

RIDGE

VINEYARDS

Exceptional single-vineyard wines since 1962

Spring 2018



Natural Cork at Ridge

During my time at Ridge, we have managed to further reduce our TCA (Trichloroanisole) occurrence to a minimum by continuing our rigorous selection process and by working closely with suppliers with the highest quality and best control in their processing. We also maintained diversity among our suppliers and cork lots purchased. This allows risk reduction so that any given wine not be entirely affected by a particular cork lot that is contaminated by TCA. Before we purchase, our suppliers will send us representative samples of potential lots for sensory evaluation. They are submitted in two forms, uncoated and coated. (All corks are coated to allow them to smoothly enter the neck of the bottle). We can then soak overnight the two separate cork samples of each lot in our Estate Chardonnay in jars holding ten corks. We typically prepare five lots both uncoated and coated to be evaluated separately. We also pour the chardonnay into a sixth jar to provide a control. The next morning we will pour off the chardonnay and blind taste the extracted flavors of the uncoated cork samples first. Then in a second flight the coated version will be tasted. We compare the quality of the fruit and any non-wine flavors that may appear to the control glass. Those that pass (having best sensory scores for uncoated and coated, and no observed off flavors) proceed to a second soak and tasting on a differ-

ent day. This second evaluation gives us another opportunity to catch TCA that might not have shown up on the first day. Once the corks have been selected and purchased, the supplier will fire brand the Ridge vintage logo and apply the final paraffin/silicone coating. They are put into a temperature and humidity controlled room to condition the corks for use. They are then shipped fresh, in bales of 1,000 corks usually a week or so ahead of bottling. Once delivered, another random cork sample will be collected from each bale and soaked for a final QC/sensory inspection. This final check will assure the corks conform to the quality of the submitted sample and no TCA or off flavors are found. Not every cork can be tested this way, some might have cork taint and be used during bottling. Although we utilize this rigorous screening process, it is still possible to have an incidence of 1.5 - 2% cork taint.

For large format bottles, since 2007 vintage, working with several of the supplier's staff we individually test each large format cork using a method called dry soak to find TCA. This

Continued on page 3

INSIDE:

