

**Sandhill****2005 Cabernet - Merlot, Estate  
(Okanagan Valley)**

As Okanagan wineries release the last of their 2005 reds, it is worth recalling that that was one of the valley's finest vintages this decade – but it was a small vintage because rain at flowering reduced the fruit set. Like all other wineries, Sandhill has smaller volumes of wine available, as this wine shows. In the more bountiful previous vintage, Sandhill was able to release 6,000 cases of this wine.

The ripe quality of the fruit in 2005 enabled winemaker Howard Soon to tweak the blend, raising the volume of Cabernet Franc to 29 percent from 13 percent the year before, with slight reductions in both Merlot (46% in 2004) and Cabernet Sauvignon (41% in 2004). According to Soon's notes, the extra Cabernet Franc "has produced a smoother, more fruit-forward Cabernet Merlot with a delicious nose."

Indeed, the aroma is immediately inviting with jammy and spicy berry notes. On the palate, there are flavours of spiced plums with hints of chocolate, tobacco and cedar. The texture shows a chewy firmness, suggesting the ability to age well for three or four years. 88 points.

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

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**THE WINE**

**Winery:** [Sandhill](#)

**Vineyard:** Estate

**Vintage:** 2005

**Wine:** Cabernet - Merlot

**Appellation:** [Okanagan Valley](#)

**Grapes:** [Cabernet Sauvignon](#), [Merlot](#), [Cabernet Franc](#)

**Price:** \$19.99

**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.