

**Blackstone Winery****2005 Chardonnay
(Monterey County)**

Blackstone Winery, founded in 1990, was sold to drinks behemoth Constellation Brands in 2001. Although the brand encompasses some pricier Napa and Sonoma bottlings, it's best known for its affordable wines labeled with either California or Monterey County appellations. As this 2005 Chardonnay shows, even big companies can produce well-made wines at a fair price.

Made at the revamped historic Monterey Vineyard facility in Gonzales, the Chardonnay was fermented in a combination of stainless steel tanks and oak barrels, then was aged in 1- to 3-year-old barrels, mostly American oak. Thirty percent of the blend goes through malolactic fermentation. It's an easy-to-drink Chardonnay that displays a nice richness surrounding the racy pear and lemon fruit. The grapes came from three Monterey County vineyards: one in Arroyo Seco and two that are in a somewhat warmer area near King City. This Chardonnay has enough mouth-watering acidity to make it a good match with a variety of foods. I'd happily drink it with grilled chicken or fish, steamed Dungeness crab or shrimp scampi. The \$12 price tag is easy to swallow, too.

Reviewed May 3, 2007 by [Laurie Daniel](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Blackstone Winery](#)
Vintage: 2005
Wine: Chardonnay
Appellation: [Monterey County](#)
Grape: Chardonnay
Price: \$12.00

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.