

Vineyard Production: 53 Tons from 48 Acres
Selection: 25%

1990 Monte Bello, bottled March 1992

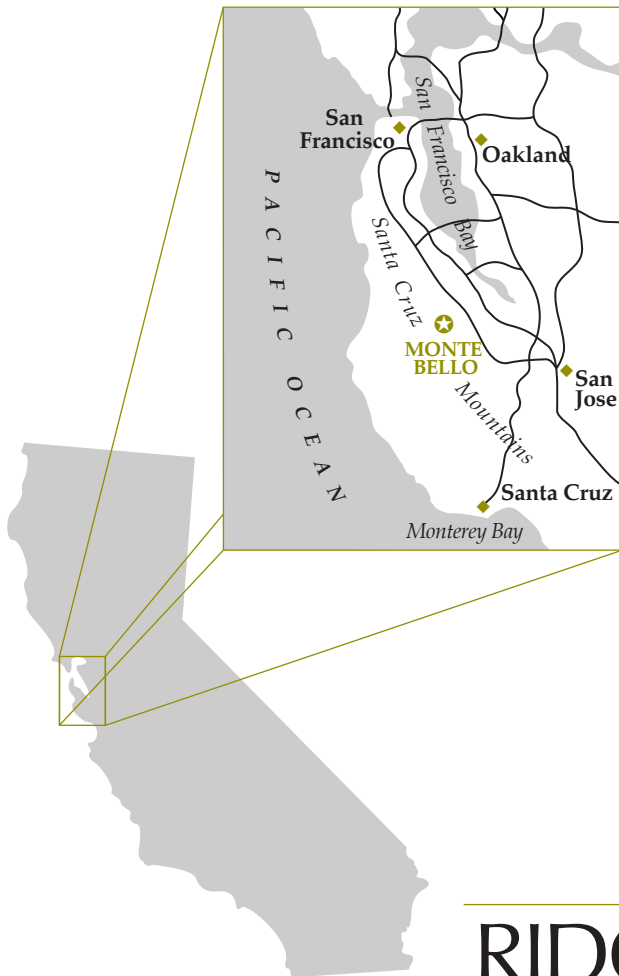
This ideal growing season produced lower-than-usual yields and a marked concentration of fruit, color and tannin. We made separate wine from each of the ten different sections of the vineyard. In the assemblage, the softer, less intense wines—amounting to twenty-five percent of the total—were held out. The first press was included, and a portion of the wine was fined early in the aging process to moderate tannin. It is well-balanced, full and quite lovely now, but will continue to develop for another twenty years. This may be the finest vintage since 1970. PD (2/92)

85% CABERNET SAUVIGNON,
10% MERLOT, 5% PETIT VERDOT

13.5% alcohol by volume

Tasting Notes

- Color:** Warm brick-edged garnet
- Nose:** Complex, spicy. Cassis, blueberry, green and black peppercorns. Sweet mint, chocolate, dusty earth.
- Palate:** Perfect balance. Fresh, pungent cabernet fruit. Soft tannins, and a complex, lingering finish.



RIDGE 1990 SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS MONTE BELLO

The 1990 Monte Bello growing season began late. In the Santa Cruz Mountains, where temperatures are moderated by the region's proximity to the Pacific Ocean, this meant that set (fruit formation) was not complete until late June. As warm summer days ripened the fruit, cool nights helped maintain firm acidity. Harvest on the south-facing slopes was begun in early October; we moved on block by block as the grapes reached full maturity.

Small, five-ton-capacity fermentors were used to handle these selective pickings; when harvest was over, in late October, there were ten individual Monte Bello wines. In addition, we held out and kept separate the first and second pressings from each lot, to provide further options for improving the final wine. Thirty to forty percent of the grapes were left unbroken as fermentation began.

Even during fermentation, it was clear we had a particularly intense vintage on our hands. By January, it seemed possible this might be the finest since 1970. A majority of air-dried american oak was used in aging. Over eighty percent of the barrels were new, and the rest had been used for ten months with the '89 Monte Bello. With this greater-than-usual amount of new and near-new wood, we monitored carefully to avoid over-oaking; The integration and balance achieved are characteristic of the finest Monte Bellos.

Location: Monte Bello Ridge, Santa Cruz Mountains, Santa Clara County.

Acreage: Cabernet Sauvignon - 43 acres
Merlot - 3.4 acres
Petit Verdot - 1.3 acres

Yield: 1 - 1.5 tons per acre

Soils: Decomposing Franciscan rock mixed with clay, laid over fractured limestone.

Climate: Cool, mountainous—between the Mediterranean and Maritime Zones.

Elevation: 2300' - 2600'

Exposure: Principally south/southeast