

RIDGE 2010 CHARDONNAY ESTATE

MONTE BELLO ESTATE VINEYARD 100% CHARDONNAY
SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS 14.2% ALCOHOL BY VOLUME

HISTORY

Ridge produced its first chardonnay in 1962 from fully-mature vines planted in the late 1940s on the Monte Bello estate vineyard. Production never exceeded ten barrels, and Monte Bello chardonnay was sold principally at the winery. Several great vintages, among them the 1973, '74, '79, and '84, showed that our cool climate and fractured limestone sub-soils were well suited to the varietal. By 1985, the old vines were producing less than a half-ton per acre; the younger ones, planted in the '70s, provided the majority of grapes. These newer plantings were on the "lower" vineyard not yet farmed as part of the Monte Bello estate so the wine was called "Santa Cruz Mountains." The vines are long since included in the estate; with this vintage, the name becomes Ridge Estate Chardonnay. In years when differences among lots are sufficient to warrant a separate bottling, we make a limited amount of Monte Bello Chardonnay as well.

FIRST RIDGE CHARDONNAY SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS: 1985
FIRST RIDGE ESTATE CHARDONNAY (THE NEW DESIGNATION): 2009

GROWING SEASON

Rainfall: 30 inches (average)

Bloom: Early June

Weather: Cool, late spring; cold summer; long, mild fall.

VINTAGE

Harvest Dates: 26 September - 19 October

Grapes: Average Brix 23.2°

Fermentation: Whole-cluster pressed and barrel fermented. Natural primary and natural secondary (malolactic).

Barrels: 10% new, 11% one year old, 15% two year old, 64% three and four year old.

88% air dried american oak, 12% french oak.

Aging: Twelve months in barrel, and five months of additional aging on the gross lees; 1/3 in four year old barrels, 2/3 in tank

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 (35 ppm initially to barrels, 80 ppm over the course of aging). Pad filtered at bottling. In keeping with our philosophy of minimal intervention, this is the sum of our actions.

2010 Estate Chardonnay, bottled Feb 2012

A prolonged winter stalled the start of the growing season by a month. Cool summer weather delayed ripening, but by October produced fruit of great intensity. Each vineyard parcel was picked separately, whole-cluster pressed, and the juice racked to barrel for native-yeast fermentation. The wines remained on their lees for eleven months as the natural secondary slowly finished. In late-summer tastings, we selected the most accessible lots for this fine Estate Chardonnay. Rich mountain fruit is matched by firm acidity. Elegant and fresh, this wine will be most enjoyable over the next five or six years. EB (11/11)



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

Soils: Decomposing Franciscan green stone mixed with clay/loam over fractured limestone sub-soils.

Age of Vines: 18.3 acres, planted 1976-1996.

Training: Head trained, cane pruned. Vertical trellis.

Yields: Two to three tons per acre (full crop)

RIDGE
VINEYARDS

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www.ridgevine.com

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