

10 Years of Ingredient Labeling

The 2021 harvest will mark the 10th anniversary of ingredient labeling at Ridge Vineyards. Since we began with the 2011 East Bench label, it has always been one of the most engaging parts of any conversation we have when tasting and discussing our wines with members of the trade. As we approach this decade milestone, we sat down with Ridge Vineyards' Chairman and longtime winemaker Paul Draper to look back at our decision to move to ingredient labeling. —Michael Torino, Senior Vice President, Global Sales

Ridge was one of the first California wineries to list every ingredient used in making a wine on all its labels. This year we celebrate sixty years of limiting our wines to what we refer to as pre-industrial ingredients. Fifty years ago, after making my first four vintages of Monte Bello ('69, '70, '71, '72) and

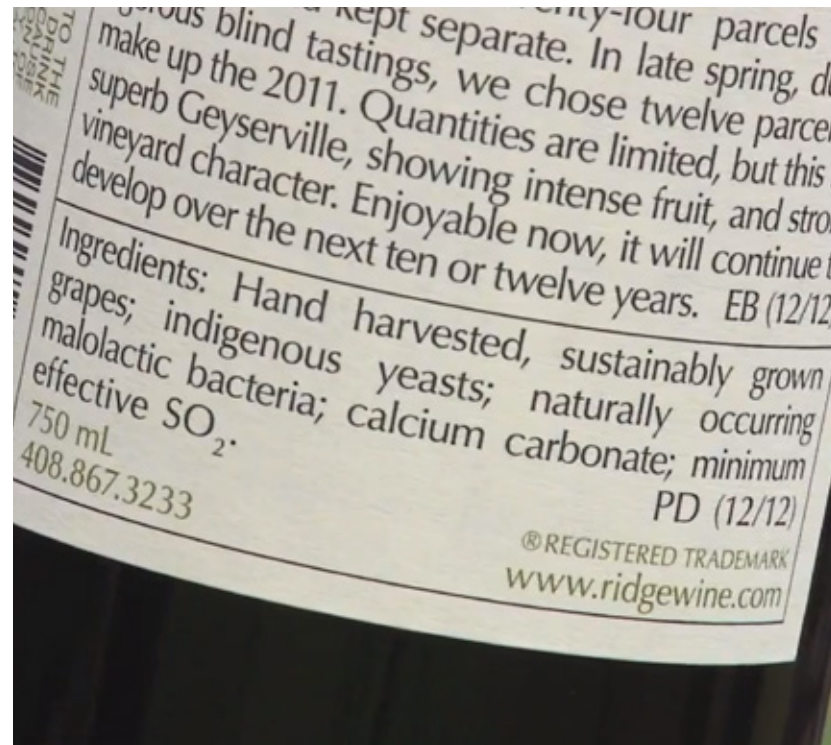
tasting again the superb '62 and '64 made by the founding partners, I thought we should do something to show how few ingredients are needed to make truly fine wine. I asked the federal authority that approves wine labels if we could voluntarily include a list of ingredients. They answered rather abruptly, "You cannot do it because it is not required. No one else does it, and it would be confusing to consumers." Then in 2008, a neighbor in the Santa Cruz Mountains put out, with federal approval, several wines with a number of ingredients listed on the labels. I proposed that we do the same, especially because today there are many more chemical additives available that are often used in making wine and our customers should be aware of that. There was some initial concern as to how it would be accepted or even understood, but we decided to go ahead. With the vintage of 2011, we began to list them on our labels, and the response was overwhelmingly positive.

—Paul Draper, Chairman, Ridge Vineyards

For Paul's entire retrospective on our ingredient labeling philosophy, please scan the QR code below.

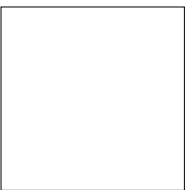


Scan to View Full Retrospective
Ingredient Labeling: A Look Back
by Paul Draper



FALL 2021

RIDGE VINEYARDS
PO Box 1810 | Cupertino, CA 95015



RIDGE VINEYARDS
GREEN EMBLEM

Robert Parker Wine Advocate announced the launch of the Robert Parker Green Emblem recognizing extraordinary sustainable efforts in wine production. Ridge is one of 24 wineries from around the world that achieved the recognition in the inaugural 2021 list.

