

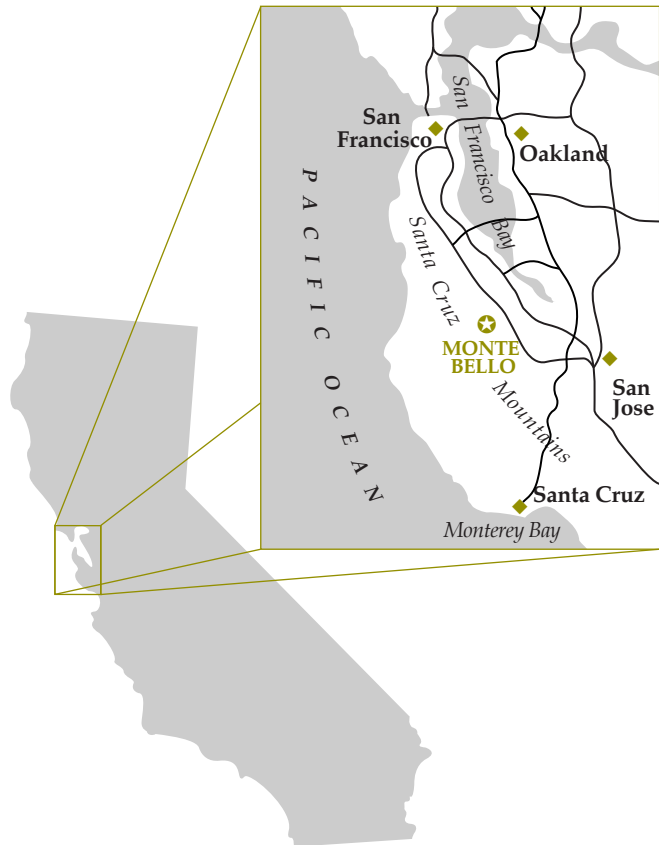
Total vineyard production:
130 tons from 108 acres
32% selected for this wine

2003 Monte Bello Estate Vineyard, bottled August 2005

Budbreak came early, but cold, wet weather in April and May delayed bloom. Summer conditions varied more than usual among the lower, middle, and highest vineyards. The first were often bathed in morning fog; the second—above the fog—more sheltered, and the last most exposed to the ocean's capricious influence. The vines ripened over the first three weeks of October; for the first time in many years the middle blocks dominate the selection, making up more than three-quarters of the wine. After a natural yeast primary fermentation, sixty percent of the lots completed natural malolactic in barrel, the rest in small tanks. In March following vintage, we made a small first assemblage, using only eight of the thirty lots; two more, a petit verdot and a cabernet, were added in May. In November, as the wine evolved, we included six more—a highly unusual third assemblage. Aging took place over twenty-two months in air-dried oak barrels—ninety-two percent american and eight percent french. This elegant Monte Bello is beautifully balanced as a young wine. It will enter a more complex stage after ten years, and continue to evolve throughout a second decade. PD (3/05)

85% CABERNET SAUVIGNON,
8% MERLOT, 7% PETIT VERDOT

13.2% alcohol by volume



RIDGE 2003

CALIFORNIA

MONTE BELLO®

History

The Monte Bello estate vineyard was planted, and the winery constructed, in 1886. A first vintage from the young vines followed in 1892. During Prohibition (1920-1933), the vineyard was not fully maintained; by the 1940s it was effectively abandoned. Eight acres of cabernet sauvignon were replanted in 1949. These were the source of the first Ridge Monte Bello (1962). Since then, the original vineyards have gradually been replanted.

Vintage

Harvest Dates 24 September - 20 October

Grapes Average brix 24.3°

Fermentation Gentle destemming, no crushing. (In thirty-six separately-fermented lots, roughly half the berries remained unbroken) Natural-yeast primary and secondary fermentations. Pressed at eleven days on average.

Aging 92% new, air-dried american oak, 8% new french oak.

Time in Barrel Eighteen months

Vineyard

First RIDGE MONTE BELLO 1962

Location Monte Bello Ridge, in northern California's Santa Cruz Mountains, overlooking the San Francisco peninsula.

Elevation 1300 - 2660'.

Soils Decomposing Franciscan rock mixed with clay, laid over fractured limestone.

Vines Cabernet sauvignon planted 1949-1993, 66.4 acres.
merlot planted 1970-1997, 12.8 acres.
petit verdot planted 1970-1993, 2.2 acres.
cabernet franc planted 1972, 1.3 acres.

Training Head-trained. Cane pruned (on vertical trellis).

Irrigation Non-irrigated. (Exception: new vines receive drip irrigation until established.)

Yield 1 to 2.5 tons per acre

Growing Season

Rainfall 51 inches (above normal)

Bloom June

Weather Wet and cool spring, moderate summer and warm fall.