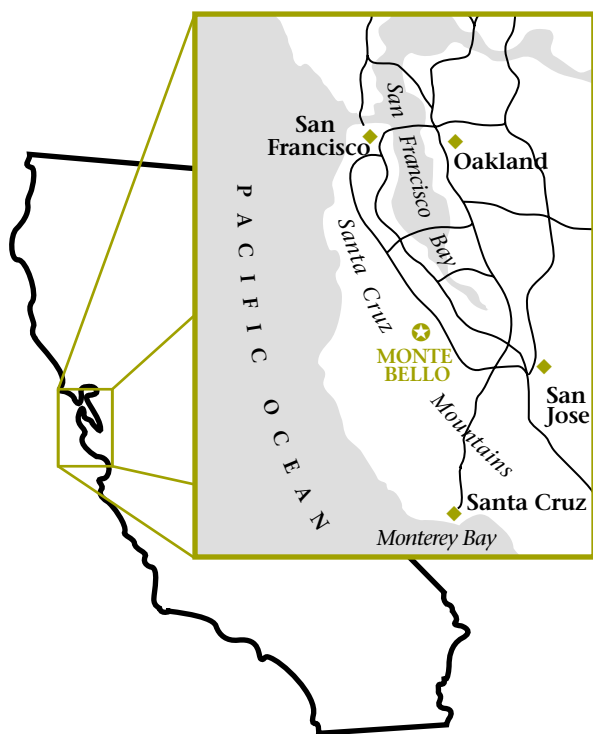


18 Barrels Produced

2000 Monte Bello, bottled January 2002

This is the twenty-fifth Monte Bello Chardonnay produced since 1962. The grapes are from our estate vineyards on Monte Bello Ridge in California's Santa Cruz Mountains. After natural primary and secondary fermentations in barrel, three parcels—representing only fourteen percent of the estate chardonnay—were selected for this Monte Bello. The three were racked off their lees in early August, combined, and returned to barrel for three months of settling. Aged for a total of fourteen months—eighty percent in air-dried american oak, twenty percent in french—this superb wine was bottled, unfiltered, in early January. It reflects the cool climate and fractured-limestone sub-soils of its distinctive site, and is one of the finest white wines Ridge has produced. Enjoyable now, it will be at its best with one to five years of bottle age. PD (11/01)



Location: Monte Bello Ridge, Santa Cruz Mountains, Santa Clara County.
Acreage: 19-year-old chardonnay: 4.7 acres.
13-year-old chardonnay: 5.5 acres.
7-year-old chardonnay: 5.6 acres.
6-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

RIDGE 2000

CALIFORNIA

MONTE BELLO®

100% CHARDONNAY MONTE BELLO ESTATE VINEYARD
SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS ALCOHOL 14.7% 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 (2070'-2390'), 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. With this year's fine vintage, we continue the tradition.

At Monte Bello—as elsewhere—the weather of vintage 2000 was erratic. In an otherwise cool year, heat spikes in late July and early August reduced crop levels. Cabernet yields suffered most, but chardonnay, too, was affected. We harvested between October 9 and 13—unusually late, even allowing for the "cool" year and Monte Bello's cool climate. Not surprisingly, acids were quite firm.

The chardonnay grapes were pressed entirely as whole clusters, and the juice racked to barrel. Both primary and secondary fermentations were natural; the wines barrel-fermented on their own yeasts for an average of fifty-five days before reaching dryness. Lees were stirred weekly, and juice temperature never exceeded 60°F. Malolactics finished—barrel by barrel—during March, April, and May of 2001, as spring weather warmed the cellar. After a final stirring, the wine was left to sit undisturbed for two months.

Beginning in early August, we blind-tasted the various lots over a two-week period, painstakingly identifying those wines worthy of inclusion in the Monte Bello Chardonnay. Once assembled, the blend was racked to three-year-old barrels from our finest coopers where—now with minimal lees contact—it continued to age. During this period, the wine clarified naturally, though settling. No filtration was necessary.

Only eighteen barrels (approximately three hundred and sixty cases) were selected for this outstanding wine, which is elegant, and defined by its minerality and firm acidity. Though the quantity is minor, its quality is not.

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

408.867.3233

www.ridgewine.com