

OntarioWineReview Vintages Release Guide

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



OntarioWineReview: Vintages Release Saturday August 21, 2010

I am 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.

We've got "Signature Wines" and German wines on the menu this week at Vintages, let's take a taste ...

Signature Wines ...

Not sure what constitutes a "signature" wine in this release – if they mean the wine you are most noted for I think they are off the mark with this first offering from Ontario: [Wildass 2008 Riesling](#) (\$19.95 - #0129700), Wildass is brought to you by Stratus and this certainly isn't their signature wine, it's very good but definitely not signature. From the U.S. comes *Hess Estate 2008 Chardonnay* (\$19.95 - #0181578) a nice mix of fruit and oak, butter, toffee, with some under-ripe apple and peach; creamy in the mouth (****). This makes more sense in the signature department, Mount Riley 2009 Sauvignon Blanc (\$14.95 - #0981670), this one is mellow for a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, though it still has nice flavours: grapefruit and passionfruit lead the charge here with a long pleasing finish, price makes this one a steal (****½). Going to California means Zinfandel, and *Howling Moon 2007 Old Vines Zinfandel* (\$18.95 - #0057356) is a pretty good rendition of what this grape can do, plum-cherry smoothness with some vanilla adding charm (****). From Australia is the *Woop Woop 2008 Shiraz* (\$14.95 - #0180174) good blue and black berry with peppery chocolate undertones (****). South Africa started their own signature grape with Pinotage, a cross between Pinot Noir and Cinsault, not a wine that's popular with everyone but this version just might change a few minds: *Lammershoek 2007 Pinotage* (\$18.95 - #0954594). Full of flavour with coffee and mocha notes, cherry, plum and smooth tannins, I was rightfully impressed here (****½).

German Wines ...

Becker-Steinhauer 2008 Riesling Kabinett (\$15.95 - #0161786) – fresh and lively Riesling with good acidity, mineral and apple-peach fruit notes. (****)

Balthasar Röss 1997 Riesling Spätlese (\$21.95 - #0160762) – another week and another wine from the 'look what we found' department. This is a 13 year old sweet Riesling that has stood the test of time: petrol, honey, violets, dried pear and mineral all make up this damn fine wine. (****)

Argentina – Red ...

Alamos 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$13.95 - #0467944) – juicy blackberry and cherry with a satisfyingly pepper and spice finish – great price for this wine. (****)

Argentina – White ...

Accuro 2009 Torrentes (\$14.95 - #0179416) – if you haven't tried Argentina's signature white wine, it's time. This has a pretty Gewürztraminer-like nose with the g-wine like flavours; there's a hint of sweetness and lovely fruit; give it a try and be ready to be impressed. (****)

Australia – Red ...

Heartland 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.95 - #0058099) – supple, rich and black; I know some women who are looking for that combination ... of course I meant in their wine. (****)

Two Hands 2008 Brave Face Shiraz/Grenache/Mataro (\$24.95 - #0660035) – this is always a wine with face melting alcohol (15.3%) but it's lovely and quaffable at the same time: plum, coffee, blackberry are all in plentiful supply, there is also some very nice spice on the finish. (****½)

Canada – White ...

(Ontario)

Featherstone Estate 2009 Sauvignon Blanc (\$16.95 - #0089011)

Flat Rock Cellars 2008 The Rusty Shed Chardonnay (\$24.95 - #0001552)

Chile – Red ...

Los Rosales 2008 Chapel Vineyard Reserva Carmenere (\$12.95 - #0169490) – black currant and blackberry lead the way, plum and black raspberry follow; good acidity and nice spice round it all off. (****)

France – Red ...

(Bordeaux)

Chateau Roquetaillade La Grange Vieilles Vignes 2006 (\$21.95 - #0125666) – this one's got the goods: good black fruit, good cedar, good spice and good backbone. (****)

(Midi)

Chateau Auzias Petits Messieurs Cabardes 2008 (\$14.95 - #0177592) – nice black fruit, spice, licorice root, vanilla and plum; there's some holding power here so buy some for the cellar too.

