

RIDGE 2014

MERLOT

ESTATE

Estate Merlot Parcels: 31 tons from 11 acres
MONTE BELLO VINEYARD **SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS**
100% MERLOT **13.5% ALCOHOL BY VOLUME**

HISTORY

Ridge first made merlot in 1974 from the Point, the highest, most exposed block on the Monte Bello vineyard at an elevation of 2600'. Originally, we wanted to see if the varietal could match the quality of, and be included in, the Monte Bello. 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.

FIRST RIDGE ESTATE MERLOT 1974

GROWING SEASON

Rainfall: 11.8 inches (below average)

Bloom: Mid-June

Weather: Very dry December & January; most of the rain fell February through April.

Overall above average temperatures at Monte Bello.

VINTAGE

Harvest Dates: 5-20 September

Grapes: Average Brix 23.9°

Fermentation: Grapes destemmed, 100% whole berries. Natural primary and natural secondary (malolactic) fermentations. Pressed at six days

Barrels: 100% air dried american oak; 45% new, 32% two to three years old, and 23% four years old.

Aging: Twenty-one months in barrel.

WINEMAKING

Sustainably farmed, hand harvested, estate-grown grapes; destemmed, left as whole berries; fermented on the native yeasts; full malolactic on the naturally occurring bacteria; 0.45mg/L calcium carbonate added to two of six lots; a fining of 3 fresh, organic egg whites per barrel for the press wine; oak from barrel aging; minimum effective sulfur (25 ppm initially, 98 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.



2014 Estate Merlot, bottled August 2016
 This driest year on record brought significant water stress to the vineyard. Fortunately, the vines managed to get through it, and harvest, unusually early, was complete by September 20. A six-day fermentation provided elegant extraction. At assemblage, in February, we combined lots with excellent fruit and balanced tannins. After twenty-one months' aging in american oak, this complex merlot has developed wonderfully. It will be most enjoyable over the next ten years. EB (6/16)



Our Estate Vineyard is located in the Santa Cruz Mountains, a stand alone appellation separating the North Coast from the Central Coast but not a part of either.

Elevation: 1400' - 2600'

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

Age of Vines: 87% Seventeen years old (1998), 13% Twenty-eight years old (1987).

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

Yields: 2.8 tons per acre



RIDGE
VINEYARDS

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