

Judgment of Paris 2006

the 30 year re-enactment

1971 MONTE BELLO & 2000 MONTE BELLO TAKE TOP HONORS

In 1976, Steven Spurrier (pictured on left with Jasper Morris of Berry Bros. and Rudd), an Englishman running a wine shop and wine school in Paris, organized a tasting of six top California cabernets and chardonnays to celebrate the American Bicentennial. He added four Bordeaux wines and four white Burgundies to act as markers against which to evaluate the Californians. The judges were among the best tasters in France, and, to everyone's surprise, chose a California wine over the French for both the red and white flights. The tasting became known as the Judgment of Paris, and ended an era in which it was thought that fine wine came only from Europe. The response of the French judges to the results was that the California wines would not age and the French wines would win if tasted again in 30 years.

On May 24, 2006, a 30 year re-enactment of the Judgment of Paris was organized by Steven Spurrier—this time with simultaneous tastings in London and in Napa. Paralleling the 1976 event, nine expert tasters at each location judged the original red wines, now over thirty years old. The winning wine in both the US and UK was the Ridge Monte Bello 1971. In the combined results, it was in a class by itself—eighteen points ahead of the second-place wine. We were very proud of this elegant Monte Bello's showing on both sides of the Atlantic— especially given the prestige of the tasters. In the UK these included such well-known experts as Michael Broadbent, Hugh Johnson, Jancis Robinson, and Michel Bettane.

RIDGE

CALIFORNIA

CABERNET

SAUVIGNON

1971

first place

ESTATE GROWN GRAPES, MONTE BELLO 2300 FT
BOTTLED OCT 1973 ALCOHOL 12.2% BY VOLUME
PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS
17100 MONTE BELLO RD, CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA



Next, young whites and young reds—including this time several other top Californians—were tasted. Here, France and California were not in competition; though on the table together, French wines were rated against each other, likewise the Californians. To our delight, in the flight of California cabernets, the Ridge 2000 Monte Bello placed first in the expert panels' combined results, but this time with a margin of only one point. It was up against some marvelous wines—among others the 2001 Shafer Hillside Select, the 2002 Phelps Insignia, and the 2001 Stag's Leap Wine Cellars Cask 23.

It was a great day for Ridge, for Monte Bello, and for wines made at a more moderate level of ripeness. *Paul Draper*

Combined Results (US & UK)

	SCORE
1 1971 Ridge Monte Bello	137
2 1973 Stag's Leap Cellars Cask 23	119
3 1970 Heitz Martha's Vineyard	112
3 1971 Mayacamas	112
5 1972 Clos du Val	106
6 1970 Chateau Mouton-Rothschild	105
7 1970 Chateau Montrose	92
8 1970 Chateau Haut-Brion	82
9 1971 Chateau Leoville-Las-Cases	66
10 1969 Freemark Abbey	59