

# RIDGE 2011 CHARDONNAY ESTATE

MONTE BELLO ESTATE VINEYARDS 100% CHARDONNAY  
SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS 14.1% 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 and were taken out. The younger vines planted in the '70s, provide the majority of grapes today. Initially 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; and the wine is designated 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: 30 September - 17 October

Grapes: Average Brix 23.5°

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

Barrels: 14% new, 10% one year old, 15% two year old, 61% three and four year old.

92% air-dried american oak, 8% french oak.

Aging: Eleven months in barrel, and three months of additional aging on the gross lees; 2/3 in four year old barrels, 1/3 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 (30 ppm initially to barrels, 67 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.

*2011 Estate Chardonnay, bottled Nov 2012*  
*A cold growing season again pushed harvest into October, though warm weather arrived in time to fully ripen the fruit. Each parcel was picked separately, whole-cluster pressed, and the juice put to barrel. The wines remained on their lees for ten months as uninoculated malolactic finished. Tasting, we chose the most accessible, fruit-forward lots. Freshness and complexity are provided by firm acidity and the nuanced mineral character of limestone sub-soils. This excellent wine will be at its best over the next five or six years.* EB (9/12)



**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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Exceptional single-vineyard wines since 1962.

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