

WINE RECOMMENDATION

**Black Hills Estate Winery****2005 Carmenère
(Okanagan Valley)**

Black Hills, one of the south Okanagan's cult wineries, has pulled off a Canadian first with this release of Carmenère. This is the late-ripening variety that practically vanished from Bordeaux after phylloxera but survived in Chile. There, the variety was thought to be another clone of Merlot until it was correctly identified in the 1990s. The exciting Carmenère wines that Chilean wineries began releasing over the past seven or eight years triggered an interest in the variety in the Okanagan, where it is known to have been planted recently by three producers.

Black Hills was the first, followed by Sumac Ridge and, most recently, a new winery called Twisted Tree. With the exception of the latter, the object was to include this ancient Bordeaux grape in top red blends. Black Hills decided the wine was so good that it bottled the entire production as a straight varietal. Black Hills kept the details of its planting so quiet that it caught its peers entirely by surprise with the recent release of a varietal Carmenère. The total production of 75 cases has been purchased by a handful of exclusive restaurants in Vancouver and Whistler.

This wine, dark in hue, is made from a third-leaf harvest. Winemaker Senka Tennant chose to age the wine in older American oak barrels. The wine's dramatic aroma of spiced cherries erupts from the glass. On the palate, there are flavours of cherries, blackberries, raspberries, with a lingering spicy finish. The texture is full, leading to the overall impression of a wine that is both generous and elegant. An impressive debut Carmenère! 91 points.

Reviewed April 24, 2007 by [John Schreiner](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Black Hills Estate Winery](#)

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Carmenère

Appellation: [Okanagan Valley](#)

Grape: [Carmenere](#)

Price: \$28.90

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.