

**Noble Ridge Vineyard and Winery****2004 Meritage
(Okanagan Valley)**

The slogan of this winery, which opened in 2005, is “the future of Old World excellence.” The likely explanation is that owners Jim and Leslie D’Andrea were first smitten with the idea of owning a winery during a 1998 vacation in French wine country. Jim, a lawyer with a leading Calgary law firm, even looked at some vineyard properties in the south of France before he and his wife made a more practical purchase in the Okanagan in 2001 of 10 acres, a third of which had mature vines. The winery gets its name from the ridge contoured there before the rest was planted.

Last year, the D’Andreas purchased a vineyard directly across the road. That has given Noble Ridge a total of 22.5 acres, plus a winery building. The winery, which had relied on consultants for its debut wines, also hired former Peller Estates winemaker Phillip Soo.

The food-friendly 2004 Meritage certainly seems informed by French wine styling, with firm tannins that should support the winery’s suggestion this wine will age 10 or more years. The wine was aged 16 months in French and American barrels, both new and used. The aroma displays a note of oak, along with spicy fruit. On the palate, the flavours suggest spice and plums. The structure is leaner than one would expect from a Merlot-dominant blend. 85 points.

Reviewed May 26, 2007 by [John Schreiner](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Noble Ridge Vineyard and Winery](#)
Vintage: 2004
Wine: Meritage
Appellation: [Okanagan Valley](#)
Grapes: [Merlot](#) (80%), [Cabernet Sauvignon](#) (20%)
Price: \$24.99

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.