

WINE RECOMMENDATION

**Bernardus Vineyards****2005 Chardonnay
(Monterey County)**

Bernardus "Ben" Pon founded his winery in Carmel Valley in 1990. But his location, while excellent for red Bordeaux varieties, is really too warm for high-quality Chardonnay. So the grapes for this wine are sourced from cooler parts of Monterey County, including the Santa Lucia Highlands and Arroyo Seco AVAs. (The blend also contains a small amount of fruit from Carneros.)

The wine was made by Dean De Korth, who has a lot of experience with Chardonnay, having worked in Burgundy and at Morgan Winery and Talbott Vineyards in Monterey. Ninety percent of the blend was barrel-fermented in French oak barrels, a third of them new, while the remainder was fermented at cool temperatures in stainless steel tanks. Eighty percent of the wine underwent malolactic fermentation. That combination of oak/stainless and partial ML has resulted in a wine that is fleshy and rich yet retains a nice freshness. The wine displays flavors of pear and pineapple, accented by some toasty oak. There's a taut core of acidity, too. It's exceptionally well balanced and, at \$20, reasonably priced for a wine of this quality.

Reviewed May 7, 2007 by [Laurie Daniel](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Bernardus Vineyards](#)
Vintage: 2005
Wine: Chardonnay
Appellation: [Monterey County](#)
Grape: [Chardonnay](#)
Price: \$20.00

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.