

**Tinhorn Creek Vineyards****2005 Cabernet Merlot
(Okanagan Valley)**

Tinhorn Creek winemaker Sandra Oldfield argues that “the only thing lacking in British Columbia red wines is age ... most wineries release the wines too young.” Now beginning its 13th year, Tinhorn Creek has had the time (and cash flow) to develop a disciplined release schedule. Its red wines now are released two years after vintage (three years for its reserve reds), which give the wines the bottle maturity that makes them approachable on release.

The two varieties are fermented and barrel-aged separately. The wines are aged for just under a year in American oak, with barrels ranging from new to

four years old.

This wine, which Oldfield describes as her favourite among the winery’s value-priced reds, successfully makes her case for longer cellaring before release. While the wine’s screwcap closure has preserved the aromas and berry flavours, the bottle maturity has softened the tannins, giving the wine an impression of fleshiness. The aromas display toast, vanilla, chocolate and raspberry, all of which carry through to the palate. The berry flavours of the Cabernet Franc remain fresh and lively while the Merlot provides mid-palate plushness. This is an easy-drinking wine with a satisfying charm. 88 points.

Reviewed December 7, 2007 by [John Schreiner](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Tinhorn Creek Vineyards](#)

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Cabernet Merlot

Appellation: [Okanagan Valley](#)

Grapes: [Cabernet Franc](#) (60%), [Merlot](#) (40%)

Price: \$16.95

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.