

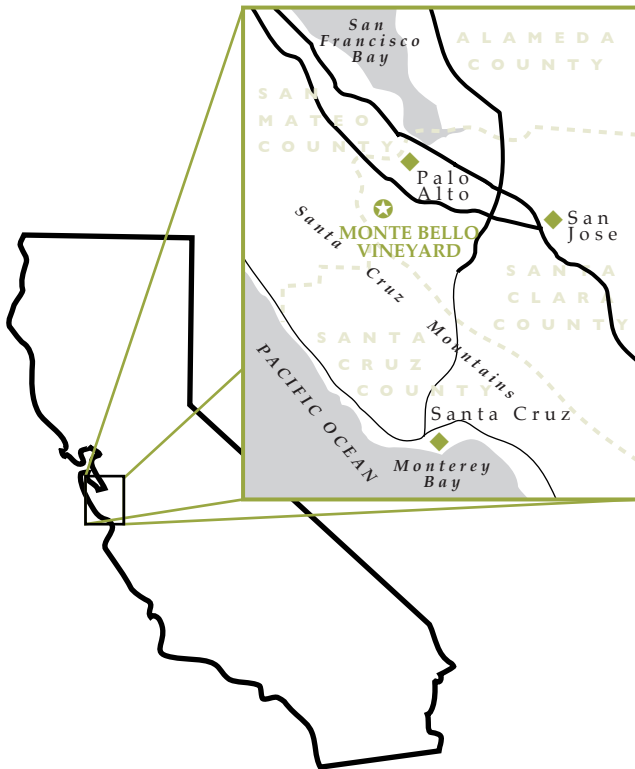
Vineyard Production:
103 tons from 50 acres
Selection: 60%

93 Monte Bello, bottled May 95

Benign spring rains delayed the start of the growing season; at set, we dropped a quarter of the crop, giving the remaining grapes their best chance to mature by harvest. Cool nights contributed exceptionally firm acidity, and very welcome warm days in mid-October fully ripened the flavors in the fruit. We harvested from October 18th to the 27th—only one week later than usual. In a particularly rigorous selection, sixty percent was held out at assemblage. This beautifully-structured wine has the intense fruit and long, elegant finish of a classic Monte Bello. PD (3/95)

RIDGE 1993 CALIFORNIA MONTE BELLO®

86% CABERNET, 7% MERLOT, 7% PETIT VERDOT
SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS ALCOHOL 12.9% 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

Late—but benign—spring rains delayed the start of the growing season at Monte Bello. In anticipation of an equally delayed harvest date, we thinned the crop heavily. Nights were cool throughout the summer, but late October's warm weather pushed the fruit to full maturity. The merlot on South Slope was picked October 1st, but the cabernet did not ripen fully until the 18th. The twenty different vineyard sections are picked more by taste than by sugar and acid readings. The late start gave us no "hang time" in which to lose acid, which was the highest to date of our thirty-two-year history. A full malolactic fermentation brought these acidic wines into balance.

In mid-December, as we began assemblage tastings, we found that, for the first time in years, we were holding some wines out because they seemed too tannic. To ensure balanced structure, we did the most rigorous selection of our history, keeping sixty percent of the Monte Bello wines out of the final assemblage. This will benefit the '93 Santa Cruz Mountains Cabernet, however, as more of the estate wine than usual will be available for inclusion.

The Monte Bello was aged for sixteen months in new oak cooperage. Approximately three quarters was in air-dried american oak—from four american and two french coopers. The remainder was done experimentally—a yearly exercise—in french-crafted european oak from two different regions—the Vosges, and the Center of France. In June of the first year, we fined with fresh egg whites. Because the merlot was so tannic, less was included than in most recent vintages. The petit verdot was well balanced, and added richness and depth.

This beautifully-structured wine is among the finest of the last ten years. Quantities are limited, but quality is superb.

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