

OntarioWineReview Vintages Release Guide

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



OntarioWineReview: Vintages Release Saturday August 2, 2008

Hello boys and girls, time to find out what's happening in the LCBO's first release of August. It used to be that August was a pretty dead month in liquor-land. We'd get one release and a Vintages magazine that looked more like a flyer. Today, there are two releases in August and both are quite sizeable. This first one focuses on two countries – well actually one country and a region: South Africa and Midi (France) – I'll pick a top three from each place, as well as my usual picks from around the world. Ontario reviews can be found in full on my website (www.ontariowinereview.com). So here we go ...

South Africa ...

Sorry ladies and gents, none of the whites from South Africa impressed me, and that has nothing to do with apartheid (rim shot) – but seriously, I was underwhelmed by the white wines tasted, so we'll move immediately to the reds. First up is the *Black Rock Red 2006* (\$23.95 - #0068502) a blend of 4 red grapes and a dash of white: Shiraz, Carignan, Mourvedre, Grenache and a one percent sprinkle of Viognier) – a nice, sweet palate with plums, herbs, vanilla-oaky-notes and floral – very tasty. South Africa is also, like many countries these days, in the Shiraz business, *Man Vintners 2006 Shiraz* (\$12.95 - #0071332), a multi-service red for that backyard bbq or get together, especially for the price: blackberry, spicy and a titch of vanilla. My final choice from South Africa is the *Nederburg 2006 Manor House Cabernet Sauvignon* (\$16.95 - #0068767), a good value in an ageable red of substance. Lots of black fruit, a touch of mint and good chocolate flavours makes this wine a winner in my book.

France's Midi Region ...

It's a tough week for whites, as only one gets called upon from this region: *Terres Blanches 2007 Muscat Sec* (\$14.95 - #0653188) – a sweet tropical nose, with a grapy palate that goes down so easy. Speaking of easy sipping wines, the rosé: *Bieler Pere et Fils 2007 Rosé* (\$12.95 - #0071423) is perfect for outdoor events. Light, fruity with lots of raspberry and cherry ... but keep in mind that this one is not a sweet rosé. The reds from Midi, for this release, are really very good, of the 6 on offer I can tell you that you really can't go wrong with any of them; but my top 3 selections would have to start with the *Domaine de L'Hortus Bergerie Classique Pic Saint Loup 2006* (\$17.95 - #0079608) with its very nice smell: black fruit dominant nose and taste with a licorice finish. There's the *Domaine Le Casenova la Colomina 2005* (\$15.95 - #0074542) with its sweet cherry nose, big red taste that starts red and ends all black. And finally, there's the second most expensive Midi wine, *Domaine de la Sauveuse Cotes de Provence Rouge 2005* (\$19.95 - #0043174) with its black fruit, cassis, blackberry and judicious use of sweet oak. Yum. You've probably noticed that all the reds from Midi are excellent values, ranging in price from \$15.95 - \$22.95.

As for what to buy from the rest of the world here we go ...

Ontario ... Red ...

[Lailey Vineyard 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon](#) (\$24.95 - #0591370)

[Lailey Vineyard 2006 Pinot Noir](#) (\$24.95 - #0591404)

Ontario ... White ...

[Fielding 2007 Pinot Gris](#) (\$18.20 - #0078519)

[Lailey Vineyard 2007 Riesling](#) (\$17.95 - #0072736)

Australia ... Red ...

Torbreck 2006 Woodcutter's Shiraz (\$24.95 - #0927533) – big 14.5% alcohol, very flavourful and well-made Shiraz; black fruit, pepper and spicy – yum.

Chile ... Sparkling ...

Valdivieso Blanc de Blancs Sparkling Brut (\$14.95 - #0075085) – great value in a tasty bubbly: light, fruity, apple, citrus, good length, quite refreshing.

France ... Red ...

(Burgundy) – *Henri de Vilamont Bourgogne Pinot Noir 2006* (\$18.95 - #0084616) – red currant, raspberry/strawberry notes, firm tannins, good acidity, thoroughly enjoyable.