(****)

(Rhône)

Chateau de Beaucastel 2007 Chateauneuf-du-Pape (\$84.95 - #0711317) – chocolate, lovely sweet fruit, this wine is absolutely delicious – and it's priced like it knows that. (****½)

Le Ferme du Mont 2007 Le Ponnant Cotes du Rhone-Villages (\$17.95 - #0171371) – funny wine here, tried two bottles, one was brilliant that other barely passable, look for the one with the winery name stacked on the label, not the words all in a row. Juicy and intense with lots of black fruit and licorice. (****)

Perrin & Fils 2007 L'Andeol Rasteau (\$19.95 - #0976845) – this one is just what the doctor ordered for BBQ night: juicy red fruit, mineral, pepper, good tannins backbone, nice acidity along with a cocoa laced cherry finish. (****½)

France – Sparkling ...

(Alsace)

Domaine Alimant-Laugner Brut Cremant d'Alsace (\$17.95 - #0030593) – pleasant creamy lemon and apple flavour with a touch of sweetness. (****)

(Burgundy)

Louis Bouillot Perle D'Ivoire Brut Blanc de Blancs (\$18.95 - #0048801) – a charming little bubbly with crisp apple and a nice limeade note. (****)

Italy – Red ...

(Tuscany)

Rendola 2004 Brunello di Montalcino (\$36.95 - #0181412) – earthy, smoky and dried plum with good acidity; the label is a direct Penfolds knock off, and it's tasty too. (****)

(Veneto)

A Amarone della Valpolicella 2007 (\$31.95 - #0179366) – plummy, chocolaty, good acidity and well-priced for an amarone. (****)

Antiche Terre Ripasso Valpolicella 2008 (\$14.95 - #0178459) – chocolate and black cherry, a hint of sundried tomato with good spice, this is a steal at that price. (****½)

Italy – Sparkling ...

(Piedmont)

Banfi 2009 Rosa Regale Acqui (\$14.95 / 375ml - #0179358) – lovely strawberry-raspberry bubbly along the lines of a Moscato with its 7% alcohol, light floral note makes this a delicate, feminine and delicious dessert sipper. (****)

Italy – White ...

(Veneto)

Clivus Soave 2009 Classico (\$13.95 - #0181180) – light and refreshing with lemon peel and juicy mac apple. (****)

New Zealand – Red ...

Babich 2008 Pinot Noir (\$19.95 - #0000216) – nice bit of Pinot wine making here with sour black cherry, spice, pepper and just the right amount of acidity on the finish. (****)

Portugal – Dessert ...

H.M. Borges Medium Sweet Aged 3 Years Madeira (\$17.95 - #0169482) – a fine Madeira my dear with orange spice, caramel and orange peel through and through. (****)

Vinzelo Ruby Port (\$12.95 - #0169623) – this is a real beauty of a ruby: ripe cherry, chocolate, spice, really delicious; with an attractive label and an attractive taste, this is the complete package. (****½)

Spain – Red ...

Etim 2007 Seleccion (\$15.00 - #0681346) – a value priced red with red fruit, mineral, a hint of black fruit and a little chocolate thrown in for good measure. (****)

Ukraine – Dessert ...

Massandra South Coast Red Dessert Wine 2005 (\$14.95 - #0013920) – looking for something different to serve after the meal, this might just do the trick; enjoyably spicy with red plums; for port fans looking to expand their horizons. (****)

Grape Guy Top 3 ... what I'll be lining up for on August 21, 2010:

Vinzelo Ruby Port (\$12.95 - #0169623) – Portugal

Heartland 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.95 - #0058099) – Australia

Lammershoek 2007 Pinotage (\$18.95 - #0954594) – South Africa

Happy Shopping.

About OntarioWineReview: a website devoted to the love, enjoyment and promotion of Ontario's wines, wineries and lots more wine related issues – visit www.ontariowinereview.com to sign up for the free bi-weekly newsletter and feel free to browse around a little while you're there.



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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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