

RIDGE 2015 CHARDONNAY ESTATE

100% CHARDONNAY MONTE BELLO ESTATE VINEYARD
SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS

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" and these vines have long since been included. Since 2009 the wine has been 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: 24.4 inches (below normal)

Bloom: May

Weather: Wet December & driest January on record; spring rains were below normal with warm temperatures. End of spring was cool with ocean fog and drizzle adding 3+ inches of rain, allowing the vines to grow nicely. Moderate summer resulted in early ripening and we began picking in late-August.

VINTAGE

Harvest Dates: 27 August - 10 September

Grapes: Average Brix 24.0°

Fermentation: Grapes are whole-cluster pressed and barrel fermented. Natural primary and natural secondary (malolactic) fermentations.

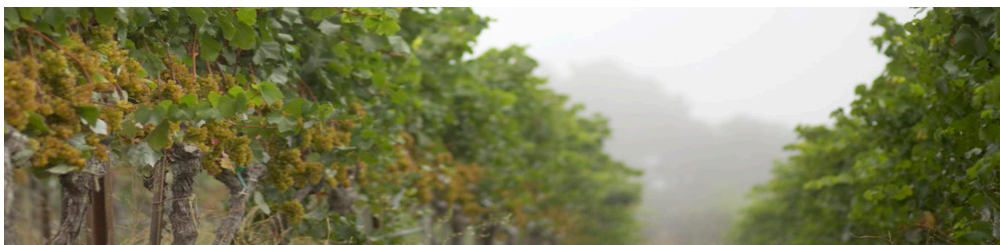
Selection: Ten of the twelve Estate Chardonnay parcels.

Barrels: 93% air-dried american oak, 7% french oak; 8% new, 35% one and two years old, 57% three, four and five years old.

Aging: Eleven months in first-fill, another five months extended settling in neutral barrels.

WINEMAKING

Sustainably farmed, hand harvested estate-grown Monte Bello vineyard grapes; whole-cluster pressed; fermented on the native yeasts; full malolactic on the naturally occurring bacteria; oak from barrel aging; minimum effective sulfur for this wine (30ppm initially to barrels, 44ppm over the course of aging). In keeping with our philosophy of minimal intervention, this is the sum of our actions.



2015 Estate Chardonnay, bottled 01/17
Mild winter weather resulted in early bud-break. Spring rains affected bloom, reducing yields by one-third. A warm, fog-free summer ripened the crop for an early-September harvest. In barrel, vineyard parcels were kept separate; at the tenth month, we assembled the most elegant lots. This out-standing vintage shows well-defined mountain fruit and firm acidity. It will be most enjoyable over the next eight to ten years. EB (9/16)



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

Elevation: 1,400 - 2,000'

Soils: Fractured limestone soils overlaid with decomposing Franciscan green stone mixed with clay/loam.

Vines: 15.5 acres, planted 1982-1998.

Training: Head trained, cane pruned, vertical trellis, vertical shoot positioned.

Yields: 1.9 tons per acre

RIDGE
VINEYARDS

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