

Ridge Vineyards

Ridge Vineyards Estate Chardonnay showcases the winery's commitment to producing refined and complex Chardonnay from the renowned Monte Bello Estate.

RIDGE
VINEYARDS



Estate Chardonnay 2021

California, USA

Region and Vineyards

Ridge Vineyards is located on **Monte Bello Ridge** in the **Santa Cruz Mountains**, a distinct appellation separating the North Coast from the Central Coast. This region benefits from a unique microclimate, characterized by **cool temperatures** and **fractured limestone soils**, which are ideal for producing high-quality Chardonnay. The vineyards are situated at elevations ranging from **426 to 610 meters**, overlooking San Francisco.

The Monte Bello Ridge is known for its **fractured limestone soils** overlaid with decomposing Franciscan green stone mixed with clay and loam. These soils contribute to the distinctive minerality and complexity of the wine. The vines, spanning **7.9 hectares** and planted between **1982 and 1998**, are head-trained and cane-pruned, utilizing a vertical trellis and vertical shoot positioning system. With yields of just over **1.1 tonne per hectare**, the focus is on quality over quantity.

Winemaking

Estate Chardonnay is crafted with meticulous attention to detail. The grapes are **hand-harvested** from the Monte Bello vineyard and undergo **whole-cluster pressing**. Fermentation is carried out in barrels, with both primary and secondary (malolactic) fermentations occurring naturally. The wine is aged for **fifteen months** in a combination of **60% air-dried American oak** and **40% French oak**, with 24% new barrels, 5% one-year-old, and 71% two- to three-year-old barrels.

The winemaking process emphasizes minimal intervention, with the wine being fermented on native yeasts and undergoing full malolactic fermentation on naturally occurring bacteria. The oak influence from barrel aging and minimal effective sulfur use (35 mg/L at crush, 82.7 mg/L over aging) contribute to the wine's complexity and depth. The wine is **pad filtered** at bottling to ensure clarity.

Alcohol :14,50 %

Composition: 100% Chardonnay



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Tasting Notes

- **Color:** pale golden hue with a bright clarity.
- **Aroma:** On the nose, it offers aromas of ripe apple, pear, and a hint of citrus zest, intertwined with subtle oak and mineral undertones.
- **Palate:** The palate is elegant and complex, with flavors of green apple, lemon curd, and white peach complemented by toasty oak and a creamy texture from the lees aging. The acidity is vibrant, providing a refreshing balance to the rich, full-bodied profile. The finish is long and mineral-driven, showcasing the wine's exceptional terroir.

Did you know?

Ridge Vineyards first produced Chardonnay in 1962 from vines planted in the late 1940s on the Monte Bello estate. Although production was initially limited, several great vintages highlighted the potential of this cool-climate site. The Ridge Estate Chardonnay designation began in 2009 to distinguish this specific terroir-driven wine from other regional offerings.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Seafood Risotto:** The creamy texture and bright acidity of the Chardonnay complement the richness of a seafood risotto, enhancing the flavors of shrimp, scallops, and mussels.
- **Roast Chicken:** A classic pairing, the wine's oak and citrus notes elevate the savory and herbaceous flavors of a roasted chicken with thyme and lemon.
- **Grilled Salmon:** The wine's acidity and minerality balance the richness of grilled salmon, creating a harmonious blend of flavors.
- **Aged Gouda:** The creamy texture and subtle oak nuances pair beautifully with the nutty, caramel notes of aged Gouda cheese.



Wine Spectator (WS) : 94 Points (2021)

Rich and toasty up front, with grilled orange, toasted cumin, nectarine and honeycomb notes, plus dried ginger and cardamom. Shows a touch of salted toffee to complement peach preserves, dried pineapple and Honeycrisp apple. Juicy finish. Drink now.



Robert Parker (RP) : 92 Points (2021)

The 2021 Chardonnay Estate Monte Bello Vineyard was aged in 60% American and 40% French oak for 15 months. The nose is spry and lively, with matchstick, lemon curd and white flower aromas. The palate combines a polished richness with refreshing zest, concluding with a clean finish and decent length. This is a floral and vibrant introductory expression of the Monte Bello site.





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Jeb Dunnuck (JD) : 94 Points (2020)

Coming from the estate vineyard on the eastern side of the Santa Cruz Mountains, the 2020 Chardonnay Estate has a beautiful nose of honeyed lemon blossom, crushed stone, toasty oak, and a touch of reductive -like minerality. This carries to a brilliantly balanced, medium-bodied Chardonnay with a round, layered mouthfeel, good acidity, and a focused style that should age gracefully for 7-8 years, if not longer (JD). (8/2022)



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