

RIDGE VINEYARDS

Exceptional single-vineyard wines since 1962

FALL 2015



THE 50th ANNIVERSARY MONTE BELLO AND THE NEXT 50 YEARS

With the 2012 vintage of Monte Bello, Ridge celebrates fifty years of fine winemaking. This superb vintage will be available on September 1, as part of our fall release.

When, in 1969, I was offered the opportunity to become Ridge winemaker, the partners opened their '62 and '64 Monte Bellos for me to taste. One of the partners, Dave Bennion, had made a half-barrel of wine from 1959 Monte Bello grapes. Before that, none of them had ever made wine. They let natural yeasts ferment the grapes, did not fine or filter, and made only minimal additions of SO₂. In those years, when all wines were inexpensive, I had tasted the great Bordeaux vintages from '45 to '49, outstanding late 1930s California cabernets from Inglenook, and from La Cuesta in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The Ridge '62 and '64 were in a class with the best Bordeaux, and as complex as those 1930s cabernets. I realized that, by great good fortune, the Ridge founders had happened upon an outstanding vineyard—one whose cool climate and limestone soils were shown to best advantage by their minimalist winemaking. I knew that if I joined them I would have the chance to make some exceptional wines. Time has not proved me wrong. Monte Bello is among the finest and longest-lived of California wines.

Having assembled and trained a team devoted to the philosophy of single-vineyard winemaking and minimal intervention, we look forward to another fifty years of learning from our vineyards and striving each year for higher quality. This talented, long-tenured group includes David Gates, Vice-President, Vineyard Operations, who began managing the vineyards in 1989; Eric Baugher, Vice-President of Winemaking, Monte Bello, who joined us in 1994; and John Olney, Vice-President of Winemaking, Lytton Springs, who came to Ridge in 1996. I have mentored them informally over the years, but they have brought us their own ideas, insight, and intelligence. They will carry Ridge—and all that it represents—well into the future.

—Paul Draper, Head Winemaker and CEO

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AN AGREEMENT WORTH THE WAIT

Early this year, Ridge completed a land exchange with the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District—an arrangement first proposed by the District some forty years ago. The complex agreement grants Ridge agricultural rights, in perpetuity, to forty-two acres of former Monte Bello vineyard land abandoned during Prohibition. The land surrounds our 19th-century production winery on the south and east, and adjoins our 2600' vineyards. A key provision of the understanding is that an equal amount of Ridge-owned land visible from the Monte Bello Open Space Preserve's hiking trails can never be developed. In addition, all new vineyards on the District's land must be farmed organically or biodynamically.

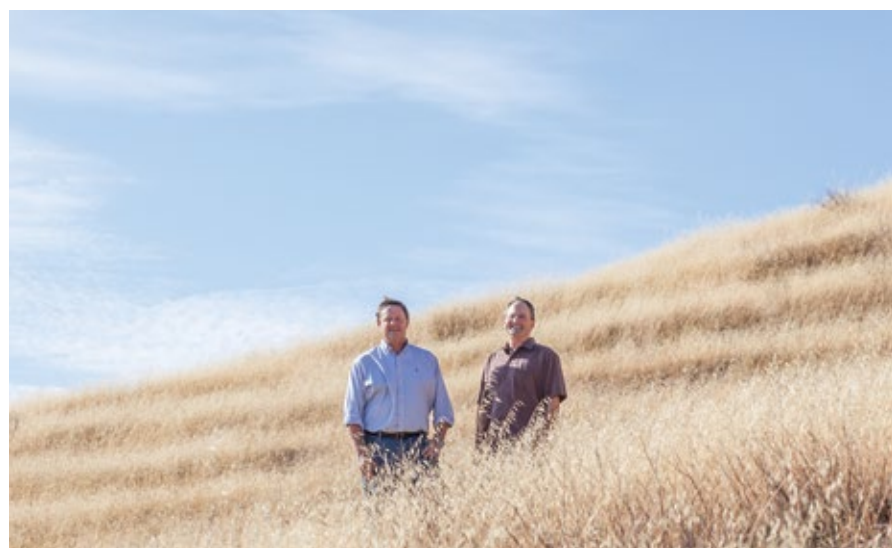
We have developed plans to plant, over time, thirty-two acres of the land now available to us. These parcels were first planted to vines in the late 1880s by Osea Perrone, founder of the Monte Bello winery.

