

# RIDGE VINEYARDS

Exceptional single-vineyard wines since 1962

Spring 2017

## A Conversation with Eric Baugher

***It's a rainy Tuesday afternoon and Eric Baugher (COO & Winemaker at Monte Bello) is moving intently around the Monte Bello chemistry lab, where he got his start at Ridge as a chemist in the summer of 1994.***

Today he's plating samples of 2015 Paso Robles Zinfandel and 2015 Geyserville, the last quality control step before the release on April 1. He's completely at ease in this technical and pragmatic environment, swabbing out test tubes and putting drops of wine on microscope slides. Calm, focused, casually dressed in jeans and a red plaid shirt rolled up to the elbows, he smiles and laughs easily while diligently completing these specialized tasks. Eric's traditional biography can be found at <https://www.ridgevine.com/about/explore/eric-baugher/> but we want to show other sides of the man who makes Monte Bello, beyond the typical press release. Here are his answers.

The first wines I drank were from where I grew up in Corralitos. I started collecting wine when I was 21. Local wines from the Santa Cruz Mountains were what my parents drank and I followed suit.

I received so much great advice from my parents, uncles, grandparents. Uncle Ray always beat into my head to "build your brain muscle, don't follow in my footsteps working manual labor, get a college degree". Uncle Ray was very successful as a contractor but encouraged me to use my mind to get ahead, rather than my back.

Paul Draper always pursued balance, making wines that came together in harmony, in a yin and yang, because it's not just  $1 + 1 = 2$ . Being sure that every single varietal could

make a great wine on its own and from there building a wine that has synergy and is greater than the sum of its parts.

The job of a winemaker makes you responsible for transferring the vineyard character to the grapes and eventually to the bottle. The whole process of transformation, taking that character of the vineyard to the consumer, that's what Paul drove for each harvest. It's also about the image of the wine in the market, talking about the wines to consumers, that's something Paul has always been great at, his finesse with describing the wines.



Eric Baugher, COO & Winemaker at Monte Bello

*Continued on page 3*

### INSIDE:

ON THE MARKET .....	PAGE 2
SPRING RELEASES .....	PAGE 3



# On the Market

## Ridge - Key Contributor to Restaurant Wine Programs

Ridge has long had the honor of being served in the finest restaurants in the world and 2016 was no exception. Despite our overall volume and available supply being down significantly last year due to the drought; we still managed to sell a higher percentage of wine to restaurants than any year prior. As I travel around to visit and talk with different sommeliers and wine directors I am often told of the importance of having Ridge on their wine list. When I sat down to write this article I thought it would be only right to have some of our top supporters share with you their feelings on what Ridge means to them and their wine program. Here is what they had to say:

“Does it get any more iconic than Ridge? As one of the preeminent benchmarks of wine production in California, Ridge’s commitment to excellence and integrity continues to be impressive vintage after vintage. The variety and quality of Zinfandels they produce, the legendary Monte Bello vineyard from high atop the Santa Cruz Mountains and the remarkably diverse set of varietals from California they produce at the highest levels all point to a wine our guests can trust. Mr. Draper has made it his life’s work creating this masterpiece, and it is no wonder his commitment to his craft has also made this one of Chef Keller’s absolute favorite wines.” Erik Johnson, Head Sommelier, The French Laundry - Yountville, CA

“I choose to carry Ridge for a number of reasons, its history as a historic estate, the quality of winemaking, and the consistency that we have seen in the wines over the years are all contributing factors. With Paul at the helm the style stayed true through decades and countless trends, they haven’t chased anyone else, instead they were confident in their mission statement and ability and were true to themselves. The result is some of the most age worthy wines not just from California but in the world.” Brahm Callahan, MS, Himmel Hospitality Group - Boston, MA

“At Boulevard, it has been our pleasure to watch the evolution of the California wine industry over the past

two decades. One of the benchmark producers for us has always been Ridge Vineyards in the Santa Cruz Mountains. From their ongoing innovative efforts in the vineyards to their thoughtful and traditional wine-making approach, Ridge has been a staple of our wine program since day one.” John Lancaster, Wine Director, Boulevard - San Francisco, CA

“I think the better question is why would you NOT choose Ridge? The historical position the winery has in addition to their reputation makes adding the wines to the “Must Have” category when building a wine list. The wines are always consistent, well priced and more importantly- Delicious! Their dedication to their craft is apparent in each and every wine. The reputation of the wines, Montebello and their people. We all know this industry is about the people. The team at Ridge truly believe in and are so proud of their product. I am so honored to have them on our lists.” Virginia Philip, MS, The Breakers Hotel & Virginia Philip Wine Shop & Academy - Palm Beach, FL

—Michael Torino, Vice President of US Wholesale Sales

## Spring Releases

### 2015 Chardonnay Estate

**Tasting Notes:** Pale golden color. Pineapple fruit, braised pear, and fig aromas, sweet oak, and dried herbs. Tart apple fruit entry, pineapple, citrus, and an elegant texture; long, refreshing firm acid finish.