France ... White ...

(Loire) – *Domaine Bellevue Touraine Sauvignon Blanc 2006* (\$13.95 - #0082305) – classic grapefruit and a little grassy, this one's pretty intense with a pretty nose; ends with lemon acidity and lingering grapefruit, which makes it pretty delicious.

Italy ... Red ...

(Pugli) – *Cantine due Palme Primitivo* (\$14.95 - #0658351) – closest thing to a Cali-Zin I've ever tried; ripe plums and fruitiness – almost sweet-like in the mouth, jammy even; finish is smooth and delicious. As the ad goes: "I want my baby backs ..."

(Veneto) – *Corte Zovo Sa Solin Ripasso Della Valpolicella 2004* (\$16.95 - #0650713) – chocolate, plum, red and black fruit, descent tannin structure, tasty finish, lively wine with a restrained elegance, good price. This has been a favourite of mine for years.

Remo Farina Vigna Montecorna Valpolicella Classico Superiore Ripasso 2004 (\$19.95 - #0056267) – long name for a wine I just wanna tell you is so delicious and a must have; sweet, classy, elegant in the mouth ... buy some, drink some; have your friends buy some, drink theirs too.

Italy ... White ...

(Umbria) – *Salviano Orvieto Classico Superiore 2006* (\$14.95 - #0714188) – very flavourful with great lemon taste all the way through, bit of minerality on the nose, finishes dry with the apples and lemons the most distinctive.

New Zealand ... Red ...

Delta Vineyard 2007 Pinot Noir (\$22.95 - #0675231) – very good Pinot from the Kiwis, everything you'd expect: earthy, raspberry, strawberry, black cherry – good tannins and acidity ... good for aging or drink right now.

Sileni Cellar Selection Pinot Noir 2007 (\$16.95 - #0694901) – this is the lighter side of Kiwi Pinot, cranberry, earthy and hints of black cherry.

New Zealand ... White ...

Wither Hills 2007 Sauvignon Blanc (\$19.95 - #0919514) – melon, grassy, grapefruit with good acidity.

Spain ... Red ...

Raimat 2005 Tempranillo/Syrah (\$14.95 - #0014696) – sweet both on the nose and in the mouth, ripe black fruit with spicy nuances, great price for something this tasty.

USA ... Red ...

(California) – *Artesa Reserve 2004 Tempranillo* (\$25.95 - #0067272) – big alcohol at 14.7% brings with it sweet red fruit and plum nose, jammy, plummy and big in the mouth – this one's not for the feint of heart.

USA ... White ...

(California) – *Ferrari-Carano 2006 Fume Blanc* (\$22.95 - #0354993) – great wines pull off a fine balancing act. Flowery, melon aromas, tropical fruit tastes lime, melon and pineapple ... very impressive and well balanced between the fruit, acidity and wood.

St. Francis 2006 Chardonnay (\$20.95 - #0317131) – soft and fruity, best U.S. Chard in this lot, tropical-like nuances amongst that soft vanilla wood.

Take a Chance on Me ...

This release it's a Romanian sweetie that's my choice to throw down a few shekels on for an interesting taste experience: *Cotnari Grasa de Cotnari 2005* (\$13.95 - #0073205) – as you can see, not a lot of dough for this pleasure. Made from a rare grape (Graso) grown only in Romania (450 hectares) this wine has very interesting smells and flavours: tropical notes with sweet apple, melon, peach cocktail sauce and a dollop of pear juice on the side. Great all on its own.

Grape Guy Top 3 ... what I'll be lining up for on August 2, 2008

Delta Vineyard 2007 Pinot Noir (\$22.95 - #0675231) – New Zealand

Cantine Due Palme 2005 Primitivo (\$14.95 - #0658351) – Italy

Remo Farina Vigna Montecorna Valpolicella Classico Superiore Ripasso 2004 (\$19.95 - #0056267) – Italy

Happy Shopping.

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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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