

Ridge Vineyards Tasting



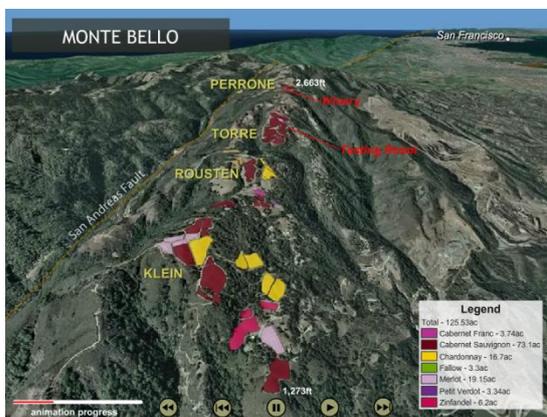
Date : Tuesday, 9th June 2015
Time : 6:30pm to 8:00pm
Venue : 21/F Hong Kong Wine Vault (Tin Wan)
No. of Attendees : 60
Wines Tasted : Ridge Lytton Springs Zinfandel 2012
Ridge Lytton Springs Zinfandel 2001
Ridge Geyserville Zinfandel 2012
Ridge Geyserville Zinfandel 2001
Ridge Monte Bello Cabernet Sauvignon 2011
Ridge Monte Bello Cabernet Sauvignon 1995
Ridge Monte Bello Chardonnay 2012
Ridge Monte Bello Chardonnay 2010

Without question, Ridge consistently produces some of the finest wines in California. They have been doing it for over 50 years and have a record that is unmatched by anyone in the state.

The history of Ridge Vineyards begins in 1885, when Osea Perrone, a doctor who became a prominent member of San Francisco's Italian community,



bought 180 acres near the top of Monte Bello Ridge. He terraced the slopes and planted vineyards; using native limestone, he constructed the Monte Bello Winery, producing the first vintage under that name in 1892. This unique cellar, built into the mountainside on three levels, is Ridge's production facility.



At 2,600 feet of altitude, Monte Bello is surrounded by the "upper vineyard." In the 1940s, William Short, a theologian, bought the abandoned winery and vineyard just below the Perrone property; he replanted several parcels to Cabernet Sauvignon in the late 1940s. From these vines – now the "middle vineyard" – new owners Dave Bennion

and his three partners, all Stanford Research Institute engineers, made a quarter-barrel of "Estate" Cabernet in 1959. That Monte Bello Cabernet was among California's finest wines of the era. Its quality and distinctive character, and the wines produced from these same vines in 1960 and 1961 (the grapes were sold to other wineries), convinced the partners to re-bond the winery in time for the 1962 vintage, Ridge's first commercial vintage.

Cabernet and Zinfandel account for most of the production; Syrah, Grenache, Carignane, and Petite Sirah constitute a small percentage. Known primarily for its red wines, Ridge has also made limited amounts of chardonnay since 1962. Lytton Springs, in Sonoma County, became part of the Ridge estate in 1991. A quarter century's experience with this vineyard had convinced us that it was an exceptional piece of ground.

In 1969, Paul Draper joined the partnership. A Stanford graduate in philosophy, recently returned from setting up a winery in Chile's coast range, Paul was a practical

winemaker, not an enologist. His knowledge of fine wines and traditional methods complemented the straightforward “hands off” approach pioneered at Ridge. Under his guidance, the old Perrone winery (acquired the previous year) was restored; the finest vineyard lands leased or purchased, and the consistent quality and international reputation of the wines established.

In 1976, Steven Spurrier, an Englishman running a wine shop and wine school in Paris, organized a tasting of six top California cabernets and chardonnays to celebrate the American Bicentennial. He added four Bordeaux wines and four white Burgundies to act as markers against which to evaluate the Californians. The judges were among the best tasters in France, and, to everyone's surprise, chose a California wine over the French for both the red and white flights, and Ridge came in 5th out of 10 wines in the blind tasting. The tasting became known as the Judgment of Paris, and ended an era in which it was thought that fine wine came only from Europe.

