

**Twisted Tree Vineyards and Winery****2005 Merlot
(Okanagan Valley)**

Twisted Tree is a promising new winery that will open its tasting room this summer at its winery at the edge of Osoyoos, a stone's throw from the U.S. border. The owners and winemakers are Beata and Chris Tolley, both embarking on second careers and with meticulous preparation. Chris, who was born in Ottawa in 1966, was formerly a software engineer in Calgary. His Polish-born wife, Beata, is a chartered accountant.

To equip themselves as wine growers, they spent 2003 taking wine courses at Lincoln College in New Zealand. Then they bought an orchard and fruit stand at Osoyoos, converting the property with eclectic planting choices (such as Canada's first [Tannat](#)).

The winery has launched with wines from purchased grapes. The quality of the wines shows that the Tolleys know how to buy good fruit. This Merlot (fruit from two vineyards in the south Okanagan) has a deep, dark hue and complex gamey and spicy aromas. On the palate, the wine has a generous chewy texture and sweet fruit, with flavours of plums, chocolate, even tar. The wine spent 16 months in American oak (half used) and there is a bit of vanilla here as well. The winery made 700 cases. 90 points.

Reviewed May 28, 2007 by [John Schreiner](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Twisted Tree Vineyards and Winery](#)

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Merlot

Appellation: [Okanagan Valley](#)

Grape: Merlot

Price: \$24.90

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.