



ASSEMBLAGE

ASSEMBLING THE 2015 MONTE BELLO

Assemblage ended on January 13th, after two days of rigorous blind tasting by the production and vineyard teams. We first considered twenty-four classic Monte Bello parcels, identifying fifteen as having particularly fine Monte Bello character; they were combined to form the core blend.

On the second day, eight lots were tasted, and added one at a time in two-glass flights — one glass with the addition, the other without, as a control. The top scoring glass then became the control for the next addition; five were selected to join the assemblage. Blind tasting against the 2010 through 2014 vintages served to confirm the final glass.

Though youthful, the 2015 stood strong, showing dark fruit, espresso notes, subtle oak and excellent weight on the palate. Varietal percentages were calculated based on how many barrels of the twenty chosen lots contributed to the blend. It worked out to 70% cabernet sauvignon, 14% merlot, 9% petit verdot and 7% cabernet franc. Fermented completely dry, the alcohol content is 13.3%. Growing conditions in the '75, '85, '95, '05 and '15 vintages were surprisingly similar. Most comparable to the 2015 in overall vintage character is the 2005.



HARVEST

2015 HARVEST

The vines enjoyed a growing season gentler than the prior three. Although short on rainfall — and a continuation into the fourth year of drought — there was some rain in late spring. Cover crops, crucial for providing nutrients, grew well, imparting greater health to the vines. While the May rains were welcome, flowering was disrupted, causing poor fruit set in many blocks. Average summer temperatures at Monte Bello fell below normal; summer fog kept the nights cool.

Unlike the past three Monte Bello vintages, when we faced the threat of rapid sugar development, ripening in 2015 was more gradual, and harvest slower-paced. This gave us time to thoroughly separate each vineyard parcel's high- and low-vigor areas for selective picking. In total, we fermented forty-six small lots, ranging in size from two to nine barrels. All four varieties fermented out beautifully, and produced great quality. In particular, petit verdot came back strong from a challenging 2014, and produced the most opaque wines of 2015. A couple of young-vine parcels are coming up in quality, and have started to show Monte Bello character.



