

Vineyard Production:
89 tons from 92 acres
Selection: 40%

96 Monte Bello Vineyard, bottled May 98

An extremely short crop in 1996 was largely attributable to a disruptive storm in mid-May and the two weeks of blustery weather that followed. The Monte Bello vineyard was severely affected. At the upper (2500'-2600') and middle (2100'-2300') elevations, yields were down by forty percent; at the lower (1400'-2000') by a full sixty percent. We determine when to harvest by tasting the grapes. Record-high daytime temperatures could have caused flavors to become overripe, but cool nights maintained firm acidity and well-defined fruit. The first assemblage of Monte Bello—in February following vintage—typically includes eighty-five to ninety-five percent of the parcels that will make up the final wine. This year we made two versions, keeping them separate until August to be sure each was fully stable. Once combined, the whole proved greater than its parts. Sensuous and complex, with layered fruit and beautifully integrated tannins, this is among the loveliest of the '90s. Accessible as a young wine, it will develop further with twelve to fifteen years of bottle age. PD (4/98)

® REGISTERED TRADEMARK

RIDGE 1996
CALIFORNIA
MONTE BELLO®

80% CABERNET SAUVIGNON, 11% MERLOT, 9% PETIT VERDOT
MONTE BELLO RIDGE ALCOHOL 13.2% BY VOLUME
PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS, INC. BW 4488
17100 MONTE BELLO ROAD, P.O. BOX 1810, CUPERTINO, CA 95015

GOVERNMENT WARNING: (1) ACCORDING TO THE SURGEON GENERAL, WOMEN SHOULD NOT DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES DURING PREGNANCY BECAUSE OF THE RISK OF BIRTH DEFECTS. (2) CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IMPAIRS YOUR ABILITY TO DRIVE A CAR OR OPERATE MACHINERY, AND MAY CAUSE HEALTH PROBLEMS. CONTAINS SULFITES