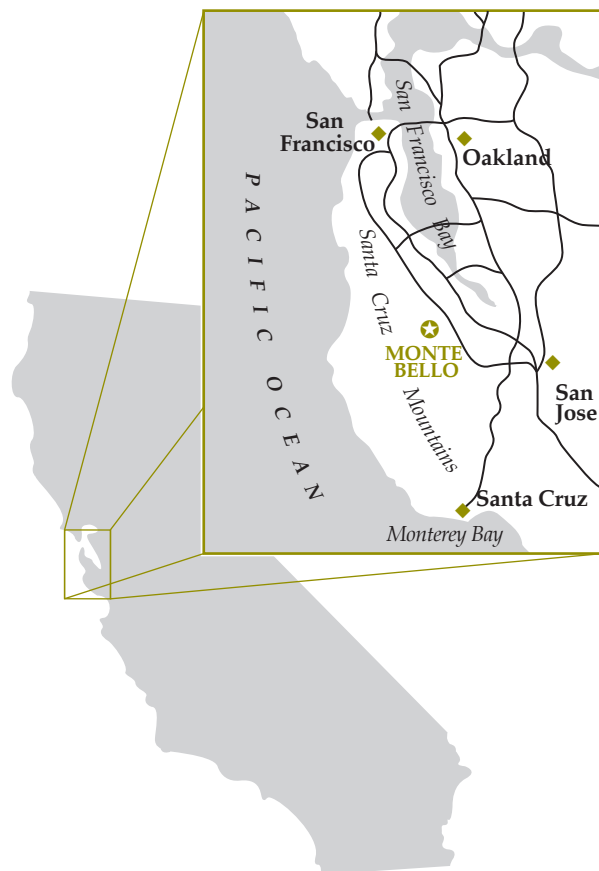


Total vineyard production:
138 tons from 108 acres
38% selected for this wine

04 Monte Bello Estate Vineyard, bottled April 06
Winter rains were scarce this year, and total rainfall down twenty-five percent. Budbreak came early, but bloom was late, delayed by cold April weather. Having set a small crop for the third consecutive year, the vines required little thinning. Harvest began on schedule; most parcels were picked in the first two weeks of October. Four days later, heavy rains drenched the remaining grapes—a quarter of the crop. Fortunately, sun and wind dried the clusters fully before the next storm, and we finished harvest with no damage to the fruit. The forty small lots fermented to dryness on their natural yeasts in nine days on average. Two-thirds of them completed natural malolactic in barrel, and remained on the lees for five months. The rest finished in tank, and were racked off their lees to barrel within one month. In a series of tastings conducted from late January through March, we selected seventeen lots for the first Monte Bello assemblage. Another was included in May, one more in December. Eighteen months in barrel has begun to integrate the firm tannins and rich texture of this fine vintage. Unusually appealing as a young wine, it will gain further depth and complexity over the next fifteen to twenty years. EB/PD (3/06)

76% CABERNET SAUVIGNON, 13% MERLOT,
8% PETIT VERDOT, 3% CABERNET FRANC
13.2% alcohol by volume



RIDGE 2004

CALIFORNIA

MONTE BELLO®

History

In 1886, high in the Santa Cruz Mountains, the Monte Bello estate vineyard was planted, and the winery constructed. 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 14 September - 23 October

Grapes Average brix 24.2°

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 (for comparison).

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 Bay to the north and the Pacific to the west.

Elevation 1300 - 2660'

Soils Decomposing Franciscan green stone 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 1.19 tons per acre

Growing Season

Rainfall 26 inches (below normal)

Bloom April

Weather Warm March, cool April, moderate summer.

RIDGE

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