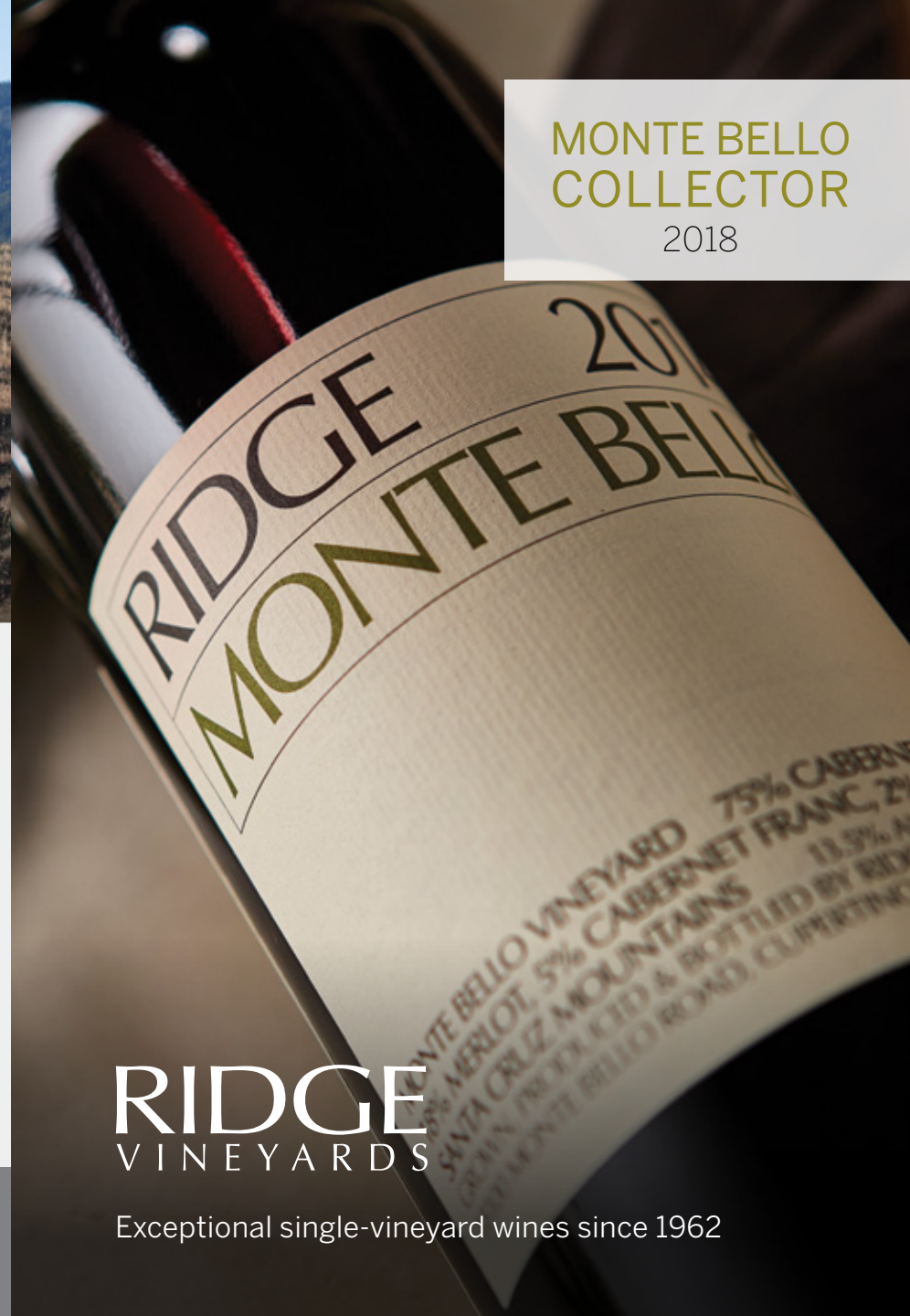
ORDER

SELECTIONS	RETAIL	MEMBER	CASE (12+)
2016 ESTATE CHARDONNAY	\$55.00	\$49.50	\$46.75
2015 ESTATE CABERNET	\$60.00	\$54.00	\$51.00
2014 PERRONE MERLOT	\$75.00	\$67.50	\$63.75
2015 MONTE BELLO	N/A. Public Release Sept. 1 st		

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MONTE BELLO
COLLECTOR
2018



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RIDGE 2016 CHARDONNAY ESTATE

100% CHARDONNAY

Winemaker's Notes: Winter was long and cold. For a second year, crop size was reduced by spring rain at bloom. Cool weather in August slowed ripening and pushed harvest out to mid-September. Barrel fermented, the wines remained on gross lees for ten months through the end of malolactic. Once assembled, it spent another four months in the cellar to fully clarify. Showing intense mountain fruit and elegance, it is enjoyable now. EB (8/17)



RIDGE 2015 CABERNET SAUVIGNON ESTATE

81% CABERNET SAUVIGNON
16% MERLOT
2% PETIT VERDOT
1% CABERNET FRANC

Winemaker's Notes: A dry, warm, winter brought an early start to the growing season but late spring storms severely cut yields. Warm days and nights through summer ripened the grapes for a September harvest. Pump-overs, during fermentation, were reduced to maintain balanced tannins. The most sensuous lots were selected during the assemblage tasting in January. The intense fruit of this fine vintage will support further development over the next fifteen years. EB (3/17)

Optional: 2015 Estate Merlot was not produced

RIDGE 2014 PERRONE MERLOT

100% MERLOT

Winemaker's Notes: Monte Bello's West Block is located within the nineteenth-century estate founded by Osea Perrone. At 2,600' elevation, full exposure to the Pacific Ocean keeps these vines cool, which allows the grapes to ripen slowly. Early bud-break advanced harvest by a month; the grapes were whole-berry fermented for seven days before pressing. Once natural malolactic was underway, the wine was pumped to new barrels, and racked quarterly to clarify by gravity. Enjoyable now, it will develop over the next eight years. EB (6/16)



2015 Futures Purchased in 2016

RIDGE 2015 MONTE BELLO

77% CABERNET SAUVIGNON
11% MERLOT
7% PETIT VERDOT
5% CABERNET FRANC

Winemaker's Notes: A mild winter brought early bud-break. Unfortunately, cold temperatures returned and storms swept through during bloom reducing yields. Summer's warmth hastened ripening for a September harvest. Grapes from twenty-four parcels fermented separately. Once barrel malolactics finished, we made our first selection in January. In April three wonderful lots were added at the second assemblage. This elegant vintage, shows superb intensity. It will develop fully over the next thirty years. EB (3/17)

