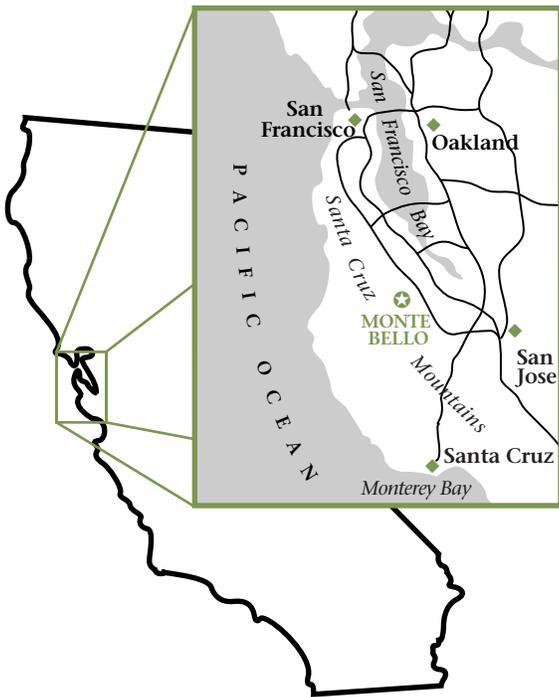


91 Monte Bello, bottled March 1993

Welcome spring rains set back the growing season by several weeks, but replenished the water in our soils. The crop was abundant, and a long, warm October fully ripened all the fruit. We made a rigorous fifty-percent selection, producing a complex, elegant wine with deep color and round tannins. Though approachable now, five years of bottle age will integrate the fruit and spicy oak; another ten to fifteen years will bring full maturity. PD (1/93)

RIDGE 1991 CALIFORNIA MONTE BELLO®

**85% CABERNET SAUVIGNON, 10% MERLOT, 5% PETIT VERDOT
SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS** ALCOHOL 13.1% BY VOLUME
GROWN, PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS BW 4488
17100 MONTE BELLO RD, BOX 1810, CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA 95015



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/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

Owner: Ridge Vineyards

With the 1991 vintage, we celebrate the 100th year of the Monte Bello vineyard and winery. The vineyard was first planted, and construction of the underground cellars begun, in 1886. The first commercial Monte Bello vintage was in 1892.

Prohibition closed down production in the twenties and early thirties. The winery was again operating in the late thirties and forties, only to close for the decade of the fifties. The Ridge partnership purchased the lower vineyards in 1959, producing its first commercial Monte Bello vintage in 1962. So 1991 represents a double anniversary—100 years for the Monte Bello, 30 for Ridge.

In 1991 two miracles—a month of much-needed rain in March, and warm summer temperatures through September and October—fully ripened an excellent crop at Monte Bello.

We made eighteen separate fermentations, picking each of the distinct blocks—or even half-blocks—of the vineyard as the fruit matured. The first and second press were kept separate, allowing us to control the quality and quantity of tannin in the wine. To make as intense and complex a vintage as possible, fifty percent of the Monte Bello grapes were held out of the final wine. We included five percent petit verdot, ten percent merlot, and virtually all the first press.

This exceptional vintage was aged entirely in new barrels—the majority in air-dried american oak, and the remainder in barrels from three different french coopers. American oak has been our favorite over the years, but we continue our experiments with french oak to be certain that our bias for the american is producing the finest wine possible.

The '91 Monte Bello shows deep blackberry fruit and lively spice. Young as it is, the tannins are balanced—if still quite chalky. This is clearly one of the finest vintages of the last ten years, and a great wine with which to celebrate our two very special anniversaries.

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www.ridgevine.com