Results 1976 of Red wines

- 1) Stag's Leap Wine Cellars 1973
- 2) Chateau Mouton-Rothschild 1970
- 3) Chateau Montrose 1970
- 4) Chateau Haut-Brion 1970
- 5) Ridge Vineyards Monte Bello 1971
- 6) Chateau Leoville Las Cases 1971
- 7) Heitz Martha's Vineyard 1970
- 8) Clos Du Val Winery 1972
- 9) Mayacamas Vineyards 1971
- 10) Freemark Abbey Winery 1969

After stunning the world by their triumph in the **1976 Judgment of Paris tasting**, Ridge Vineyards shot to fame and gained cult status almost overnight.

Ridge Monte Bello Chardonnay 2010

It exhibits a more vibrant nose of citrus blossoms, white peaches, pear and lemon zest. Crisp acidity gives the wine an attractive, elegant, textured and long refreshing finish!

Ridge Monte Bello Chardonnay 2012

It shows the musky aromas of vanilla, hazelnut and citrus on the nose. Mineral, nutty, firm acid on the palate, nicely balance and some oaky flavors at the end taste.

Ridge Geyserville Zinfandel 2012

A blend of 71% Zinfandel, 19% Carignane, 7% Petite Sirah, 2% mataró (mourvèdre) and 1% Alicante Bouschet. It displays a dark/ruby color, loads of berry fruit intermixed with licorice, black cherry, earthy and pepper. Good freshness and sensuous finish!

Ridge Lytton Springs Zinfandel 2012

A blend of 70% Zinfandel, 21% Petite Sirah, 6% Carignane and 3% mataró (mourvèdre). It appears layers of dark red fruit, complex flavors of raspberry, licorice and spicy. Good concentration, silky tannin and well balanced finish.

Ridge Geyserville Zinfandel 2001

A blend of 74% Zinfandel, 18% Carignane and 8% Petite Sirah. Deep ruby/purple color followed by intense aromas of black cherry, pepper and oak. Rich, dense, full-bodied and layered textures on the finish. This is an exceptional example of this renowned cuvee!

Ridge Lytton Springs Zinfandel 2001

A blend of 76% Zinfandel, 17% Petite Sirah and 7% Carignane. It emerges lots of dried red fruits, spicy and licorice on the nose. Plums, earthy and cedar on the palate, ripe tannins that are well-integrated and long complex finish. Drink now.

Ridge Monte Bello Cabernet Sauvignon 2011

A blend of 88% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot and 4% Cabernet Franc. It shows the musky aromas of Cherries, plums, herbs and smoky on the nose. Beautifully textured, good concentration and finesse followed by oak flavors. This good wine is also one to keep an eye on!

Ridge Monte Bello Cabernet Sauvignon 1995

A blend of 69% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Merlot, 10% Petit Verdot and 3% Cabernet Franc. It offers up a succession of delicate aromas of black fruits, licorice, spicy and cedar. Full-bodied, sweet, elegant and good textures and slightly spicy at the end tastes. Delicious, brilliant finish!



John Olney (left), the Vice President and Winemaker at Lytton Springs, to present their premium wines to us

Ridge's ethos is simple: 100% dedication in the vineyards to grow the most concentrated and flavorsome grapes followed by 100% dedication in the winery with minimum intervention to draw all the fruit's natural richness into the wine. At Ridge, they are committed to sustainability, and to organic certification of the vineyards. Sustainable agriculture can be summarized as a farming system that is sensitive to the environment, responsible to the community, and economically feasible to implement and maintain.

On May 24, 2006, A 30th Anniversary re-tasting of the Judgment of Paris was organized by Steven Spurrier - this time with simultaneous tastings in London at Berry Bros. & Rudd and in Napa at Copia. Paralleling the 1976 event, nine expert tasters at each location judged the original red wines, now over thirty years old. The winning wine in both the US and UK was the Ridge Monte Bello 1971. In the combined results, it was in a class by itself - eighteen points ahead of the second-place wine.

Results 2006 of Red wines

- 1) Ridge Vineyards Monte Bello 1971
- 2) Stag's Leap Wine Cellars 1973
- 3) Mayacamas Vineyards 1971
- 4) Heitz 'Martha's Vineyard' 1970
- 5) Clos Du Val Winery 1972
- 6) Chateau Mouton-Rothschild 1970
- 7) Chateau Montrose 1970
- 8) Chateau Haut-Brion 1970
- 9) Chateau Leoville Las Cases 1971

10) Freemark Abbey Winery 1967

If you are looking for balanced wines that are food friendly and delicious and have the ability to age for a long period, Ridge should be at the top of your list just as it is on mine!