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TIP » INEXPENSIVE EASTER WINES

Even if you have a minuscule budget and a huge crowd to feed on Easter Sunday (or for any other gathering), you don't have to forgo wine: Check out the **NV Oak Leaf Vineyards Chardonnay** (about \$3 or \$4, and no, that's not a typo) to serve as an aperitif or with ham. At 12.5 percent alcohol, this award-winning, light-bodied unoaked California chardonnay pleasantly surprised us on its own, especially for the price. Its apple-y fruitiness really shined when it accompanied ham with mustard sauce, but food-wise, this whisper of a wine works best with lighter flavors that don't overwhelm it.

We weren't as enthusiastic about the **NV Oak Leaf Merlot** (\$3), which had a nose that neither of us cared for and was only so-so on its own, but we both admitted it was not bad at all with lamb. Oak Leaf is sold only at Wal-Mart stores that carry wine.



OAK LEAF
VINEYARDS