

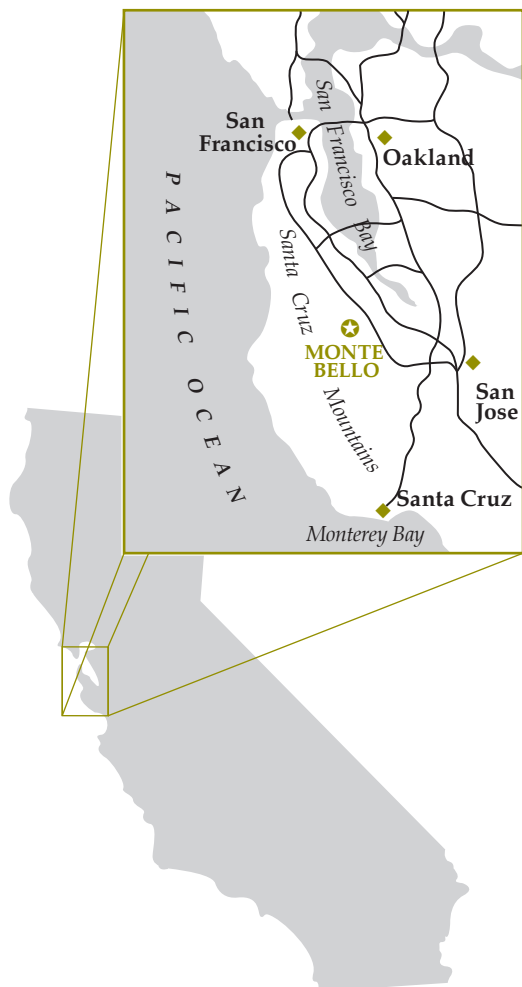
RIDGE 2008

SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS ESTATE CHARDONNAY

2008 Chardonnay, bottled January 2010

An unusually warm February prompted an early start to the growing season. Set finished by late April, but yielded less fruit than usual; a mild summer ripened the grapes for an early-September harvest. The whole clusters went directly to our gentle membrane press. Natural primary and secondary fermentations took place in barrel. All lots spent ten months on their lees, and were stirred weekly during malolactic for added richness. Assemblage combined the most elegant and fruit-forward wines for this superb chardonnay. A portion was returned to barrel for continued aging and settling; the rest remained in tank, to balance freshness and complexity. The two were racked off the lees and reassembled for unfiltered bottling. The wine's abundant fruit and refreshing acidity will be most enjoyable over the next five to six years. *EB (11/09)*

100% CHARDONNAY
14.4% alcohol by volume



History

Ridge produced its first chardonnay in 1962 from fully mature vines planted in the late 1940s on the Monte Bello estate vineyard. In the '60s, we replanted a number of the abandoned 19th century vineyards to cabernet sauvignon, but did not extend the chardonnay planting. Production never exceeded ten barrels, and the Monte Bello chardonnay was sold principally at the winery. Several great vintages, among them the 1973, '74, '79, and '84, showed that our cool climate and fractured limestone sub-soils were well suited to the varietal. By 1985, the old vines were producing less than a half-ton per acre; the younger ones, planted in the 70s, were providing the majority of grapes. These newer plantings were on the "lower" vineyard, which was not yet farmed as part of the Monte Bello estate, so the wine was designated "Santa Cruz Mountains". The vines are now included in the estate, and produce a Santa Cruz Mountains Estate Chardonnay annually. In years when differences among the twelve small lots are sufficiently pronounced to warrant a separate bottling, we make a limited amount of Monte Bello Chardonnay as well.

Vintage

Harvest Dates	4 - 15 September
Grapes	Average Brix 23.9°
Fermentation	Whole-cluster pressed and barrel fermented. No inoculation. Natural primary and secondary (malolactic).
Selection	Seven of the ten Monte Bello Vineyard chardonnay parcels or fractions thereof.
Barrels	Air-dried oak (26% new, 48% one and two year, 26% three, four and five years old air dried oak)
Aging	Sixteen months in barrel

Vineyard

First RIDGE Chardonnay Santa Cruz Mountains	1985
Location	Monte Bello Ridge, overlooking San Francisco from the Santa Cruz Mountains, a unique appellation separating the North Coast from the Central Coast but a part of neither.
Elevation	1400' - 1900'
Soils	Decomposing Franciscan green stone mixed with clay/loam over fractured limestone sub-soils
Vines	18.3 acres, planted 1976 - 1996.
Training	Head-trained, cane-pruned. Vertical trellis.
Yields	Two to three tons per acre (full crop)

Growing Season

Rainfall	30 inches (just below average)
Bloom	Early June
Weather	Moderate summer and fall, long cool growing season.