

RIDGE 2012 CHARDONNAY ESTATE

100% CHARDONNAY MONTE BELLO ESTATE VINEYARD
SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS 14.5% ALCOHOL BY VOLUME

HISTORY

Ridge produced its first chardonnay in 1962 from fully-mature vines planted in the late 1940s on the Monte Bello estate vineyard. Production never exceeded ten barrels, and Monte Bello chardonnay was sold principally at the winery. Several great vintages, among them the 1973, '74, '79, and '84, showed that our cool climate and fractured limestone sub-soils were well suited to the varietal. By 1985, the old vines were producing less than a half-ton per acre and were taken out. The younger vines planted in the '70s, provide the majority of grapes today. Initially these newer plantings were on the "lower" vineyard—not yet farmed as part of the Monte Bello estate—so the wine was called "Santa Cruz Mountains." The vines are long since included in the estate; and the wine is designated Ridge Estate Chardonnay. In years when differences among lots are sufficient to warrant a separate bottling, we make a limited amount of Monte Bello Chardonnay as well.

FIRST RIDGE CHARDONNAY SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS: 1985
FIRST RIDGE ESTATE CHARDONNAY (THE NEW DESIGNATION): 2009

GROWING SEASON

Rainfall: 18 inches (below average)
Bloom: April
Weather: Moderate summer and fall

VINTAGE

Harvest Dates: 10 September – 13 October
Grapes: Average Brix 24.5°
Fermentation: Grapes are whole-cluster pressed and barrel fermented. Natural primary and natural secondary (malolactic) fermentations.
Selection: Seven of the ten Monte Bello vineyard chardonnay parcels.
Barrels: 19% new, 11% one year old, 7% two year old, 63% three, four and five years old. 95% air-dried american oak, 5% french oak.
Aging: Nine months in barrel on the lees, and three additional months on the lees in four year old barrels to settle after assemblage.

WINEMAKING

All estate-grown Monte Bello vineyard grapes, hand harvested. Whole-cluster pressed. Fermented on the native yeasts, followed by full malolactic on the naturally occurring bacteria. Minimum effective sulfur (28 ppm initially to barrels, 76ppm over the course of aging). Pad filtered at bottling. In keeping with our philosophy of minimal intervention, this is the sum of our actions.



2012 Estate Chardonnay, bottled Oct 2013
A mild winter, early bud-break, and early-April bloom gave us an unusually large crop, which we thinned rigorously; warm summer weather pushed ripening for a September harvest. Whole-cluster pressed, the lots fermented in barrel, and were stirred every two weeks from January to April during natural malolactics. The wine was racked off its gross lees in June, tasted, and assembled. Ripe fruit is balanced by naturally high acidity in this appealing wine. It will be at its best over the next five to eight years. EB (8/13)



Monte Bello Ridge overlooks San Francisco from the Santa Cruz Mountains, an appellation separating the North Coast from the Central Coast but not a part of either.

Elevation: 1,400 - 2,000'

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

Vines: 23.3 acres, planted 1976 - 2010.

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

Yields: Two to three tons per acre (full crop).

RIDGE
VINEYARDS

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