

**Desert Hills Estate Winery****2005 Merlot Proprietor's Reserve
(Okanagan Valley)**

Desert Hills Winery was opened in 2003 by Randy and Jesse Toor, Punjab-born twins who grew apples on their prime Black Sage Road property until 1995. They switched to grapes initially to supply the Langley-based Domaine de Chaberton Winery, which needed red varieties. They have become first-rate growers. Wines made from their Syrah have won a top award two years running in a competition sponsored by British Columbia's Lieutenant Governor.

The fingerprint of their terroir, whether with Syrah, Gamay or Merlot, is a unique spiciness in the flavours of the wines. This Merlot is a big, ripe wine, with aromas of spicy vanilla and red fruit. On the palate, the full-bodied wine tastes of plums, black cherries and currants. The long ripe tannins give the wine a chewy texture. The finish is lingering, with that terroir-induced hint of cloves. 88 points.

Reviewed October 20, 2007 by [John Schreiner](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Desert Hills Estate Winery](#)

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Merlot Proprietor's Reserve

Appellation: [Okanagan Valley](#)

Grape: [Merlot](#)

Price: \$24.90

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.