

RIDGE 2003

CALIFORNIA CHARDONNAY MONTE BELLO

2003 Chardonnay, Monte Bello, bottled January 2005

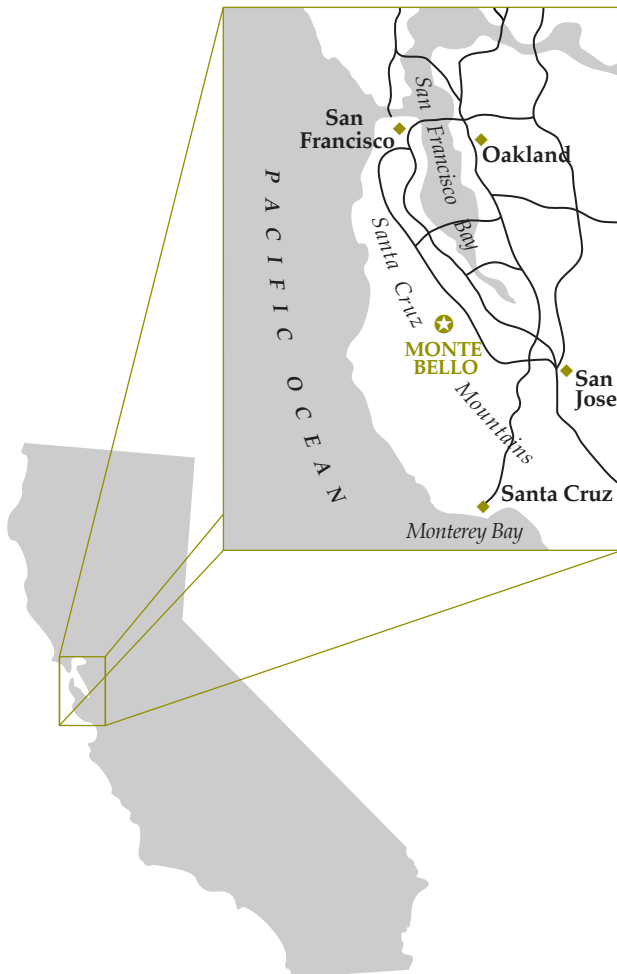
Ridge made its first Monte Bello Chardonnay in 1962. Not every vintage produces a Monte Bello—the last was in 2000. Warm late winter weather gave the vines an early start; a cold, unsettled spring slowed growth. By mid-September the more-stressed vines had developed full flavor, followed in mid-October by those with larger ground-water reserves. Whole cluster pressed and barrel fermented for two months on their natural yeasts, the wines took ten more months in barrel to complete a natural malolactic. This superb chardonnay is comprised of five barrels from the stressed lots, and twelve from Middle Block. Clarity was achieved by racking and settling, first at twelve months, and again when the wine was bottled, unfiltered, at fifteen months. A classic Monte Bello, it has the firm acid and intense, complex fruit of the cool Santa Cruz Mountains region. It will continue to develop beautifully through the decade.

PD/EB (11/04)

100% CHARDONNAY

Alcohol 14.6% by volume

17 Barrels Produced



History

In 1949 William Short, retired theologian and then-owner of the Ridge "middle" vineyard (2100' - 2400'), planted several acres of chardonnay; these vines provided the 1962 Monte Bello for the Ridge partners' first vintage. During the next twenty-three years small amounts of chardonnay were produced each year under the Monte Bello name.

Vintage

Harvest Dates 18 September -16 October

Harvest

Conditions Average brix 25.0°. We thinned up to 40% of the fruit in some blocks in order to concentrate flavors and ensure ripeness.

Fermentation The grapes were whole-cluster pressed in separate lots. Juice was aerated by pumping over. Natural primary and secondary fermentation.

Agging 78% air-dried American oak barrels and 28% French oak barrels (17% new, 7% one year, 12% two year, 50% three year, 14% four and five year)

Time in Barrel 15 months

Vineyard

First Ridge

Monte Bello 1962

Location Monte Bello Ridge, Santa Cruz Mountains Viticultural Area, overlooking San Francisco Bay.

Soils Decomposing Franciscan rock mixed with clay, laid over fractured limestone.

Training Head-trained, cane-pruned.

Irrigation 74% not irrigated, 26% drip irrigated

Growing Season

Rainfall Above normal, 51"

Bloom June (normal)

Weather Weather at bloom was very good, and the chardonnay vines set a large crop.