

**Round Hill Winery****2007 Oak Free Chardonnay
(California)**

Okay, the AVA on Rutherford Wine Company's Round Hill 2007 Oak Free Chardonnay is California. That leaves the winery's grape source wide open, right? The fruit, in fact, was taken from "select vineyards throughout California." So you can understand my confusion with the winemaker's notes that accompanied my review sample which describe the entire state of California as if it were one wine growing region and not the nearly 90 AVAs that exist in the state.

The notes talk about 2007's stunning vintage with very cold days and no precipitation and a spring with unusually high temperatures and early bud break. A mild summer with few days topping 100 degrees and a Labor Day heat spike gave the grapes the sugar development growers were looking for. Alas, this generalization does not summarize what went on in every part of the state or the multiple AVAs from which the Chardonnay came.

But hey, the marketing hype, or maybe mis-hype, can't get around what a bargain this delicious wine is. Listed at \$12, Round Hill is invariably sold for much less in supermarkets and wine stores and that price belies the surprising quality of the Chardonnay in the bottle. Delightfully oak-free (the company's first in this style), the full-bodied Chard is big on flavors, particularly green apples and pears with a backbone of lemon. Without the barrel-age to interfere, we get Chardonnay fruit that stands up on its own, with enough acid to balance the blend, making it enjoyable from first sniff to last sip. With alcohol at a refreshing 13.2 percent, this is a bargain wine that is made for the impatient, not for the cellar.

Reviewed March 19, 2008 by [Michael Lasky](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Round Hill Winery](#)

Vintage: 2007

Wine: Oak Free Chardonnay

Appellation: [California](#)

Grape: [Chardonnay](#)

Price: \$12.00

THE REVIEWER**Michael Lasky**

APPELLATION AMERICA's Senior Editor, Michael Lasky, has been writing about food and wine for over 20 years. His work has appeared in national magazines such as *Playboy*, *Esquire*, *GQ*, and *Parade*, and newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Newsday*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. His wine reviews focus on the aroma, taste, and visual appeal of what's in the glass. He is decidedly not a wine snob and prefers to describe its virtues in conversational prose that speaks to everyone from wine neophytes to veteran connoisseurs. He only reviews delicious wines.