

RIDGE 2021

ESTATE

CHARDONNAY

100% CHARDONNAY MONTE BELLO ESTATE VINEYARD
 SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS 13.7% 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: 14" (30% of normal)

Bloom: Early May

Weather: A dry winter and spring stressed the vines, limiting yields and concentrating flavors. Harvest was early, accelerated by a heat wave in early September. For the first time in our 50+ year history we finished our Monte Bello harvest before Lytton Springs.

Harvest Dates: 26 August to 16 September

Grapes: Average Brix 22.5°

WINEMAKING & TECHNICAL DATA

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

Barrels: 60% air-dried American oak, 40% French oak; 24% new, 5% one-year-old, and 71% two- to three-year-old.

Aging: Fifteen months

pH: 3.36

TA: 6.91 g/L

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 (35 ppm at crush, 82.7 ppm over the course of aging); pad filtered at bottling. In keeping with our philosophy of minimal intervention, this is the sum of our actions.

RIDGE
 VINEYARDS

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Exceptional single-vineyard wines since 1962.

2021 Estate Chardonnay, bottled Jan '23
 Rainfall was scarce through the winter months with less than 15 inches of rain. Spring and summer temperatures allowed for slow and even ripening. Harvest began in late August; we picked steadily over the next three weeks. Whole cluster pressed, barrel fermented and sur lees aged for nine months, this complex, elegant chardonnay will be enjoyable over the next six years.
 TG (11/22)



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: 19.6 acres, planted 1982 - 1998.

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

Yields: Just over 1 ton per acre

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