

**Quails' Gate Estate Winery****2006 Stewart Family Reserve Chardonnay  
(Okanagan Valley)**

Since 1994, the top wines at Quails' Gate have been released under the Family Reserve label. Beginning with the 2006 vintage, that label has been tweaked to actually identify the family. The Stewarts, after all, have been active in Okanagan horticulture for a century, including 50 years of grape growing. They were among the first growers, if not the first, to establish Pinot Noir in the Okanagan. Today, the flagship varieties at this winery are Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

Winemaker Grant Stanley is a Vancouver native who, after a career as a sommelier, went to New Zealand in 1991. He began working for Montana Wines, which sponsored him to become a winemaker. By 1998, he began working with Ata Rangi, a New Zealand Pinot Noir specialist. Five years later, Quails' Gate lured him back to Canada precisely because of his expertise with the Burgundy varieties.

This Chardonnay is a head-turner. Made with grapes from vines that are 12 to 15 years old, it has had all of the winemaker intervention that Stanley could throw at Chardonnay, including barrel fermentation in French oak. The wine had complete malolactic fermentation but, with a bright natural acidity to begin with, the wine comes through with fresh varietal flavours. The aromas show toast, butter and bacon fat. On the palate, there are flavours of caramel and baked apples around a core of fresh lemon and lime notes. The balance is superb and the finish is long. 91 points.

Reviewed March 19, 2008 by [John Schreiner](#).

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**THE WINE**

**Winery:** [Quails' Gate Estate Winery](#)

**Vintage:** 2006

**Wine:** Stewart Family Reserve Chardonnay

**Appellation:** [Okanagan Valley](#)

**Grape:** Chardonnay

**Price:** \$29.99

**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.