

**Sweet Cheeks Winery****2006 Riesling, Estate  
(Willamette Valley)**

It's not hard to understand why some of the best U.S. Rieslings come from the Pacific Northwest. Although a bit south in latitude, Oregon's great whites endure long periods of cold, rainy weather just as Germany's fruit does, and the terrain and soils are akin to each other as well.

Sweet Cheeks' eastern-oriented Riesling plantings prosper in their cool home, especially when temperatures soar in the late summer around Crow, Oregon. The winery's take on this noble variety is a good one by Aussie winemaker Mark Nicholl, a young man with more

enthusiasm for his work than a German oompah band during Oktoberfest. Although he hasn't been on the job long, having just arrived during the '06 harvest, Nicholl quickly demonstrated his talent for winemaking.

The wine appears clear and clean with a subtle, lemon-gold color. Aromas are just as bright and crisp, with appealing peaches and lavender, then hints of citrus on the nose that just keep giving – so much so, you almost hesitate to taste for fear it will lose some of this pleasing, flowery bouquet.

The 2006 Estate Riesling is varietally correct, but with its own standards. I doubt that many Riesling lovers will confuse it with the motherland of Germany in a blind tasting, because the influences of coastal Oregon are all over it, as are the apple orchards just over the mountain. The vineyard has to have a significant mineral content as well. There are polished, round touches of Red Delicious apples, ripe peaches and melons, all well balanced with firm acidity. Stones and sweet apricot are in the finish, as is a touch of lemon and a bit of Pacific salt air.

Enjoy with white meats such as the turkey pastrami I paired with it. Drink now or cellar 2-3 years

Reviewed April 30, 2008 by [Gregory McCluney](#).

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**THE WINE**

**Winery:** [Sweet Cheeks Winery](#)

**Vineyard:** Estate

**Vintage:** 2006

**Wine:** Riesling

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

**Grape:** Riesling

**Price:** \$12.00

**THE REVIEWER****Gregory McCluney**

Greg McCluney has been writing about wine since 1987 and has judged many competitions including the Atlanta International Wine Summit, Florida Suncoast Winefest, Northwest Wine Competition and the Dallas Morning News Wine Competition. His work has appeared in numerous regional, national and international publications including *Wines & Vines*, *AirTran Arrivals* in-flight magazine, *Atlanta Magazine*, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Tampa Bay's Best*, Atlanta Wine School and the James Beard Foundation publications. He conducts wine education classes and consults on wine selections for retail and restaurant clients.