

Vineyard Production:
100 tons from 50 acres
Selection: 40%

92 Monte Bello, bottled April 94

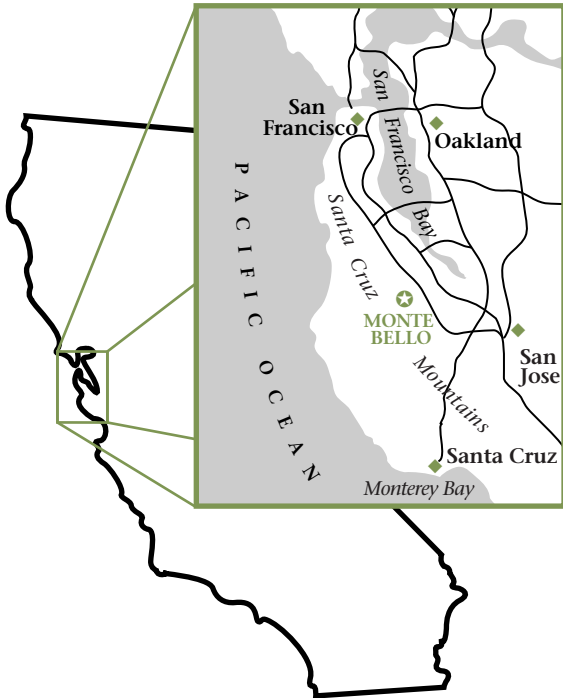
After late spring rains, mild weather allowed the vines to set a full crop. For concentration, we dropped a third of the clusters. A perfect summer and warm October gave us mature fruit and firm acidity. At assemblage, forty per-cent of the wine made from the twenty distinct vineyard blocks was held out as less intense. In a decade of exceptional vintages, this may be one of the very finest. Despite substantial tannin, the wine is supple, balanced, and accessible. It will continue to evolve in depth and complexity over the next twenty years. PD (3/94)

RIDGE 1992

CALIFORNIA

MONTE BELLO®

80% CABERNET, 11% MERLOT, 9% PETIT VERDOT
SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS ALCOHOL 13.4% BY VOLUME
GROWN, PRODUCED & 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 - 48.5 acres
Merlot - 6.0 acres
Petit Verdot - 3.0 acres
Cabernet franc - 1.5 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

The 1992 growing season at Monte Bello began with late rains, which were followed by ideal spring weather. Often, during this crucial period, cold winds and fog interfere with the formation of fruit, called "set", reducing the crop. This natural thinning gives intensity to the Monte Bello, but is indiscriminate. In '92, with a very full crop, thinning was up to us. On the smaller vines, we dropped half the clusters—on the more vigorous, a third. Harvest began October 1. We picked all the cabernet on the lower (2300') vineyard over the next ten days. Between the 14th and 18th, we picked the merlot, franc, and petit verdot, as well as all the cabernet on the upper vineyard (2600'). With no delay at set, and summery days throughout much of October, sugars were high. Warm temperatures promoted the natural yeast fermentations, which started within forty-eight hours of each crush. In most tanks, the small, intense berries deeply colored the juice even before fermentation began.

We fermented twenty-two separate, small tanks of Monte Bello, representing twenty distinct sections of the vineyard. Two of these are large enough to divide into individual tanks, so we can run controlled experiments. (One experiment which we do each year compares a tank fermented only on yeasts present on the grapes with one to which a selected commercial yeast is added. This is a "reality check" of sorts, as Ridge is the only California fine wine producer to have used naturally-occurring yeasts in virtually all its red wines over the last twenty-five years.)

Based on blind tastings, we held forty percent of the vineyard's less intense wines out of the Monte Bello.

The rich, complex '92 has substantial tannin, yet—despite its size—is supple and beautifully balanced. It ranks with the '90, '91, and '93 as one of the finest wines in our thirty-one years of making Monte Bello.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Sogary".

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www.ridgevine.com