

**Jekel Vineyards****2005 Pinot Noir
(Monterey County)**

As the popularity of Pinot Noir continues to grow, it's become increasingly difficult to find good, modestly priced bottles – the grapes have simply gotten too expensive. So this \$15 Pinot from Jekel Vineyards was a nice discovery. The grapes come from a variety of Monterey County vineyards, with a dash of Sonoma County fruit for good measure. The wine is fermented in stainless steel, then aged in mostly neutral French oak barrels (15 percent of the wine goes into new or once-used barrels).

The resulting wine is brimming with robust, juicy cherry and raspberry fruit, accented by some interesting Christmas spices. No, it's not a super-complex Pinot Noir, nor does it have a huge amount of depth or intensity. But it shows a lot of refinement for a Pinot Noir in this price category, culminating in a long, supple finish. It's a wine that would be very versatile with food – anything from a simple roast chicken or grilled salmon to mushroom risotto or seared ahi tuna. And it's priced low enough to become your weeknight house red.

Reviewed May 16, 2007 by [Laurie Daniel](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Jekel Vineyards](#)

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Pinot Noir

Appellation: [Monterey County](#)

Grape: [Pinot Noir](#)

Price: \$14.99

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.