

New Wine Spotlight: Grenache Blanc

What white wines do you make? I have been asked this question more times than I can remember — almost every time I taste through our wines with a sommelier. Until now, the answer has been one word: chardonnay. While our Estate Chardonnay has always been a big hit and often sells out, we have wanted to feature another white wine in our portfolio. However, we knew it couldn't be just any white wine. We wanted to produce something different, something expressive, a wine that fit our ethos and would complement the other wines we produce.

I am beyond excited to announce that we have added a white southern rhône blend from Paso Robles as our newest national release. The blend consists of 75% grenache blanc, 15% picpoul, and 10% roussanne. At its core, grenache blanc contributes a lush mouthfeel with a base of green apple and spice, picpoul adds bright acidity and minerality, and rousanne contributes structure and texture.

The Adelaida Vineyard, located in the Adelaida district of Paso Robles, is home to twenty-year-old vines planted in a soil of fractured limestone, shale, and sandstone. Once harvested, the grapes were brought to our Monte Bello winery where Eric Baugher made the wine. Production consisted of a whole-cluster press with 44% of fermentation occurring in stainless steel tanks and the balance fermented in mostly neutral barrels. About 12% of the final wine saw new oak. The resulting wine is bright and fresh, with great food pairing potential, and is an excellent by-the-glass option. We really enjoyed making this wine and hope you get the chance to taste it soon.

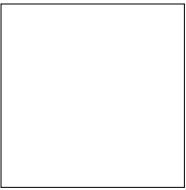
— Michael Torino, Vice President, US Wholesale



Top: Harvesting grenache blanc
Bottom: 2018 Grenache Blanc



RIDGE
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JOIN US

Virtual Tasting

Friday, September 13, 2019
10 a.m. PDT

Join us as our winemakers take you through our fall release wines.

More information:
ridgewine.com/fall-2019-virtual-tasting



96 – 98+ Points
William Kelley, Wine Advocate

95 – 98 Points
Antonio Galloni, Vinous Media

97 Points
Jeb Dunnuck, JebDunnuck.com

96 Points
James Molesworth, Wine Spectator

An Interview with David Gates

Recently, I had the pleasure of sitting with David Gates, Senior Vice President of Vineyard Operations at Ridge Vineyards. David holds an advanced degree in Viticulture from UC Davis, is a founding member of the Historic Vineyard Society, and has been with Ridge for nearly 30 years. In the face of such an accomplished career, his humility and enthusiasm for teaching others were what struck me most.

We sat at a picnic table at Monte Bello on a warm morning, under the shade of an olive tree, and as I asked my first questions, I immediately recognized his passion for his trade. His smile never left his face during our entire conversation.

David grew up on a 160-acre farm in Corcoran, Minnesota. The middle of six children, he was raised helping his parents farm the land where they grew corn and soy beans. David had the green thumb of the family and eventually learned to fix just about anything on the farm. “There is a mindset around farming — you have to be able to do whatever it takes to get things done.” His mother — his biggest influence — always taught him a good work ethic and that you “shouldn’t just settle.”

Higher education provided David with the opportunity to get “as far away from Minnesota winters” as he could. He started out at UC San Diego in Engineering, and transferred to UC Davis after his second year. It was a professor at Davis who would spark his passion for Viticulture, and once David realized he could make a living out of it, he never looked back.

When I asked David to tell me his story at Ridge, he described its beginning as nothing short of “serendipitous.”

In the late 1980s, before the thought of working with Ridge had even entered his mind, David and his wife, Donna, were living in Napa. Donna had recently been accepted to a PhD program at Stanford, from which David was prepared to drive back and forth each day.

In 1989, David had heard from a friend that Ridge was looking for a full-time vineyard manager. So, as serendipity would have it, he applied for the position. After a successful first interview, he was asked to return for a second meeting with Wilma Sturrock and Paul Draper which he recalls as a “fun interview.”

On the day of the interview, David recalled, “in typical Ridge fashion, one of the employees was having a birthday celebration, so I do this interview with the President and the CEO and then all of a sudden, I’m thrown into having lunch

and a big birthday party with everybody. That was fun!” After accepting the position, David shared his initial plan to stay in the area for three to four years, at which point he and Donna would head back to Napa — “well it’s been more than that.”

So I had to ask David what took him from thinking that they would be here for only three or four years to where they are now. He explained:

“There is a certain connection that you can have with Ridge; there are a lot of “lifers” here, a lot of people who have been here for a long time. There is a culture — basically it’s Paul — that has been encouraged and embraced — and, ... it goes all the way back to the hippie culture from the late 1950s and early ‘60s when Ridge was just getting started. It’s a group dynamic — Paul is a master at that. He surrounds himself with people who have that same kind of management style. If you stick, you stick.”

And David has certainly “stuck.” Since 1989, he has worked to perpetuate the humanistic culture Paul started, and for the last nine years, has passed it on to Will Thomas and Kyle Theriot, the Directors of Vineyard Operations at Lytton Springs and Monte Bello.

It’s hard to sum up a man who has accomplished so much, but from my vantage point, he is someone who cares deeply for the land and preserving its history, has a passion for woodworking and creating things with his hands, hopes to never stop learning and discovering new things about little known grape varietals, and wants to continue to teach and inspire.

Once harvest rolls around, you can be sure that David is getting up early each morning, starting the day with a stretch and a triple cappuccino because “if the stretching doesn’t wake me up, that does.”

— Murphy Young, Sales and Marketing Coordinator

“There is a mindset around farming — you have to be able to do whatever it takes to get things done.”



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It Starts in the Vineyard:
An Interview with David Gates
ridgewine.com/about/news/interview-with-david-gates

RIDGE 2019

Fall Releases

“The 2016 Monte Bello is stunningly beautiful. Medium in body, gracious and understated...built on total finesse. All the elements are simply in the right place.”

— Antonio Galloni, *Vinous Media*

Left: David Gates

Below: David working with the vines



2017 Lytton Springs

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

2016 Monte Bello

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



2017 Paganini Ranch Zinfandel

Site: Located in Sonoma Valley. Zinfandel, interplanted with minor amounts of petite sirah, carignane and alicante — oldest vines planted in 1896.

2017 Ponzo Zinfandel

Site: In Russian River Valley, south of Healdsburg on Old Redwood Highway. Mixed zinfandel, petite sirah — planted in 1952.

2017 Lytton Estate Petite Sirah

Site: The oldest petite sirah vines on our Lytton Estate were planted in 1901 and the youngest in 2008. Gravelly clay loam soils.