

**Paraiso Vineyards****2005 Pinot Noir, West Terrace
(Santa Lucia Highlands)**

In 1973, Rich Smith planted one of the first vineyards on the bench land that has come to be known as the Santa Lucia Highlands. In those days, a lot of Monterey County vineyards were planted with the wrong grape varieties, but Smith planted Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Riesling, grapes that performed very well in the cool surroundings. In 1987, Smith and his family bought the vineyard from the investors for whom he'd planted it, and it's now known as Paraiso Vineyards.

The West Terrace Pinot Noir comes from two of the oldest blocks in the vineyard, which were planted with the Martini selection of Pinot; grapes from some newer plantings of Dijon clones 115, 777 and 667 were included for additional complexity. The wine was aged for a year in primarily 1- and 2-year-old French oak barrels, then given a year of bottle age. The resulting Pinot, which sells for \$40, is ripe, dark-toned and spicy, with juicy raspberry and cherry fruit and firm structure. It's fairly typical of the Pinots from the southern end of the Santa Lucia Highlands yet shows admirable restraint and balance.

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

THE WINE

Winery: [Paraiso Vineyards](#)
Vineyard: West Terrace
Vintage: 2005
Wine: Pinot Noir
Appellation: [Santa Lucia Highlands](#)
Grape: Pinot Noir
Price: \$40.00

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.