

**Five Rivers Winery****2005 Chardonnay
(Monterey County)**

The striking label for the Five Rivers Chardonnay also carries a lot of blather about a goddess paddling down a river at dusk and vines along the river reaching for her. I suppose some consumers find this intriguing. Even if you don't, look past the marketing and check out what's inside the bottle.

This is a delicious little wine, at the reasonable price of \$11. The grapes come from throughout Monterey County. In the winery, 60 percent of the blend is fermented in stainless steel, while the rest is fermented in mostly French barrels. Then the wine spends six months in a combination of French and American oak before bottling. Just 15 percent of the wine goes through malolactic fermentation, resulting in a Chardonnay that's fresh and crisp, with flavors of apples, pears and lemons. The oak sits in the background. There's a firm, mouth-watering core of acidity that carries through to the long finish. All in all, a very refreshing Chardonnay that would work well as an aperitif. Or you could drink it with lighter seafood dishes – a cold shrimp salad, perhaps, or maybe oysters on the half shell.

Reviewed March 15, 2007 by [Laurie Daniel](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Five Rivers Winery](#)

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Chardonnay

Appellation: [Monterey County](#)

Grape: Chardonnay

Price: \$11.00

THE REVIEWER**Laurie Daniel**

Laurie Daniel, wine columnist for the *San Jose Mercury News*, has been reviewing wine for more than 10 years. She doesn't use numbers, preferring to describe her recommended wines and let consumers decide for themselves.

Laurie believes that bigger isn't necessarily better; she's partial to wines of balance, finesse and character. Her particular interests are Pinot Noir (versions that really taste like Pinot, that is) and aromatic whites like Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling and Gewürztraminer.