

## WINE RECOMMENDATION

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### Hayman & Hill

#### 2005 Meritage (Monterey County)

Hayman & Hill is a brand that's part of the huge Constellation Wines portfolio. The philosophy is to seek out grapes from the regions where they grow best: Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot from Napa Valley, for example; Riesling from Columbia Valley; Chardonnay from the Russian River Valley. Monterey County might not seem like the obvious choice for a Bordeaux-style red blend, given Monterey's past reputation for vegetal Cabernet.

But all that has changed as plantings of Bordeaux reds have migrated to warmer spots in the county, where the grapes can ripen properly. This Meritage is a blend of 43 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 25 percent Merlot, 15 percent Malbec, 11 percent Petit Verdot and 6 percent Cabernet Franc. The blend was aged in American oak barrels for about 18 months. This is a bargain-priced Meritage that offers flavors of ripe black cherry and black currant, accented by a savory note of black olive. There's enough tannin for structure, but the wine is accessible enough to drink now with a seared steak, grilled pork tenderloin or even a burger.

Reviewed December 11, 2007 by [Laurie Daniel](#).

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### THE WINE

**Winery:** [Hayman & Hill](#)

**Vintage:** 2005

**Wine:** Meritage

**Appellation:** [Monterey County](#)

**Grapes:** [Cabernet Sauvignon](#), [Merlot](#), [Malbec](#), [Petit Verdot](#), [Cabernet Franc](#)

### 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.