

RIDGE 2008

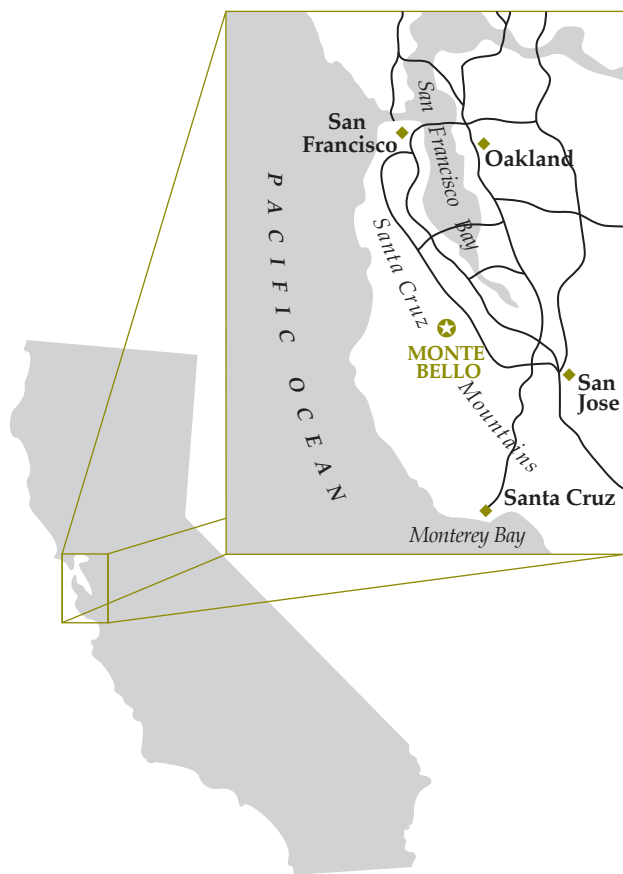
CALIFORNIA CHARDONNAY MONTE BELLO®

08 Chardonnay, Monte Bello, bottled January 2010

A mild winter, short on rain, brought bud-break by mid-February. Cool weather in March slowed growth, but summer's warmth ripened the small crop for an early-September harvest. Whole-cluster pressed, each parcel was barrel-fermented separately on naturally-occurring yeasts. Weekly stirring during the uninoculated malolactic fermentation maintained freshness and provided further richness. Four lots in particular showed exceptional quality and character. These were combined, and returned to older barrels for four months' settling. Clarity was achieved naturally, and we bottled without filtering. Complex fruit, mineral notes from the limestone sub-soil, and firm acidity set a classic style. The 2008 will develop more fully over the next eight to ten years.

EB (11/09)

100% CHARDONNAY
14.1% alcohol by volume



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 (25 ppm at the press, 84 ppm over the course of aging) and 5.3mg per liter isinglass fining just prior to bottling; unfiltered. In keeping with our philosophy of minimal intervention, this is the sum of our actions.

History

In 1949 William Short, retired theologian and then-owner of the Ridge "middle" vineyard (2070' - 2390'), planted several acres of chardonnay, which provided the 1962 estate Monte Bello Chardonnay for the Ridge partners' first vintage. From 1962 to 1984, limited amounts of chardonnay were produced each year under the Monte Bello designation. By 1985, younger, replanted vines had begun to supplant the older vines, whose yields had dropped to a quarter-ton per acre, and we changed the designation to Santa Cruz Mountains. As of this vintage we have changed it to Estate Chardonnay to make it clear that the grapes are from Monte Bello vineyard, not the AVA in general. By 1999, the young vines had matured; we were able to select several exceptional parcels for a Monte Bello chardonnay, a practice that continues to the present in most years.

Vineyard

**First RIDGE
Monte Bello
Chardonnay**

1962

Location

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

Elevation

1400' - 1900'

Soils

Decomposing Franciscan green stone mixed with clay, laid over fractured limestone.

Training

Head-trained, cane-pruned.

Yield

2.4 tons per acre

Growing Season

Rainfall

30 inches (just below average)

Bloom

Early June

Weather

Moderate summer and fall

Vintage

Harvest Dates

2 September - 8 September

Grapes

Average Brix 23.4°

Fermentation

Whole-cluster pressed. Juice aerated and racked to barrel for natural primary and secondary.

Selection

Two of the ten Monte Bello Vineyard chardonnay parcels

Barrels

90% air-dried American oak (10% new, 66% one and two years, 24% three years old) & 10% French oak barrels.

Aging

Sixteen months in barrel