

WINE RECOMMENDATION

**Morgan Winery****2006 Chardonnay, Highland
(Santa Lucia Highlands)**

The promise of high-quality Chardonnay is what first attracted Morgan's Dan Lee to the Santa Lucia Highlands in Monterey County. He bought land there in 1996 and planted mostly Pinot Noir and Chardonnay (along with about an acre of Syrah). Although Lee's Pinots are getting a lot of the attention these

days, he still makes superb Chardonnay, including this bottling called Highland.

Slightly more than half of the grapes are from Lee's Double L Vineyard, which is farmed organically; the remainder are from other vineyards in the appellation, including Rosella's and Lucia Highlands. The wine was barrel fermented in French oak; 30 percent of the barrels were new. (Some lots started fermentation in tank, then were transferred to barrels to finish.) The wine was aged in barrel for 10 months, and 65 percent of the blend underwent malolactic fermentation, so the wine has nice richness but still retains a racy freshness.

This is a Chardonnay that's fleshy yet bright, with creamy pear flavors, some tropical fruit notes and a hint of minerality. It's extremely well-balanced and, at \$26, is attractively priced, too.

Reviewed March 19, 2008 by [Laurie Daniel](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Morgan Winery](#)

Vineyard: Highland

Vintage: 2006

Wine: Chardonnay

Appellation: [Santa Lucia Highlands](#)

Grape: Chardonnay

Price: \$26.00

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.