ON THE MARKET	PAGE 2
SPRING RELEASES	PAGE 3
NATURAL CORK, CONT'D	PAGE 3

On the Market

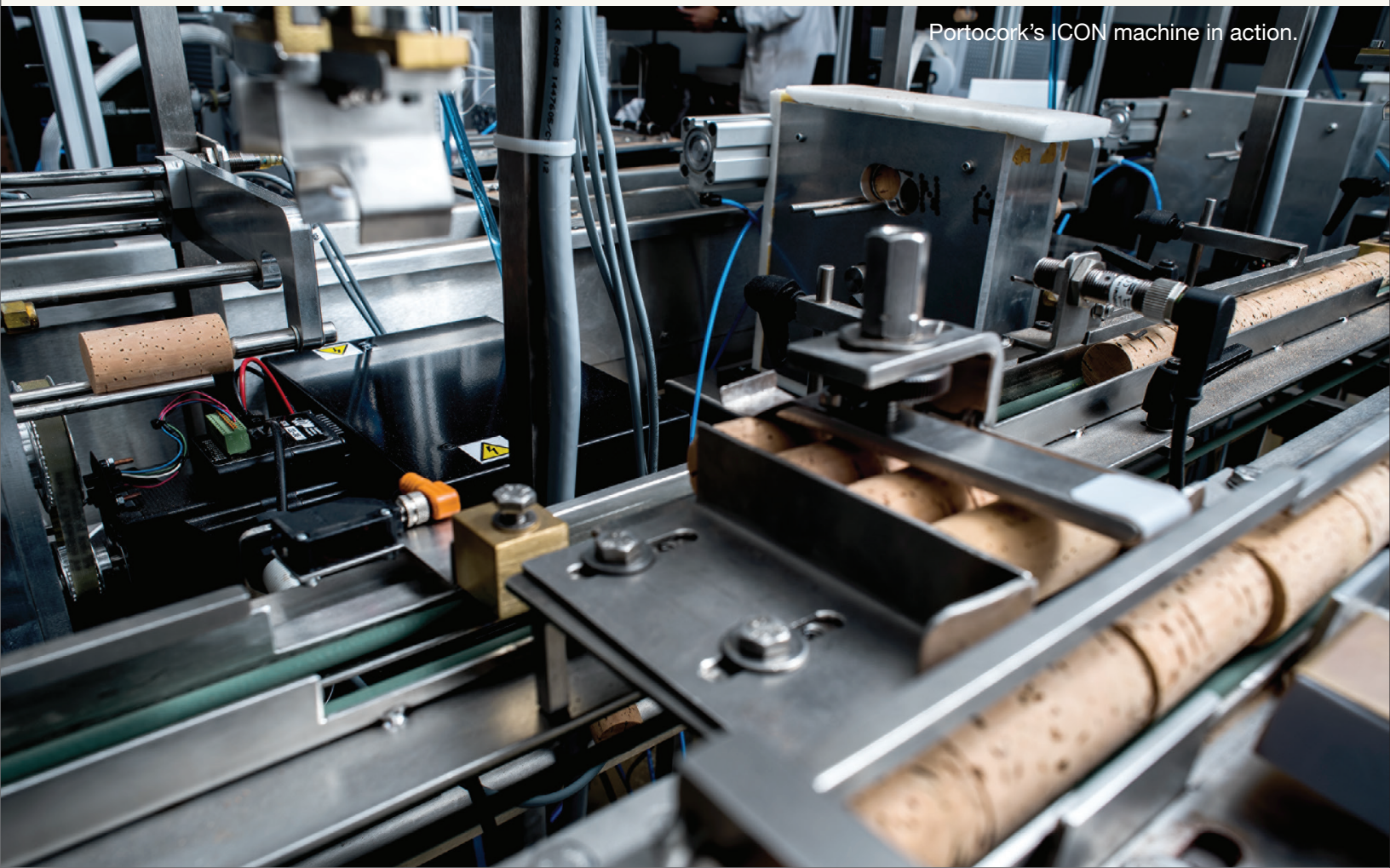
Ridge's First Distributor of the Year

Ridge first started with distribution through the wholesale network in 1968. Although we had already been officially in business for six years, prior to 1968 everything was sold directly at the winery. We started small, first in Chicago, then adding Boston and New York. By the early 1990's our wines were being distributed nationwide in all 50 states. The role of a distributor is vital to a winery's success, increasingly so in the most recent years as we have dealt with shorter vintages and with the Direct to Consumer channel growing so rapidly in the US resulting in tighter available supply. We rely on our distributor partners now more than ever not just to sell our wines but to manage our brand and make sure we are present in the finest restaurants and retail shops across the country and that we stay front of mind with the top sommeliers, restaurateurs, and wine buyers. This is actually much harder to do when you have a limited amount of wine to sell!

In 2017 we decided to implement an annual program to recognize and reward our top performing distribution partner. We set out a short list of highly focused goals and criteria and with that our distributors went to work. We were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and interest in winning this award. It was an extremely tight race between many of our wholesalers and came down to the wire at the end of the year.

We are thrilled to announce that the 2017 Ridge Distributor of the Year is The Estates Group (A Division of Young's Market Company) in Southern California. The Estates Group only began representing Ridge in 2016 but has done a tremendous job since taking over in SoCal. Our sincerest thanks to Marin Blomquist, Gino Margarino, and the entire The Estates Group team on a job well done! We look forward to celebrating this great achievement together and gearing back up for the 2018 program.

—Michael Torino, VP US Wholesale



Portocork's ICON machine in action.

RIDGE 2017 DISTRIBUTOR OF THE YEAR

1st
PLACE



THE ESTATES GROUP™
A DIVISION OF YOUNG'S MARKET COMPANY

Natural Cork, Continued from page 1
has allowed us to kick out tainted corks so that 100% of the ones used are free of cork-taint.

Beginning with the 2015 Monte Bello and with all the wines bottled since the fall of 2017, every cork is now being screened by our suppliers using highly sophisticated gas chromatography and mass-spectroscopy detection. This specialized cork screening equipment is capable of detecting TCA at levels below sensory threshold. The screening process used by our major cork supplier, Portocork, is called "ICON." We use the two top grades of corks, extra select grade for the majority of wines and Flor grade for Monte Bello and all our other wines made from the bordeaux varieties. These corks are then visually sorted and screened by the ICON process. The corks used for Monte Bello receive the highest level of screening and sorting, and therefore cost \$2.00 to \$2.50 apiece. I arrived at Ridge in the mid 90's and a few years later began to manage cork purchasing. I could purchase top quality corks in Deutsche Marks from our German supplier. Given the dollar's strength in those years, our corks were still only costing about \$0.40 apiece. There is a higher cost for corks today, partly because of all the research and innovation by the cork industry to bring back the health of the cork forests and improve washing of the bark, and now individually testing each cork to assure that they are free of cork taint. We are demanding of both our cork and barrel suppliers. Anything that will touch our wines must meet the highest standards. There is so much hard work going into farming our vineyards and making the wines. It has always been a real disappointment for us when a bad cork destroys all of that. Yet, we know how ideal the best natural cork closure is for the complexity the wine develops with aging. With that, we remain fully committed to finding and using only the very finest for our wines.

—Eric Baugher, COO & Monte Bello Winemaker

Spring Releases

2016 Estate Chardonnay

Site: Monte Bello estate vineyard in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Red, decomposing Franciscan rock mixed with clay/loam; fractured limestone sub-soils.



2015 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon

Site: Monte Bello estate vineyard in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Cabernet sauvignon, merlot, petit verdot, and cabernet franc—oldest vines planted in 1949.



2016 Geyserville

Site: Western edge of Alexander Valley, Sonoma County. Zinfandel, petite sirah, carignane—oldest vines planted in 1891.



2016 East Bench

Site: On top of the bench that separates Dry Creek and Alexander Valley appellations, north of Healdsburg, Sonoma County.



2016 Paso Robles

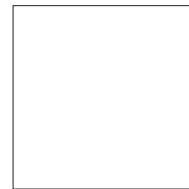
Site: Three miles south of Paso Robles on the east side of Highway 101. Zinfandel planted in 1922.





RIDGE VINEYARDS

PO Box 1810
Cupertino, CA 95015



91-94 Points

The 2016 Zinfandel Geyserville is bright, lifted and decidedly medium in body. The flavors are distinctly red toned and the acids are bright. Sweet red cherry, red plum, mint and floral notes add nuance, but it is the wine's overall energy that really makes an impression. Even at this early stage, the 2016 Geyserville is a knock-out. —Antonio Galloni, August 2017

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explore all things wine

www.ridgewine.com/wholesale



Virtual Tasting



Join Us

**Friday, April 13 at
10am PDT**

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

More information:

[www.ridgewine.com/
about/news/spring-
2018-virtual-tasting](http://www.ridgewine.com/about/news/spring-2018-virtual-tasting)



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