

**Averill Creek Vineyard****2005 Pinot Gris
(Vancouver Island)**

Opened in 2006, Averill Creek is one of the newest wineries in the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island but one that seems on the way to cult status. It was established by Andy Johnston, a former doctor now better known for the meticulous vineyard he has on a south-facing slope on Mount Prevost. The site enables Johnston to make the most of Vancouver Island's sometimes limited sunshine hours. The 28-acre vineyard is planted primarily to Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir because Johnston (and others) believe these varieties are well suited to the island if a grower has a good, sunny site. The climate is not unlike that of Oregon, where both of these varieties

also do well.

The 2005 season was the best on Vancouver Island in recent years, with a warm, dry summer and autumn. As can be seen by the 13 percent alcohol level in this wine, Johnston had no trouble ripening the grapes, enabling him and a consultant from New Zealand to make fine, expressive wine. This wine was completely barrel fermented in new and used French oak and also allowed to go totally through malolactic fermentation, if only because Vancouver Island vineyards deliver acidity to spare.

Golden-hued, the wine begins with peachy, toasty aromas. It offers a complex palate, with flavours of honey, ripe pineapple and tangerine, with notes of spice from the oak and minerals from the vineyard. There is a beguiling sexiness to the flavour profile of this complex wine. 90 points.

Reviewed December 14, 2007 by [John Schreiner](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Averill Creek Vineyard](#)

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Pinot Gris

Appellation: [Vancouver Island](#)

Grape: Pinot Gris / Grigio

Price: \$22.00

THE REVIEWER**John Schreiner**

John Schreiner has been covering the wines of British Columbia for the past 30 years and has written 10 books on the wines of Canada and BC. He has judged at major competitions and is currently a panel member for the Lieutenant Governor's Awards of

Excellence in Wine. Both as a judge and as a wine critic, he approaches each wine not to find fault, but to find excellence. That he now finds the latter more often than the former testifies to the dramatic improvement shown by BC winemaking in the past decade.