We will replant in five stages, with four-year gaps between each phase. Clearing of eight acres for Phase One will begin next year, planting will commence in 2017. For all stages, the vines will be primarily cabernet sauvignon, with some cabernet franc, petit verdot, and merlot. We expect that the fruit will be of very high quality; as the vines mature fully, at least half could be included in the Monte Bello. The vine mix will consist of four or five of our favorite 19th-century Santa

Cruz Mountains and California clones. The petit verdot is also a 19th-century California selection; there will be a few acres of old-clone chardonnay as well. Ridge is one of the few California vineyards that does not irrigate vines once their roots are established. This, combined with the staged planting, eliminates future stress on the mountain's aquifers.

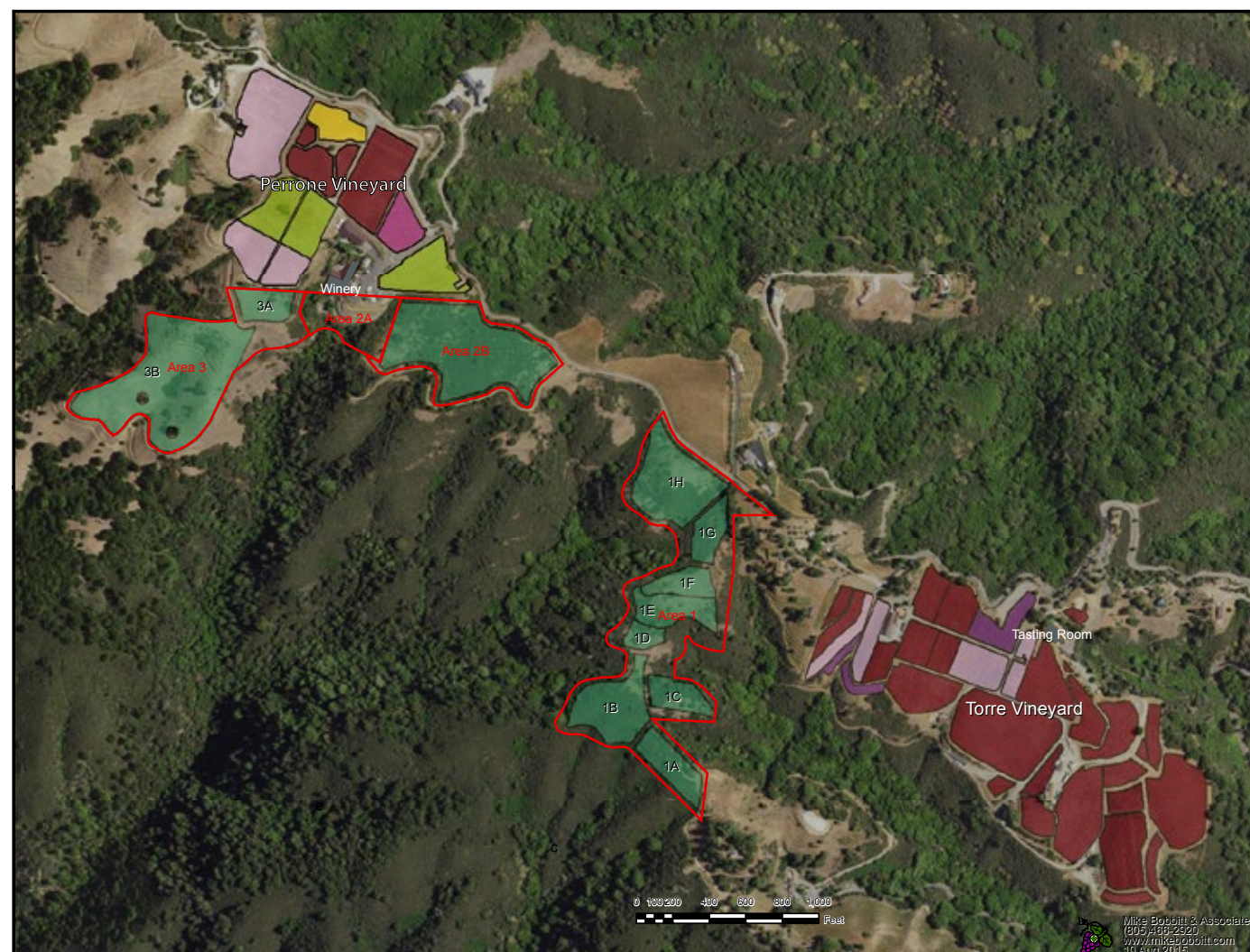
In the near term, we could see up to fifteen tons of cabernet from the Phase One plantings just five years from now, these additional 1000 cases most likely destined for the Estate Cabernet until the vines mature. In the longer term, once the entire thirty-two acres are planted, these new vineyards should provide up to 5000 more cases for the Estate and Monte Bello together. A forty-year-old dream is coming true; some things are worth the wait.

