

OntarioWineReview Vintages Release Guide

A bi-weekly report about the upcoming wines being released through LCBO's Vintages program.



OntarioWineReview: Vintages Release Saturday April 17, 2010

I am now using a 5-star rating system, which appears at the end of each review; here's the key to the stars:

5 = Outstanding ... 4.5 = Excellent ... 4 = Very Good ... 3.5 = Good ... 3 = Average

I'm always looking for good value and I'm not afraid to give or take away a half mark for it – I'll let you know when I've done so.

I am sitting here with the LCBO Vintages mag in my hand and there seems to be two focuses on the cover, and three inside – more confusion from our liquor monopoly. Veneto is the main region, there's a minor on Eco-Wines and then an even smaller Tasmanian focus (ie: a single producer). Two of them I can tell you about, a lot of the Eco-wines weren't available at the tasting I was at.

Veneto (Italy) ...

This region is most known for Valpolicella and its off-spring: Amarone and Ripasso(a) ... but there are plenty of other wines and real fantastic values coming out of this region:

Red ...

Monte del Fra Bardolino 2008 (\$12.95 - #134544) – this is an easy recommend with raspberry liqueur and maraschino cherry notes, and the price is excellent, an extra half mark just for that. (****½)

Tenuta Sant'Antonio Scaia Rossa 2008 (\$13.95 - #165688) – another great value wine, this one has big black fruit on the nose, while the palate is delicious and subtle with red fruit and spice. (****)

Maculan 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$14.95 - #987701) – another fruit forward number at a good price, you'll even find coffee and spice on the finish. (****)

Monte del Fra Tenuta Lena di Mezzo 2008 Valpolicella Classico (\$13.95 - #160226) – a great starter Valpolicella for those who claim they do not like red wines. Lots of red fruit with a touch of vanilla and spice. (****)

Fumanelli 2008 Valpolicella (\$12.95 - #687186) – this one is for the summer and can even be chilled before enjoying. Ripe cherries and raspberries, this one is very palate pleasing, buy by the case and enjoy thru the hot months. (****½)

Sartoni Vigneti di Valdimizzo Ripasso Valpolicella Superiore 2007 (\$16.95 - #160374) – this one is what you're looking for in a Ripasso, chocolate, blackberry and lots of plum flavours. (****)

Masi Serego Aligheri Vaio Armaron Amarone della Valpolicella Classico 2004 (\$69.95 - #462812) – big plum, big taste, lots of ripe fruit, this one is almost liqueur like in the mouth ... there's also some alcohol heft at 15.5%. (****)

Tenuta Sant'Antonio Selezione Antonio Castagnedi Amarone della Valpolicella 2006 (\$42.95 - #685107) – chocolate, plum, coffee with good acidity on the finish, delicious now and for the future. (****½)

Tasmania – Josef Chromy

Josef Chromy 2008 Pinot Gris (\$22.95 - #162974) – nice fruity white with lovely apple and pear notes. (****)

Josef Chromy 2009 Pepik Pinot Noir (\$21.95 - #162990) – bright red cherry nose, good raspberry-earthy palate, the acidity is just right - good for immediate enjoyment and mid-term cellaring. (****)

Argentina – Red ...

Chakana 2009 Bonarda (\$13.95 - #003525) – this is the next Argentinean grape you'll be searching for in the future, and it's gonna be big. Nice spice and blackberry notes with cassis,

black cherry and some earthy notes – good tannins brings this one together in the mouth and on the finish – get it while it's cheap. (****½)

Dona Paula Estate 2008 Malbec (\$17.95 - #661819) – intense and inviting nose with blackberry and other black fruit along with cocoa and spice, lovely finish. (****)

Argentina – White ...

Zolo 2009 Unoaked Chardonnay (\$12.95 - #144717) – fresh and fruit driven with a touch of the tropical, good price for this patio sipper, extra half mark for value. (****)

Australia – Red ...

Gemtree 2008 Bloodstone Shiraz / Viognier (\$18.95 - #022111) – this one has an easy entry into the mouth with rich fruit, plum, blackberry, and hints of cocoa. The finish is long with a little bit of toast and vanilla. This wine continues to impress. (****)

Water Wheel 2008 Bendigo Shiraz (\$19.95 - #700815) – fresh red fruit, touch of spice, hint of chocolate all wrapped up in a nice tannin grip. (****)

Chile – Red ...

