

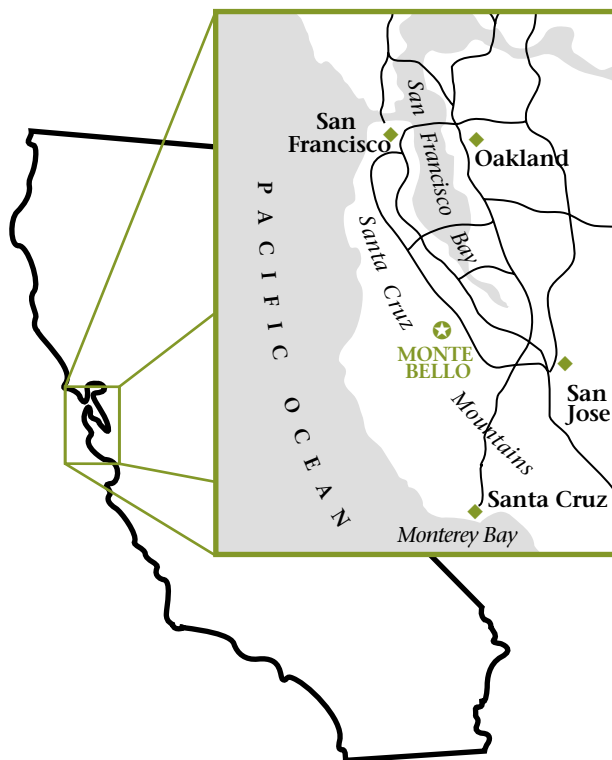
# RIDGE 1999

# CALIFORNIA

# MONTE BELLO®

**99 Chardonnay, Monte Bello, bottled February 2001**  
Ridge produced its first Monte Bello Chardonnay in 1962, from fourteen-year-old vines on the estate vineyard. In 1985, when other vineyards on the ridge were included, the designation was changed to Santa Cruz Mountains. In 1999, using estate-grown grapes only, we again produce a Monte Bello. These four parcels were harvested in late October, whole-cluster pressed, barrel fermented, and held on their lees through a natural malolactic fermentation. In August, the wine was racked off and combined. After additional aging, it was bottled—without filtration—seventeen months after vintage. Superbly typifying Monte Bello's cool climate and fractured limestone sub-soils, this is one of the finest chardonnays we have ever made.

PD (12/00)



**Location:** Monte Bello Ridge, Santa Cruz Mountains, Santa Clara County.  
**Acreage:** 18-year-old chardonnay: 4.7 acres.  
12-year-old chardonnay: 5.5 acres.  
6-year-old chardonnay: 5.6 acres.  
5-year-old chardonnay: 2.5 acres.  
**Yield:** 2 - 3 tons/acre  
**Soils:** Red decomposing Franciscan rock mixed with clay/loam, fractured limestone sub-soils.  
**Climate:** Cool, mountainous—between the Mediterranean and Maritime zones.  
**Elevation:** 1400' - 1990'  
**Exposure:** Principally east/southeast

**100% CHARDONNAY MONTE BELLO VINEYARD**  
**SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS** ALCOHOL 14.5% BY VOLUME  
GROWN, PRODUCED & BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS BW 4488  
17100 MONTE BELLO ROAD, P. O. BOX 1810, CUPERTINO, CA 95015

In 1949 William Short, retired theologian and then-owner of the Ridge "middle" vineyard (2100'-2400'), planted several acres of chardonnay; these vines provided the 1962 Monte Bello for the Ridge partners' first vintage. During the next twenty-three years, small amounts of chardonnay were produced each year under the Monte Bello name.

In the 1970s, founding partner Dave Bennion worked with Elmano Homem, manager of the Jimsomare Ranch, to develop more chardonnay acreage. Those vines were mature by 1985; we combined them with the old estate vines, and changed the designation to Santa Cruz Mountains. In February 1996, under a thirty-year lease agreement, Ridge took over farming and management of the Jimsomare vines, integrating them into the Monte Bello estate. For a number of years we selected barrels from each parcel for a first—most intense, and a second—more approachable, chardonnay. By 1998, the first was coming entirely from Monte Bello estate blocks. Its superb quality in 1999 convinced us to call it Monte Bello once again.

A cold, rainy spring pushed the 1999 growing season back by a whole month. Set was excellent, and lovely fall weather ripened the grapes, parcel by parcel, from October 30 through November 6. (We usually harvest chardonnay by the end of September; this was record lateness.) Full flavor and balanced acidity developed at slightly lower sugars than those of the last three years. The grapes were whole-cluster pressed in separate lots. Juice was aerated by pumping over, oxidizing it sufficiently to reduce the yellow pigments that produce broader, less defined wine. With the lees in solution, the wine was transferred to barrels for fermentation and aging. To emphasize fruit, new oak was kept to a minimum; one- and two-year-old barrels—half french, half american—predominate.

Primary fermentation finished by early January, and a natural malolactic extended over the following six months. As usual, the lees were stirred once a week throughout that period. In June, fermentations over, we tasted all lots, choosing the ones to be blended into the Monte Bello. In August these were racked and assembled, then returned to tank and barrel for extended settling. We bottled six months later, without filtration.

This lovely wine does not depend on residual sugar for richness, nor on oak for character. Rather, it reflects the site on which it grew, and our minimalist approach to winemaking. Monte Bello's cool climate imparts firm natural acidity, its fractured limestone sub-soils add an intriguing mineral element. There is a hint of yeast—of brioche or baked bread, and exquisite apple/pear fruit. Beautifully structured, it will begin to open with one year in bottle, and be at its best over the next five to seven.

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

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[www.ridgevine.com](http://www.ridgevine.com)