—David Amadia, Vice President of Sales and Marketing



Above: Mark Vernon, President & COO, who worked for more than 10 years to conclude the land agreement and David Gates, Vice President of Vineyard Operations, who will oversee planting the new acreage. They stand in front of the old terraces, first planted in the 1880's.

Right: The newly acquired 42 acres of land; in green with red outline. The first 8 acres (Area 2B) will be planted in 2017.



2012 Monte Bello

Tasting Notes: Saturated ruby. Ripe cassis, blackberry, violets, licorice, wet stone, oak spice. Strong blackberry fruit on entry; superb full body; structured, velvety tannins; toasty oak; crushed-limestone minerals; long, intense finish.



2013 Lytton Springs

Tasting Notes: Complex aromas of vanilla, black olive, clove and blackberry. Full bodied with chalky tannins, ripe raspberry, and cassis fruit, lingering finish with notes of licorice and mint.



2013 Pagani Ranch

Tasting Notes: Deep garnet. Stewed plum, dried fig, oak spice, clay minerals. Opulent and full bodied; rich fruit, exotic spices, moderate acid, lingering finish.



2013 Ponzo

Tasting Notes: Enticing nose of ripe raspberry, plum and black pepper; medium bodied, soft sensuous mouthfeel, cherry pie fruit, mineral notes and firm acid to the elegant, persistent finish.



2013 Petite Sirah Lytton Estate

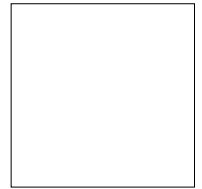
Tasting Notes: Opaque purple in color, pepper, eucalyptus and toasty oak on the nose, plentiful blackberry, plum fruit on the palate, full-bodied with well coated tannins and a long finish.



vinous 98 POINTS

RIDGE
VINEYARDS

PO Box 1810
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"The 2012 Monte Bello is one of the most harmonious young Monte Bellos I can remember tasting. Seamless and voluptuous through to the finish, the 2012 is showing beautifully today." —Antonio Galloni, July 2015



www.ridgewine.com/wholesale

CURRENT REVIEWS

**95
POINTS**



**94
POINTS**



July 2015
Antonio Galloni
vinous
explore all things wine

OTHER REVIEWS

- 2013 Chardonnay Estate, 92 points
- 2013 East Bench Zinfandel, 91 points
- 2013 Paso Robles, 90 points
- 2012 Cabernet Estate, 94 points

**93
POINTS**



**92
POINTS**