### 2014 Merlot Estate

**Tasting Notes:** Saturated ruby color. Ripe cherry fruit, chaparral, black tea, toasted oak, and clove spice. Well-defined mountain fruit entry, rounded tannins, sweet oak, lengthy finish showing limestone character.



*A Conversation with Eric Baugher, continued from page 1*

During the long commutes from my home on the Pacific coast to Monte Bello, or on the drive to Sonoma to see the vineyards, I listen to a range of music according to my moods. Country music on the way to work, classical to relax in the evening after a stressful day, or some hip-hop or whatever my kids are listening to!

If I could have dinner with anyone, I would love to dine with Dr. Osea Perrone, (original founder of the Montebello Winery in the 1880s-1890s). It’d be great to ask him questions about coming to the top of this mountain and building such a large estate in the middle of nowhere. What varietals of grapes were planted? What other crops was he growing? What was his winemaking philosophy? Did he have plans to build further cellars? Was he hiding a secret stash of wine from the federal ATF inspectors during Prohibition? There are so many questions unanswered.

The fascinating thing about being a parent is how strong DNA is. Your kids grow up with your personality but where is it mostly coming from? Is it nature or nurture? The personalities that my son & daughter have are fascinating. When one of my kids is angry or yells at me, I wonder “Is that little Eric?”

When I’m on a beach in Hawaii after taking a run in the sand, enjoying the beautiful surroundings and fresh air, that’s when I feel the most relaxed.

If I could choose my last meal, I’d stay at home with my family and have grilled filet mignon, using grapevine cuttings for the fire, with a side of Brussels sprouts roasted with bacon, and mashed potatoes smothered in truffle oil. 1974 Monte Bello would be the ideal pairing.

My eighteen year old self wouldn’t take this advice! I’d tell him to study harder in the subjects that at the time were painful to go through, like Literature & English. Writing and being a good communicator is a vital part of building a career and being well-rounded.

For the complete list of Eric’s answers, please follow this link: [www.ridgevine.com/about/news/conversation-eric-baugher/](http://www.ridgevine.com/about/news/conversation-eric-baugher/)

—Interviewed by Dan Buckler, Regional Sales Manager

### 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon Estate

**Tasting Notes:** Deep purple color. Aromas of blackcurrant, cherries, clove spice, toasted oak, and cocoa. Ripe bramble fruit entry, medium-full body, supple tannins, and sweet oak; firm acid persists in a long finish.



### 2015 Paso Robles

**Tasting Notes:** Garnet color. Appealing black cherry fruit aromas, berry pie, and exotic oak spice. Fresh, ripe cherries on entry, fruit-forward, round tannins, and lovely old-vine pepper spice finish. Drinkable now.



### 2015 East Bench

**Tasting Notes:** Deep ruby color, mixed red fruits nose, subtle vanilla and oak spice, black cherry and raspberry palate with well coated tannins and bright acidity.

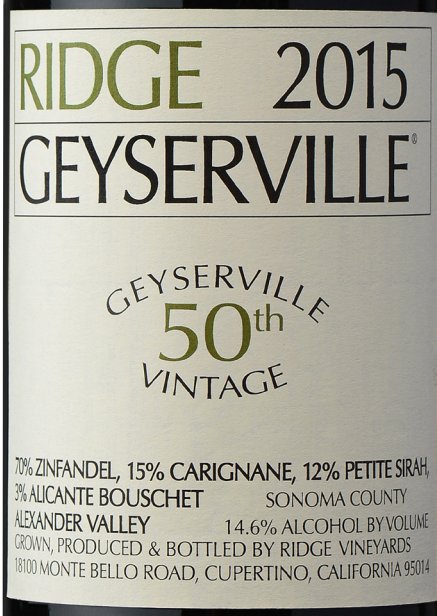


### 2015 Three Valleys

**Tasting Notes:** Spicy oak with strawberry and fig jam to the nose. Medium-to-full bodied, soft mouthfeel and focused cherry fruit, mint. Refreshing acidity on the finish with notes of chaparral.

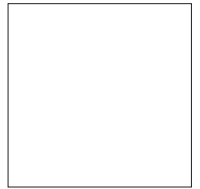






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PO Box 1810  
Cupertino, CA 95015



### 2015 Geyserville

**Tasting Notes:** Saturated ruby color. Intense dark berry fruits, gravel earth, black licorice, mint, and exotic spices. Powerful bramble fruit entry, sensuous, well-defined tannins, great depth of flavor, enjoyable lengthy finish.

[www.ridgevine.com/trade](http://www.ridgevine.com/trade)

## Virtual Tasting



### Join Us

**Friday, April 21  
10am Pacific Time**

*Join us as our  
winemakers take you  
through our Spring  
Release wines.*

More information:

[www.ridgevine.com/  
about/news/spring-2017-  
virtual-tasting/](http://www.ridgevine.com/about/news/spring-2017-virtual-tasting/)