"Our Green Emblem is given in recognition of the most extraordinary cases of sustainable efforts in our wine industry. The distinction is awarded to producers/wineries that have achieved outstanding levels of sustainability. It is very rarely given out, and only after careful consideration of firsthand reviewer knowledge."
— Robert Parker Wine Advocate



JOIN US

Virtual Tasting

Friday, September 17, 2021
10 a.m. PDT

Join us as David Gates, Senior VP of Vineyard Operations, John Olney, Head Winemaker & COO, David Amadia, President, and Paul Draper, Chairman of the Board, take you through our fall release wines.

More information:
ridgewine.com/fall-2021-virtual-tasting

ridgewine.com/trade

Vineyard Soil

Wine grapes can grow in a variety of soils as long as those soils are well-drained. The best grapes grow in soils that are not too rich and without mineral or salt toxicities. The soils at Monte Bello and Lytton Springs reflect these tenets: each is an integral and essential part of the soul of these wines.

The soils at Monte Bello are unique to California. This limestone and greenstone mélange formed 160–140 million years ago as a seamount on the Farallon tectonic plate and was subsequently (and violently!) adhered to the North American plate 80–65 million years ago. This mix lifted above the San Francisco Bay to form Monte Bello Ridge through seismic upheaval from the adjacent San Andreas Fault. Over the millennia, weathering by sunlight and rainfall has given us the soils that support the vines that provide us Monte Bello. The limestone helps to sweeten the soil, buffering the effects of acidic rain and helping the grapes retain their acidity. The fractured rocks allow for good drainage, and vine roots penetrate deep into the rock, searching for water. Weathering of these rocks yields just enough clay and loam for plant life.

Cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, and merlot excel in the limestone-influenced soils throughout all four ranches at Monte Bello, especially in more exposed sites where the soil is more weathered. These lean soils temper the vigor of cabernet sauvignon, producing intense and structured wines. In swales and areas of accumulation where the soil is deeper, chardonnay and petite verdot do well, especially where there is limestone close to the surface.

There are five soil types at Lytton Springs, which isn't unusual in North Coast vineyards. The low hills surrounding our Lytton Springs winery are the oldest, formed as sediment approximately 80 million years ago. These soils are loamy clay, with fractured rock not far from the surface. The soils in the flats next to the winery are recent alluvium—gravelly clay loam deposited one million or so years ago by the meandering Russian River. These soils are very well-drained, with the water table close to the surface in the spring. The vine roots follow this water deeper into the soil as it recedes, keeping the vines healthy and happy for most years. At Lytton Estate West, we have three more soils, two with a higher clay percentage. These soils are on the benchland that separates Lytton Springs from Dry Creek proper. They are sedimentary and may be 40 million years old. The higher clay content and lower pH of these soils lead to more compact, less vigorous vines. The other soil is similar to the gravelly soils by the winery but with a different mineral content (soil classification is complicated!).

Zinfandel, grenache, mataro, and carignane love the deep, well-drained gravelly soils in the flats. In the hills with their higher clay content and thinner soils, petite sirah, its parent syrah, and grenache grow well. In areas where the soil has accumulated in the hills, zinfandel can produce a rich, intense wine.



Soils are the life of the vineyard. There is so much that we don't know about the almost infinite variety of life under our feet. Our goal as custodians of the precious and unique soils we farm is to keep the soil healthy and productive by continually building topsoil to counterbalance the natural effects of erosion. We do this by utilizing cover crops to add nitrogen and organic matter, adding compost made from our fermented pomace and stems, and practicing minimal tillage or no-till to protect the soil from erosion. We monitor our soil health by looking at soil mineral nutrition, organic matter, and soil structure. But, of course, the best measurement of the health of our soils is the wine made from the grapes grown on them. We hope that you enjoy these wines.

—David Gates, Senior Vice President, Vineyard Operations



Scan to Find Out More
Vineyard Soils and Their Importance
ridgewine.com/news/vineyard-soils-their-importance

“The best grapes grow in soils that are not too rich and without mineral or salt toxicities. The soils at Monte Bello and Lytton Springs reflect these tenets: each is an integral and essential part of the soul of these wines.”



RIDGE 2021

Fall Releases

“Apart from their commitment to organic farming and sustainable winemaking, what is perhaps most striking about Ridge is transparency. They began including ingredient lists on labels in 2011, a move only a few others have made in the decade since.”

— Robert Parker
Wine Advocate

Below left: Monte Bello Vineyard vines
Above left: Lytton Springs Vineyard
Below: Soil in Monte Bello Vineyard



2020 Grenache Blanc

Site: Located in Paso Robles, Adelaida District. The vines are twenty years old; planted in fractured limestone soils, including shale and sandstone.

2019 Lytton Springs

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



2019 Pagan Ranch Zinfandel

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



2018 Monte Bello

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