

**Skimmerhorn Winery & Vineyard****2006 Marechal Foch
(British Columbia)**

Alsace plant breeder Eugene Kuhlmann (1858-1932) created numerous hybrid grape varieties designed to help French vineyards overcome a variety of vine diseases. Many of these varieties – none are permitted today in European vineyards – were imported to Canada and the eastern United States after 1945 as a significant improvement on the *labrusca* grapes then widely planted. While most Kuhlmann crosses now have

been succeeded by finer *vinifera* varieties, Maréchal Foch continues to thrive as a reliable early-ripening red with commendable disease resistance.

In British Columbia's Okanagan, Foch has largely been replaced with Merlot and other red *vinifera*. But it hangs on successfully in more marginal growing regions (Vancouver Island, for example) where the big red *vinifera* are unreliable ripeners. The Creston Valley in southeastern British Columbia is one of those marginal regions, former tree fruit country in which pioneering vineyards have been planted. Skimmerhorn's owners, Al and Marleen Hoag, planted Creston's first vineyard four years ago. For their big red, they chose reliable Maréchal Foch in the assurance that the variety will mature fully within the seasonal limits of the Creston Valley.

Judging from the quality of the 2006 Maréchal Foch – made in Skimmerhorn's first vintage – Foch was a good choice. This blood red wine begins with gamey, meaty aromas of spicy plums. On the palate, it presents spicy plum flavours with a hint of smokiness and tar, and a touch of tartness on the finish. The generous texture is juicy and sensuous, thanks in part to the variety's soft tannins. 88 points.

Reviewed March 27, 2008 by [John Schreiner](#).

THE WINE

Winery: Skimmerhorn Winery & Vineyard

Vintage: 2006

Wine: Marechal Foch

Appellation: British Columbia

Grape: Marechal Foch

Price: \$17.00

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.