

**Gray Monk Cellars****2006 Pinot Auxerrois
(Okanagan Valley)**

Formerly successful hair salon operators, Gray Monk founders George and Trudy Heiss switched careers dramatically in 1971 when they purchased an Okanagan orchard and began converting it to grapes. Initially, they followed conventional advice and planted French hybrids. Finding the wines unpalatable, they were among the earliest growers in the Okanagan to move to *vinifera* varieties, identifying suitable varieties by consulting with the research institute at Colmar in Alsace. In 1976, they imported Pinot Gris, Gewürztraminer, Kerner and Pinot Auxerrois.

While only a few vines of each of the first three were available, they secured about 2,000 Pinot Auxerrois, establishing a good foothold for the variety in British Columbia. Curiously, it remains a mere foothold. Total plantings of the variety are only 47 acres or 19 hectares. Because the variety has not won popular fashion, several producers have dropped it entirely.

That is hard to understand on tasting Gray Monk's consistently fine Pinot Auxerrois vintages. This is an attractively fruity white with aromas and flavours of peaches, nectarines, rhubarb and melon. The texture is full and the finish is refreshingly crisp and dry. 89 points.

Reviewed July 17, 2007 by [John Schreiner](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Gray Monk Cellars](#)

Vintage: 2006

Wine: Pinot Auxerrois

Appellation: [Okanagan Valley](#)

Grape: [Auxerrois](#) / [Pinot Auxerrois](#)

Price: \$14.99

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.