

## Boschendal Chardonnay 2005 Coastal Region

6 Mar 2007 by JR

[Find this wine](#)

This was the second favourite wine at my South Hampstead/ World Challenge Vietnam [tasting last night](#) and deservedly so (the favourite is currently unavailable).

I know that only three months ago I recommended another 2005 South African Chardonnay from [Rustenberg](#) as wine of the week but I don't apologise as 2005 was clearly a great vintage for this style and I firmly believe that South Africa can offer some truly great value examples of this ubiquitous varietal. This is not a carbon copy of white burgundy – it's a little fruitier and more direct in its appeal – but (and?) it is much better balanced than most non- Burgundian Chardonnays. So many are either heavy and too obviously oaky or weighed down by simple tropical fruit flavours or, in the case of some of the more ambitious examples, just too tight and acid to be much fun to drink.

This one comes from one of the oldest estates in South Africa, founded on the border of the beautiful Franschhoek Valley and Paarl in 1685 (the year that looks at first glance to be the vintage on this bottle) which has just changed ownership but has retained the respected winemaker J C Bekker. According to the estate's own website, "2005 was an exceptional year for Boschendal's Chardonnay. Bushvines growing in mountainous soils saw their fruit achieving perfect ripeness under ideal conditions" (though isn't that always the way?). It carries the Coastal Region appellation, presumably a reflection of its location on the boundary between two more specific appellations.

According to the invaluable [Platter Guide](#), 75% of the grapes were fermented and aged for nine months in French oak, a third of it new. Half of the wine was fermented using ambient rather than selected yeast. It is certainly no cookie-cutter wine, being wonderfully lively and beautifully balanced with lots of interest and just a touch of lime and luscious stone fruit about it. Very juicy, it is probably at its peak now though I would feel confident it will still be drinking well at the end of this year. It is over 14% alcohol, however, and therefore a bit much to drink without food. I would suggest sweet shellfish such as prawns or scallops, roast chicken, cheese and vaguely Mediterranean foods - pasta?

The ranges now produced by Boschendal are, going upwards in price and quality, Pavillion (the Pavillion Semillon/ Chardonnay seems well distributed in the US), Favourites, 1685, Reserve and Cecil John. This Chardonnay is from the 1685 range – and a great buy it is too, quite widely available in Europe, including the UK where Hailsham Cellars have it at £6.99.

There may still be stocks of the 2005 at the regular price of £7.99 in branches of Waitrose. Incidentally, the 2006 (which I haven't tasted) is currently on special offer via this particular link at [www.waitrosewine.com](http://www.waitrosewine.com) for just £5.69 a bottle when the regular price is £7.99.

[Find this wine](#)

