

**Highland Estates - Kendall Jackson Vineyard Estates****2005 Chardonnay, *Camelot Highlands*
(Santa Maria Valley)**

This is one of a series of eight wines from KJ's hillside and benchland vineyards from the California coast. At \$25, it's the least expensive wine of the project as the mega-winery attempts to go upscale. Each wine, each from a [single vineyard in KJ's portfolio](#), has its own expression of the region from where it originates.

This Chardonnay, from the Camelot Vineyard at from 350- to 450-foot elevations in the Santa Maria Valley AVA of Santa Barbara County, is from a small block that winemaker Randy Ullom calls the "filet mignon" or "nirvana." The valley is the only east-west facing region on the coast, hence a direct infusion of daily fog and moderate temperatures combine for a long growing season.

There are creamy, toasty notes on the nose, while on the palate the wine is very rich and sweet in the front. That unctuousness, thankfully, is washed away by wonderful acidity that prepares the mouth for the next bite of food.

That acidity apparently is derived from the vineyard which is strewn with sedimentary limestone rock that has flakes of calcium carbonate. The wine was aged for 8-10 months in French oak, 45 percent of which was new. The pH – the acidity to which I was alluding – is a low 3.32. The listed alcohol is 14.5 percent and there were about 3,200 cases produced.

Reviewed May 3, 2007 by [Alan Goldfarb](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Highland Estates - Kendall Jackson Vineyard Estates](#)

Vineyard: Camelot Highlands

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Chardonnay

Appellation: [Santa Maria Valley](#)

Grape: Chardonnay

Price: \$25.00

THE REVIEWER**Alan Goldfarb**

Alan Goldfarb has been writing about and reviewing wine for 17 years. His reviews have been published in the *St. Helena Star*, *San Jose Mercury*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *Decanter*, and *Wine Enthusiast*, among others. Not once has he used a point system, star

system, or an iconic symbol to quantify a wine. What counts in Mr. Goldfarb's criteria when judging a wine is: how it tastes in the glass; is it well-constructed; its food compatibility; and presence of redeeming regional attributes.