

**Mer Soleil Winery****2005 Chardonnay  
(Central Coast)**

Even though the label says Central Coast, the primary source for Mer Soleil's Chardonnay is a vineyard at the very northern tip of Monterey's Santa Lucia Highlands AVA, a chilly spot for grape growing. The vineyard, first developed in 1988, is named for the two factors that influence its growing conditions: the sea (mer) and sun (soleil). (I suppose they could have added the wind and the fog, but never mind.)

The vineyard has multiple clones of Chardonnay on three types of trellising systems. In some years, winemaker Charlie Wagner II also uses a little Chardonnay from the somewhat warmer Las Alturas Vineyard – which is also owned by the Wagner family of Caymus fame and planted mostly to Pinot Noir for the Belle Glos label – but the 2005 fruit all came from the cooler site.

Mer Soleil Chardonnay is barrel fermented, then aged in French oak barrels, about 40 percent of them new. This is always a riper-style Chardonnay, but it also has lots of zingy acidity, along with flavors of grapefruit, lemon, pear and some creamy vanilla accents. This Chardonnay would provide a good counterpoint to any sort of seafood in a creamy sauce or perhaps shrimp scampi.

Reviewed August 23, 2007 by [Laurie Daniel](#).

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**THE WINE**

**Winery:** [Mer Soleil Winery](#)  
**Vintage:** 2005  
**Wine:** Chardonnay  
**Appellation:** [Central Coast](#)  
**Grape:** [Chardonnay](#)  
**Price:** \$42.00

**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.