



Wente Vineyards

2005 Chardonnay Reserve, Riva Ranch (Arroyo Seco)

The Wente family is closely associated with the Livermore Valley, but it has been growing Chardonnay at Riva Ranch in the Arroyo Seco AVA since the 1960s. The vineyard is planted with several clones, including Clone 4 (the so-called Wente clone) and three Dijon clones. Most of the grapes for this wine come from that Arroyo Seco vineyard, with a tiny percentage originating in the Livermore Valley.

Ninety percent of the wine was barrel-fermented; the remainder was in stainless steel. All the blend goes through malolactic fermentation, and it's aged in barrel for 12 months. The result is a Chardonnay that's quite opulent, ripe and fleshy, but it still has a firm core of acidity and manages to maintain its balance. The wine displays tropical fruit flavors of pineapple and mango, along with hints of coconut and butterscotch. A Chardonnay made in this hedonistic style is often pricey, but the Wente Riva Ranch Reserve retails for a reasonable \$18. It's a wine that needs rich cuisine to balance it: Think cream sauces, melted butter, that sort of thing.

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

THE WINE

Winery: [Wente Vineyards](#)

Vineyard: Riva Ranch

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Chardonnay Reserve

Appellation: [Arroyo Seco](#)

Grapes: [Chardonnay](#) (94%), [Gewurztraminer](#) (3%), [Pinot Blanc](#) (3%)

Price: \$17.95

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.