.

I see my vines as elite athletes training in a first-class gymnasium, with me as their stern coach, caretaker and guide. They are going to work, suffer, produce, survive, recuperate, and be lovingly tended, while striving for the ultimate glory of offering their fruit **for your pleasure**.

My winemaking is an extension of this and could be described as attentive, but basic.

If it's not already pretty obvious, I consider the process of growing and winemaking one-in-the-same – arduous, yet fairly straightforward. Damn my Burgundian tendencies!

Describe your vision for **True Believer**...

True Believer, my Flagship *cuvée* is essentially a fully ripe, cool-climate blend of primarily Grenache, along with some Syrah & Mourvedre as well as a few other co-fermented varieties. I can achieve full ripeness on these “warm-climate” grapes behind chilly Bien Nacido by combining VERY LOW YIELDS with minimal irrigation on sandy soils (especially as pertains to the Grenache). My goals for this wine are to achieve a seamless elegance, savory-ness, balance (structure, concentration and complexity to support the ripeness and extraction levels that I conceptually favor for this wine), ageability (MS Word tells me that's NOT a word), spiciness, captivating herbal undertones, subtle (but not too subtle) fruitiness, and both intellectual AND sensory stimulation. All of these attributes ideally lead to the overarching goal of:

PROVIDING A SOURCE OF PLEASURE AND
INSPIRATION TO THE **TRUE BELIEVERS**

The Offer

Our **2012 True Believer offering** to you is simple:

OPTION 1

2 x 750 ml bottles along with 1 x 1500 ml magnum for the all-in price of **\$320+** tax & shipping.

OR

OPTION 2

4 x 750 ml bottles along with 2 x 1500 ml magnums for the all-in price of **\$640 +** tax & shipping.

Our goal is to make 21 deliciously wonderful VINTAGES of this wine, and this is vintage #2! We will get you on board THIS YEAR, and you can stay for the next 19! My vineyard is just over 6 acres, so I am planning to max out my production one day at just under 400 cases – FOR THE WHOLE WORLD (as my friend, PL, would say)!

Some of you have committed already & I have you down, but *please* complete the ordering process anyway, so that nothing falls through those notorious & proverbial cracks. So, if you're interested in becoming a **True Believer**, please click on the [linked form](#) and kindly provide us with the information that is needed.

After you return this information, we will send back a note with your **True Believer#** along with a confirmation that I'll be reserving your wine. You will not be charged until just prior to shipping in November (unless you want to pick up your wine at the pick-up party/Fandango on Aug 2 from 12pm - 4pm here at hWa World HQ in the beautiful Santa Maria Valley). Dayna will reach out to you to gather payment information in the early fall.

I look forward very much to sharing our journey with you. Once you confirm, I'll send you some correspondence that I've done with current True Believers over the last year regarding our winery.

Again, do consider coming to the Fandango if your schedule allows. The cost is a mere \$25/person and each **True Believer** is encouraged to bring up to 3 guests. It will be a small, delightful affair filled with wine, food and friends (and beer). You may RSVP on the [linked form](#).

Here's to an intimate and pleasant future together - one that I hope will last for years to come...

Sincerely,

Chris Hammell - truevigneron@gmail.com