

**Monticello Vineyards | Corley Family Napa Valley****2005 Syrah
(Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley)**

If Syrah is going to make its mark in California – and in the Napa Valley – the cooler Oak Knoll District in the southern part of the region may be best suited. This 2005 example from the Corley family is a fine example. Right now, the aromas are locked in because this is such a young wine. On the palate, it's sweet and brambly. But hold onto it for a couple of years and I believe the wine will prove its great promise. That's because there's an underlay, a foundation, with good acidity and tannin structure. It'll age for a number of years, too, perhaps as much as eight or 10.

This is Monticello's second stab at the variety, which thus far has produced some uneven results throughout most of California. But the Corleys, who have been longtime growers, think they have the right site, with the right clonal material, to have a shot at making a good Syrah.

The 4 1/2-acre block of its Knollwood Vineyard was originally planted to Pinot Noir which had been ravaged with Pierce's disease, spread by the bacteria from the sharpshooter vector. That block was replanted eight years ago to Syrah, which is much less susceptible to PD. The site gives low yields – less than three tons – and is 7 1/2 degrees cooler than Yountville, which is six miles to the north.

The wine was vinted using only about 10 percent new oak barrels, which is a good thing, as it allows the fruit to stand on its own. The stated alcohol is 14.5 and is well-integrated. There were only 390 cases produced.

Reviewed January 16, 2008 by [Alan Goldfarb](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Monticello Vineyards | Corley Family Napa Valley](#)
Vintage: 2005
Wine: Syrah
Appellation: [Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley](#)
Grape: Syrah / Shiraz
Price: \$38.00

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.