

# Ridge Vineyards

A benchmark of California Cabernet Sauvignon, the 2021 Monte Bello displays an intricate balance of rich concentration, elegance, and minerality, ensuring exceptional aging potential for the next 20 to 25 years.

RIDGE  
VINEYARDS

## Monte Bello 2021

California, USA

### Region and Vineyards

Monte Bello Vineyard is perched high in the **Santa Cruz Mountains**, a unique appellation that stands apart from both the **North Coast and Central Coast** of California. Overlooking San Francisco Bay to the north and the Pacific Ocean to the west, the vineyard benefits from a **cool maritime influence**, ensuring a long growing season and balanced ripening.

The site ranges in elevation from **400 to 840 meters**, with soils composed of **fractured limestone and decomposed Franciscan greenstone mixed with clay and loam**. These well-draining, mineral-rich soils contribute to Monte Bello's **signature structure, freshness, and age-worthy character**. Cabernet Sauvignon vines, originally planted in **1949**, dominate the vineyard, with additional plantings of **Merlot, Petit Verdot, and Cabernet Franc**, reinforcing complexity and depth. The 2021 vintage saw **low rainfall (355 mm) and drought conditions**, naturally reducing yields and intensifying the concentration of flavors in the fruit.

### Winemaking

Grapes were **hand-harvested and estate-grown**, reflecting Ridge's commitment to sustainable and minimal-intervention winemaking. After **destemming**, the fruit underwent **100% whole-berry fermentation with native yeasts**, allowing for a pure expression of terroir. Full malolactic fermentation occurred naturally, contributing to the wine's seamless texture and depth.

Aging took place over **19 months in 100% new oak**, with **92% American oak and 8% French oak**, lending subtle spice, structure, and integration. This careful élevage ensures Monte Bello retains **its hallmark balance of power and finesse**. Bottled in **June 2023**, the wine was produced with **minimal sulfur and gentle filtration**, adhering to Ridge's philosophy of **preserving the integrity of the vineyard in the bottle**.

100  
James  
Suckling



Alcohol :13,50 %

Composition: 82% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Merlot, 8% Petit Verdot, 1% Cabernet Franc



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## Monte Bello 2021

### Tasting Notes

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- **Color:** Deep, inky ruby with hints of garnet, reflecting its depth and intensity.
- **Aroma:** Expressive and layered, unveiling cassis, blackberry, and dark cherry, intertwined with graphite, crushed rock, cedar, and tobacco leaf, framed by refined oak spice.
- **Palate:** A commanding structure with dense black fruit, vibrant acidity, and firm, finely-grained tannins. Notes of plum, dark chocolate, anise, and cigar box emerge, leading to a long, mineral-driven finish. The depth and precision promise two to three decades of graceful evolution.

### Did you know?

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Monte Bello was first planted in **1886**, but Prohibition led to its decline until Ridge Vineyards revived the estate in **1962** with its first Monte Bello vintage. The vineyard's fractured limestone soils are **geologically similar to Bordeaux's Right Bank**, influencing the wine's **signature minerality and age-worthiness**. Unlike Napa's warmer climate, Monte Bello benefits from a **cooler, high-altitude environment**, resulting in a more **classically structured and restrained Cabernet Sauvignon**, often drawing comparisons to **top-tier Bordeaux crus**.

### Wine Pairing Ideas

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- **Dry-aged ribeye with black truffle butter** – The wine's tannic structure and dark fruit intensity complement the richness and umami depth of the steak.
- **Rack of lamb with rosemary and thyme** – The herbaceous notes in the dish echo the wine's subtle savory nuances, enhancing its complexity.
- **Wild mushroom risotto with aged Parmesan** – The wine's acidity cuts through the creaminess, while its earthiness mirrors the depth of the mushrooms.
- **Comté or aged Gouda cheese** – The nutty, caramelized flavors of these cheeses provide a perfect counterpoint to Monte Bello's structured fruit and minerality.



#### James Suckling (JS) : **100 Points** (2021)

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*Tightly wound at this stage, the wine is massively concentrated, taut, yet trim and medium-bodied. Aged in 100% new oak, predominantly American, it offers espresso, blackberry, black cherry and vanilla bean flavors with a linear intensity and drive. Known to age and improve for several decades, this is one of California's most collectible cabs and from a classic, age-worthy vintage. Best from 2031.*



## Monte Bello 2021



**Decanter (DCT) : 98 Points (2021)**

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*It's a journey. This wine offers high mountain pine bough, petrichor, and floral predominance of violet, high mountain lavender, and scrub. The palate is crisp and taut, with bright berries, blood orange and savoury mint. A true mountain wine with alpine herbs and wildflowers that lift deep fruit tones of blackberries, figs and muddled mint leaves. Leather, crushed stone and smoked cedar plank come together in America's most singular and iconic Cabernet Sauvignon.*



**Wine Enthusiast (WE) : 97 Points (2021)**

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*This ageworthy classic is a blend of 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Merlot and 5% Petit Verdot this vintage. The nose offers focused aromas of blackberry, toasted herb and light caramel with a hint of cocoa dust. The firm, leathery palate feels like it will last forever, as waves of berry, herb, pepper, clove and pencil shavings flow on. Drink now-2045. Cellar Selection*

