

A concrete buy: Mer Soleil Silver Chardonnay



Hey, would you pass me a little of that moonshine over there? Sorry bud, all we have tonight is Chardonnay. What? Yep, that's just our 'lil bottle of [Mer Soleil Silver](#).

And so it goes, this is one of the cleverest Chard packaging ideas yet, especially when you consider the quality of the product that is contained within. "Silver" is quite surprising on many levels.

First consider the source. This is a [Wagner Family of Wine](#) selection that has been carefully refined for "character" inside and out. It is from a California winery operated by Chuck Wager's oldest son Charlie since 2001. Personal attention makes for a fabulous wine and this one gets a lot of attention.

Second consider the how it was made. The color of the bottle represents the cement tanks that were used for some of the fermentation. A very French style of processing that brings forth a more mineral background in both the bouquet and taste. But even though it is totally "unoaked", the California fruit character still comes through.

Third consider the location and grapes. Charlie is very "picky" about how the grapes are grown, harvested, and also has the advantage of the primo location in which they thrive, [Santa Lucia Highlands](#). There, conditions are perfect for Chardonnay, not too hot, not too cold. Mer Soleil is in good company, with [numerous top producers](#) operating in the same area.

Then, after all of that, you'd expect to pay dearly. In fact, this 2011 vintage wine does taste like a \$40 Chardonnay, but it can be had for less than \$30. At Phoenix area [Bevmo](#) stores it is \$27.99 and at valley [Totalwine](#) stores, it is \$21.99 (both 2010 and 2011 may be on the shelves). Not bad, accounting for its pedigree.

So focus on this one for entertaining with light appetizers or a big baked seafood spread. Its well balanced body of fruit and acid is sure to please a wide range of Chardonnay lovers and also occupy those white wine drinkers who prefer the top shelf. Nice.

Serve it after 40 minutes in the fridge (55-60 degrees). You can also take it from room temperature to perfection by dropping it into an ice bucket for 7-10 minutes. There is no paper label to soak off!