

WINE RECOMMENDATION

**Sandhill****2005 Sangiovese - Small Lots, Sandhill Estate Vineyard (Okanagan Valley)**

To date, this is Canada's only Sangiovese. The first vintage was 1999, when only 76 cases were released. Production reached 618 cases in 2002 but has been scaled back because 2005 was a short crop and because some of the fruit now goes into the winery's Super Tuscan blend, Sandhill *three*. Only 312 cases of Sangiovese were released in 2005. Since 2003, Sandhill winemaker Howard Soon has tweaked the blends, adding some Bordeaux varietals to improve the depth and complexity. The 2005 blend may well be his best so far.

At the recent Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival, where Italy was the theme region, Soon had the daunting task of showing this wine in a lineup that included wines from Ruffino, a heavyweight Chianti producer, along with Sangioveses from California (Seghesio, Montevina) and Argentina (Norton). The Sandhill wine, made with the Brunello de Montalcino clone, was certainly competitive.

This is a big red, a little bigger and more alcoholic than typical Chianti, but with the fruit to carry the alcohol. The wine begins with dusty aromas of cherries and chocolate. On the palate, it delivers spicy cherry flavours with mocha notes on the finish. 88 points.

Reviewed March 28, 2008 by [John Schreiner](#).

THE WINE

Winery: Sandhill

Vineyard: Sandhill Estate Vineyard

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Sangiovese - Small Lots

Appellation: Okanagan Valley

Grapes: Sangiovese (85%), Barbera (11%),

Merlot (4%)

Price: \$29.99

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.