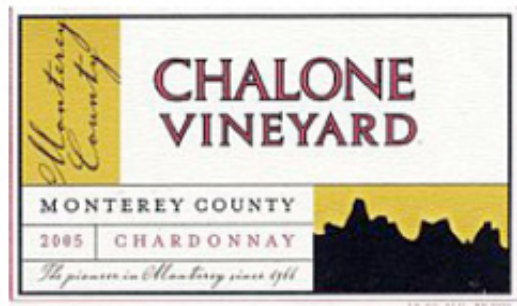


WINE RECOMMENDATION



Chalone Vineyard

2005 Chardonnay, *Estate* (Chalone)

Chalone's Estate Chardonnay is one of the few wines I can pick out in a crowd (and I've done so in several blind tastings) because its minerality is so distinctive. The wine hails from a site at 1,800 feet in the Gavilan Mountains, on the eastern edge of Monterey County. The climate is extreme: Hot days, cold nights and very little rainfall. Grapes couldn't be grown there in most years without irrigation. With that climate and the area's limestone soils, the Chalone AVA has more in common with the Mount Harlan appellation in neighboring San Benito County than it does with the rest of Monterey.

My one complaint about Chalone's Chardonnay in some years has been that it's simply too ripe, with some alcoholic heat. But this version from the relatively wet 2005 vintage shows considerably more restraint. The wine, which sells for \$25, displays racy lemon, pear and apple flavors along with that trademark minerality. There's some oak, but it's mostly a background note for this intensely flavorful wine. It's a Chardonnay that's built for some aging (the winery suggests three to seven years), but you'll be tempted to drink it now with pan-roasted salmon or shrimp scampi.

Reviewed August 23, 2007 by [Laurie Daniel](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Chalone Vineyard](#)

Vineyard: Estate

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Chardonnay

Appellation: [Chalone](#)

Grape: [Chardonnay](#)

Price: \$25.00

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.