

RIDGE 2017 CHARDONNAY ESTATE

100% CHARDONNAY MONTE BELLO ESTATE VINEYARD
SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS 14.2% ALCOHOL BY VOLUME

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

VINTAGE

Rainfall: 44.2 inches (above normal)

Bloom: Late May

Weather: A wet winter gave Monte Bello over 44" of rain, well above normal. A cool spring, which effected sets and warm spells in summer pushed vines along. Labor Day heat wave ripened the grapes nicely. Harvest started early September and finished quickly.

Harvest Dates: 30 August - 13 September

Grapes: Average Brix 22.9°

WINEMAKING

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

Selection: Nine of the twelve Estate Chardonnay parcels.

Barrels: 93% air-dried american oak, 7% french oak; 10% new, 40% one and two years old, 24% three and four years old and 26% five to nine years old.

Aging: Fourteen months.

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 (25 ppm initially to barrels, 62 ppm over the course of aging). In keeping with our philosophy of minimal intervention, this is the sum of our actions.



2017 Estate Chardonnay, bottled 12/18
A cold winter delayed bud-break. Late spring rain disrupted bloom, reducing yields by a quarter. Summer was warm at times, but mostly foggy and cool. This slowed ripening which produced greater flavor and firmer acidity. We picked nine parcels in early September, and barrel fermented each separately. The most elegant, that showed the finest fruit, were selected for this superb chardonnay. It can be enjoyed now. EB (8/18)



SITE

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: 15.4 acres, planted 1982 - 1998.

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

Yields: 3.0 tons per acre

RIDGE
VINEYARDS

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