

**Sandhill****2006 Chardonnay, Estate  
(Okanagan Valley)**

So far this year, this wine has won a gold medal (All Canadian Wine Competition) and a silver (Okanagan Fall Wine Festival). That is a credible performance for a single vineyard but large volume – for British Columbia - varietal. Under the direction of veteran winemaker Howard Soon, Sandhill makes only single vineyard wines, most of them from the 174-acre Sandhill Estate Vineyard on Black Sage Road. The Chardonnay vines here were planted in four blocks between 1994 and 1997, along with such

mainstream varieties as the Bordeaux reds and Pinot Gris.

The 2006 vintage is remembered for the abundant production the vineyards gave after a short crop in 2005. At Sandhill, aggressive cluster thinning was required to prevent the harvest from overshooting the targeted quality. In the winery, the grapes were whole cluster pressed. All the wine was barrel-fermented and aged seven months in French oak (new and one year old), with lees stirring. In order to preserve the fruit freshness, malolactic fermentation was not allowed.

The result is a very satisfying Chardonnay, beginning with toasty and citrus aromas. On the palate, the flavours are complex, showing tangerine and ripe pear flavours subtly supported by oak. The texture is full but the lively acidity gives this wine a fresh, crisp finish. A textbook example of how to make oaked Chardonnay that remains fresh and lively. 90 points.

Reviewed November 8, 2007 by [John Schreiner](#).

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**THE WINE**

**Winery:** [Sandhill](#)  
**Vineyard:** Estate  
**Vintage:** 2006  
**Wine:** Chardonnay  
**Appellation:** [Okanagan Valley](#)  
**Grape:** Chardonnay  
**Price:** \$17.99

**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.