Terranoble 2007 Gran Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (\$16.95 - #046268) – big mint note accosts the nose and it follows on the palate, you'll also find lots of body and lots of fruit amongst that big hit of mint. (****)

France – Red ...

(Midi)

Domaine Boudau 2008 Le Clos (\$16.95 - #149989) – raspberry really pops in your mouth with this one, lovely fruity notes with sufficient tannins and hints of strawberry on the finish ... yummy. (****½)

Germany – White ...

Max Ferd Richter Riesling Kabinett 2007 (\$15.95 - #160556) – apple, mineral, apricot and sweet pear. Good balance of flavour, sweetness and acidity. (****½)

Greece – After Dinner ...

Limnos Wines 2008 Muscat de Limnos (\$11.95 - #061119) – don't let what I am about to say scare you off about this wine, it really is fantastic, but it smells like lemon cleaning fluid. Great lemon Pledge nose, the palate has a cleaning fluid taste but ends with a pleasant lemon-ginger finish ... all in a good way. Very good wine, chill and enjoy – or polish the furniture, either way you won't be disappointed. (****½)

Greece – White ...

Tselepos Moschofilero 2009 (\$18.95 - #724583) – very summery drink with sweet melon and citrus. (****)

Italy – Red ...

(Puglia)

Leone de Castris Elo Veni 2008 Negroamaro (\$15.95 - #995696) – nice black fruit, smooth and juicy. (****)

New Zealand – White ...

Spy Valley 2009 Sauvignon Blanc (\$14.95 - #686675) – Kiwi Sauv Blanc fans should flock to this wine, the price is just right for a multiple bottle purchase and the wine has lots of grapefruit and green grass on the nose and palate with lots of acidity and a long finish – it's exactly what you're looking for. Drink over the course of the summer – extra half mark for value. (****½)

Portugal – After-Dinner ...

Quinta do Infantado Tawny Port (\$16.95 - #168633) – price really plays a factor here, this Tawny is loaded with acidity so it doesn't come off too sweet, plenty of nutty and cherry nuances; this is a

real winner. (****)

Quinta do Noval LB Finest Reserve Port (\$19.95 - #956656) – another delicious dessert wine from Portugal, this one has good spiciness with chocolate and black cherry; the thickness of this wine will coat your mouth with delectable goodness. (****½)

South Africa – Red ...

Anura 2005 Reserve Merlot (\$24.95 - #157461) – you get fruit, cocoa and chocolate, licorice with subtle spice and just a hint of grit ... a very good Merlot for South Africa. (****)

Café Culture 2009 Pinotage (\$13.95 - #072710) – I'm not a coffee drinker but I love this wine, massive coffee smells and mocha/coffee in the mouth ... now easier to get into with a screw cap. (****)

United States – Red ...

(California)

Clos du Bois 2007 Pinot Noir (\$18.95 - #161273) – big cherry fruit on the nose and palate, this is a very fruity Pinot, if you like 'em that way you'll like this one. (****)

Ravenswood 2007 Vintners Blend Merlot (\$17.95 - #505065) – a really juicy Merlot that is BBQ / get-together ready, bring out to the patio, pour everyone a glass and watch the smiles. (****)

Grape Guy Top 3 ... what I'll be lining up for on April 17, 2010:

Fumanelli 2008 Valpolicella (\$12.95 - #687186) – Italy

Quinta do Infantado Tawny Port (\$16.95 - #168633) – Portugal

Domaine Boudau 2008 Le Clos (\$16.95 - #149989) – France

Happy Shopping.

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What can the Grape Guy do for you ... Michael Pinkus (Grape Guy) provides a variety of wine related services that you might be interested in taking advantage of: he gives lectures, leads seminars, conducts tastings, sets up tours; consults, selects and judges. He also gives interviews, broadcasts, podcasts and writes. [Contact the Grape Guy if you require any of these services or have any questions.](#)



Psst, Pass It On ... keep the good wine flowing. Pass this report onto to friends, family members, loved ones, or any other wine lover on your list of contacts.

To contact me with feedback, article ideas, comments, concerns or questions – email michael@ontariowinereview.com. I look forward to hearing from you!

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