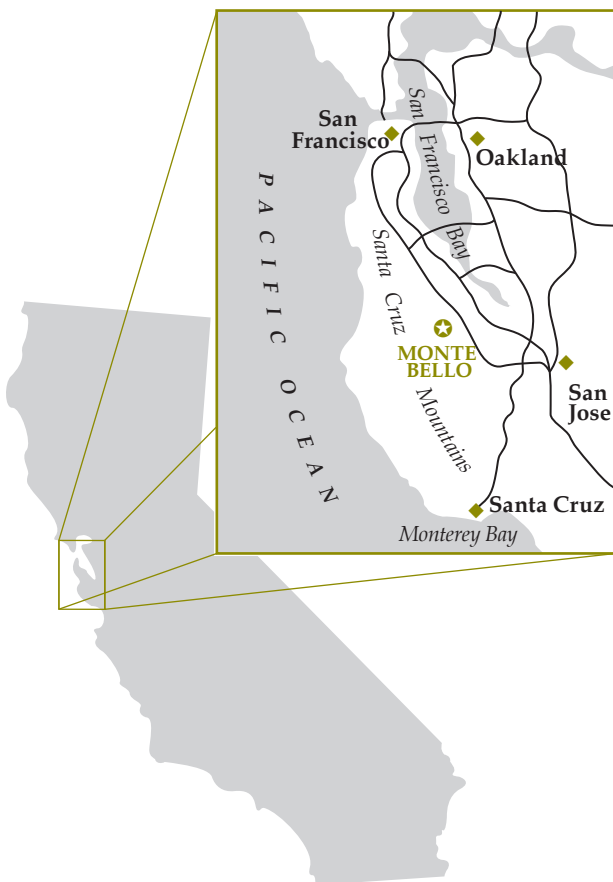


# RIDGE ESTATE MERLOT 2009

## 2009 Estate Merlot, bottled June 2011

Ridge made a merlot from the Monte Bello vineyard in 1974, 1976, and from 1991 to 1997; this is our first bottling since then. In the excellent 2009 vintage, the Casa Grande parcel and the six-acre merlot section of 25 Acre were fermented separately, and combined for this limited release. Quarterly racking off the lees clarified the wine naturally, and maintained its freshness. Intense fruit allowed the use of seventy-five percent new american oak barrels, adding hints of spice. A variety known for its elegance, this approachable merlot will be enjoyable over the next decade. EB (3/11)

100% MERLOT  
14.2% alcohol by volume



## History

Ridge first made merlot in 1974 from the exposed Point vineyard, planted on Monte Bello Ridge at an elevation of 2600'. Originally, we wanted to see if the varietal could match the quality of, and be included in, our estate cabernet. Once satisfied that it could, we planted more merlot over the years as space and resources allowed. From 1975 on, it has been a part of the Monte Bello whenever assemblage tastings so indicated. As the younger plantings matured, it became apparent that not only did merlot complement the Monte Bello, but also had the structure and complexity to merit a separate bottling.

## Vineyard

**First RIDGE  
Estate  
Merlot** 1974

**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/loam over fractured limestone sub-soils.

**Training** Head-trained, cane-pruned. Vertical trellis.

**Yields** 1.9 tons per acre

## Growing Season

**Rainfall** 28 inches (below average)

**Bloom** Late May

**Weather** Cool spring, warm summer and fall, short growing season.

## Vintage

**Harvest Dates** 28 September

**Grapes** Average Brix 24.6°

**Fermentation** Destemmed/ whole berry. Natural primary and natural secondary (malolactic). Pressed at eight days.

**Barrels** 75% new, 25% one year old. 100% air dried american oak.

**Aging** Twenty months in barrel

## Winemaking

All estate-grown Monte Bello vineyard grapes, hand harvested. Destemmed whole-berry fermented on the native yeasts, followed by full malolactic on the naturally occurring bacteria. Minimum effective sulfur (30 ppm initially to barrels, 95 ppm over the course of aging). Fresh egg white fining for tannin reduction was done using six egg whites-per-barrel. Pad filtered at bottling. In keeping with our philosophy of minimal intervention, this is the sum of our actions.