

RIDGE 2022

ESTATE

CHARDONNAY

100% CHARDONNAY MONTE BELLO ESTATE VINEYARD
 SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS 14.3% 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: 28" (below average)

Bloom: Late May

Weather: 2022 was another drought year, with just enough Spring rains to help the vines through the season. Two heat spells, one in late July and the other in late August, pushed the vines to an early harvest.

Harvest Dates: 29 August to 12 September

Grapes: Average Brix 24.1°

WINEMAKING & TECHNICAL DATA

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

Barrels: 15% new of which 80% American and 20% French oak was used, 85% older American; one- to four-year-old.

Aging: Fifteen months

pH: 3.36

TA: 6.61 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, 111 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.

2022 Estate Chardonnay, bottled 1/2024
 A dry, warm growing season resulted in reduced yields with small berries and concentrated flavors. We picked nine parcels over a two-week period from late August to early September. The grapes were pressed as whole clusters and barrel fermented as separate lots. The next summer, after malolactics finished, they were combined for this fine chardonnay. It will be most enjoyable over the next five to six years.
 TG (10/23)



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: 2 tons per acre

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