

RIDGE 2004

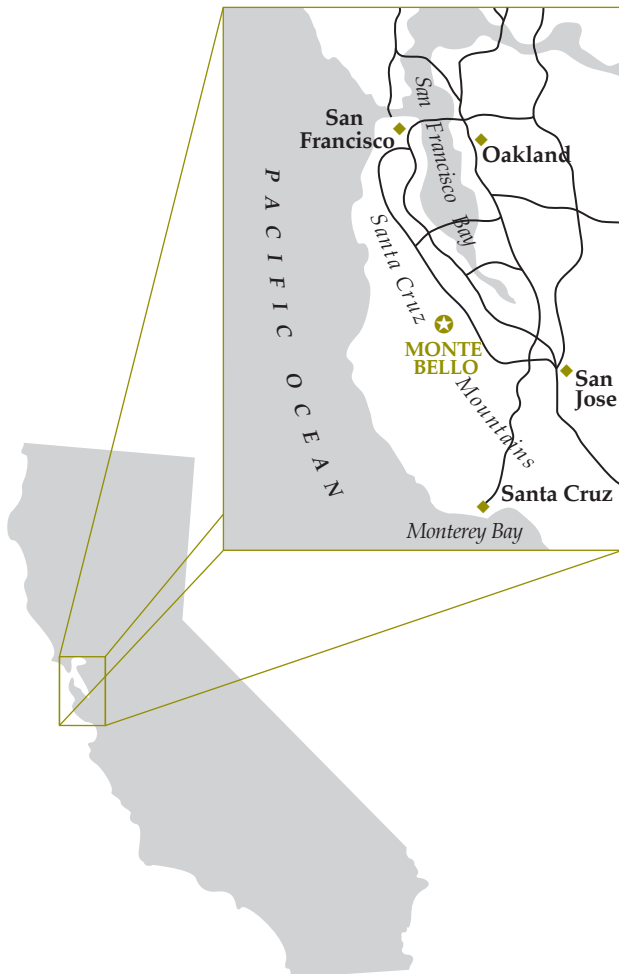
CALIFORNIA CHARDONNAY MONTE BELLO®

2004 Chardonnay, Monte Bello, bottled March 2006

In 1962, when the number of fine California white wines could be counted on one hand, Ridge made its first Monte Bello Chardonnay. Not every vintage produces a Monte Bello—recently, only 1999, 2000, and 2003. In 2004, after a wet winter, the vines flowered and set significantly earlier than usual. This, coupled with a mild summer, brought ripe flavors by early September—also ahead of schedule. Each of the ten small parcels and sub-parcels was picked separately and whole-cluster pressed. The lots were racked to barrel, then spent three months in our cool underground cellars, fermenting to dryness on their own yeasts. A natural malolactic followed, finishing in late spring, when we selected three small exceptional lots for this Monte Bello. Racked off the lees in August, the wines were returned to barrel and tank for six additional months of aging and settling, enabling us to bottle without filtration. This complex chardonnay is enjoyable now, but is still very young. It will develop more fully over the next five years. EB/PD (1/06)

100% CHARDONNAY

14.7% alcohol by volume



History

In 1949 William Short, retired theologian and then-owner of the Ridge “middle” vineyard (2070’ – 2390’), planted several acres of chardonnay as well as cabernet sauvignon; the former provided the 1962 estate Monte Bello Chardonnay for the Ridge partners’ first vintage. Throughout the following decades, small amounts of chardonnay were produced in most years under the Monte Bello name.

Vintage

Harvest Dates	6 September -10 September
Grapes	Average brix 24.7°
Fermentation	Whole-cluster pressed. Juice aerated and racked to barrel for natural primary and secondary.
Aging	76% air-dried american oak barrels and 24% french oak barrels (28% new, 45% two years, 27% three years)
Time in Barrel	Nineteen months

Vineyard

First RIDGE Monte Bello	1962
Location	Monte Bello Ridge, in Northern California’s Santa Cruz Mountains, overlooking the San Francisco peninsula.
Soils	Decomposing Franciscan green stone mixed with clay, laid over fractured limestone.
Training	Head-trained, cane-pruned.
Yield	Two tons per acre

Growing Season

Rainfall	75% below normal at 26”
Bloom	Early budbreak, due to dry soil and a warm March.
Weather	Good weather at budbreak, but a cold April slowed growth. Bloom in May; moderate temperatures through harvest.