

**Skimmerhorn Winery & Vineyard****2006 Pinot Noir
(British Columbia)**

Skimmerhorn Winery, which opened this year, is pioneering grape growing in the Creston Valley in southeastern British Columbia, an entirely new viticultural area. Winery owners Al and Marleen Hoag had grown tree fruits in the valley for about 25 years. When the prices of tree fruits collapsed early this decade, they reasoned that grapes, provided the varieties were chosen carefully, should do as well as cherries and apples. In

their four year old vineyard, they grow only those varieties that mature early to mid-season, including Pinot Noir.

Understanding that the Creston Valley is a typical cool climate terroir, the Hoags went to New Zealand, another cool climate wine region, to find a winemaker. They came up with Mark Rattray, a Geisenheim graduate and the owner of a small winery, Floating Mountain, near Christchurch. He was interested in doing some vintages again in the northern hemisphere, particularly where it involved opening a brand new wine region. Under a three-year-agreement that started in 2006, Rattray arrives in Creston each fall in time to make the wines, seeing the whites in bottle and the reds into barrel before he returns to New Zealand.

With his capable winemaking, Skimmerhorn has launched with commendable debut wines. Although this Pinot Noir's light mid-palate reflects young vines, the wine is clean and refreshing, with flavours of raspberry and aromas of cherries, spice and even a hint of anise. There is some of the classic Pinot silkiness on the texture. The wine is a promising start with a tough variety. 86 points.

Reviewed November 16, 2007 by [John Schreiner](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Skimmerhorn Winery & Vineyard](#)

Vintage: 2006

Wine: Pinot Noir

Appellation: [British Columbia](#)

Grape: Pinot Noir

Price: \$18.90

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.