

**Sandhill****2005 Petit Verdot - Small Lots, *Phantom Creek Vineyard*
(Okanagan Valley)**

Sandhill released the Okanagan's first Petit Verdot in 2002 and remains one of the very few wineries producing a grape not extensively grown in the valley. It ripens as late as Cabernet Sauvignon. In the 2005 vintage, the Okanagan's best this decade, the grapes were picked on October 27, virtually at the season's end.

The Phantom Creek Vineyard's planting is so modest that Sandhill was only able to release 309 cases from 2005. Some of the fruit also goes into other Bordeaux wines from this vineyard because of Petit Verdot's ability to lift the aromas and underline vivid flavours. Here, winemaker Howard Soon has actually introduced some restraint by adding Malbec and Cabernet Sauvignon to the blend, stopping just below the 15 percent threshold beyond which the wine could no longer be labelled as a single variety wine in British Columbia.

This wine was a bit mute and earthy when first poured but opened up well as it had time to breathe. The aromas include mocha, blackberry and cedar with a touch of smokiness, leading to flavours of tart cherries that, with time, evolve to a fruity richness. The finish is lingering. The overall impression is of an opera diva hitting one high C after another. 88 points.

Reviewed February 22, 2008 by [John Schreiner](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Sandhill](#)

Vineyard: Phantom Creek Vineyard

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Petit Verdot - Small Lots

Appellation: [Okanagan Valley](#)

Grapes: [Petit Verdot](#) (84%), [Malbec](#) (9%),
[Cabernet Sauvignon](#) (7%)

Price: \$29.00

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.