

RIDGE 2011

MERLOT

ESTATE

2011 Estate Merlot, bottled August 2013
A long winter and harsh weather during bloom cut merlot yields. Through an unusually cool summer, our mountain vineyards were in full sun. Early October rains set the vines back, but three weeks of warm weather allowed the grapes to ripen fully. Whole berries fermented on natural yeasts; natural malolactics started in tank and finished four months later in barrel. In blind tastings, four of eight parcels were selected for this year's Estate bottling. This sensuous wine will be most enjoyable over the next six to eight years. EB (6/13)

MONTE BELLO VINEYARD
100% MERLOT
SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS 12.9% ALCOHOL BY VOLUME

HISTORY

Ridge first made merlot in 1974 from the Point, the highest, most exposed block on the Monte Bello vineyard at an elevation of 2600'. Originally, we wanted to see if the varietal could match the quality of, and be included in, the Monte Bello. Once satisfied that it could, we planted more merlot over the years as space and resources allowed. From 1975 on, it has been a part of the Monte Bello whenever assemblage tastings so indicated. As the younger plantings matured, it became apparent that not only did merlot complement the Monte Bello, but also had the structure and complexity to merit a separate bottling.

FIRST RIDGE ESTATE MERLOT: 1974

GROWING SEASON

Rainfall: 36 inches (above average)

Bloom: Late-June

Weather: Moderate summer and fall.

VINTAGE

Harvest Dates: 19 October - 2 November

Grapes: Average Brix 23.8°

Fermentation: Destemmed/ whole berry. Natural primary and natural secondary (malolactic). Pressed at seven days.

Barrels: 100% air dried american oak; 41% new, 59% three and four years old.

Aging: Nineteen and a half months in barrel.

WINEMAKING

Estate-grown Monte Bello vineyard grapes, hand harvested. Destemmed whole-berries fermented on the native yeasts; full malolactic on the naturally occurring bacteria; 22mg/L calcium carbonate added to two fermentors; minimum effective sulfur (35 ppm initially, 83 ppm during of aging). Pad filtered at bottling. In keeping with our philosophy of minimal intervention, this is the sum of our actions.



Our Estate Vineyard is located in the Santa Cruz Mountains, an appellation separating the North Coast from the Central Coast, but not a part of either.

Elevation: 1400' - 2600'

Soils: Fractured limestone sub-soils overlaid with decomposing Franciscan green stone mixed with clay/loam.

Age of Vines: 52% Fourteen years old(1998), 48% Twenty-five years old (1987).

Training: Head trained, cane pruned, on vertical trellis, vertical shoot positioned.

Yields: 2 tons per acre



RIDGE
VINEYARDS

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