

OntarioWineReview Vintages Release Guide

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



OntarioWineReview: Vintages Release Saturday August 30, 2008

These days a Vintages release is like going to school, you have to pick a major and a minor. In this release Vintages takes us to Spain and Portugal (the Iberian Peninsula) with a minor side trip to Champagne, France for a bit of bubbly. So let's take a look at what's on offer from these features.

Spain ...

Over the past few years I have bought some pretty dang good wines from Spain, nice age-worthy wines with plenty of body and spirit (alcohol). One of my favourites has been from Juan Gill, who is in the release, but I did not get a chance to taste because it was not on offer. I recommend his wines site untaste if it is anything like the past two I own. So on with what else you and your palate can get into trouble with from Spain. I find I am rarely impressed with Spanish whites, so let's move right along to the reds shall we? The **Torres 2005 Salmos** (\$32.95 - #060772) has a sweet oak flavour that accompanies the red and black fruit with a touch of vanilla – tasty. **Emina 2005 Prestigio** (\$24.95 - #067066) is another winner with deep black fruit, cinnamon and black cherry being the most prominent, there is also a dusty-oaky finish. Looking for something with some age? Check out the *Monasterio de las Vinas Gran Reserva 2001* (\$21.95 - #082024), while it is softer and you'll have to dig for the fruit a little deep there is a black fruit and oak subtly on the nose that is very approachable; soft tannins, nice balance, subtle fruit and good use of oak so as not to overpower. So far we've seen the over-twenty dollar bracket of wines, time to look at the under-twenty. My pick here is *Mas Collet Barrica 2005* (\$17.95 - #080705), soft and fruity with blackberry, cherry, plum and nice oaking ... ready to drink now. For dessert try the *Torres Moscatel Oro* (\$16.95 - #642173 – 500ml), this medium sweet wine is perfect for dessert on its own, with tangerine, nuts and honey for smell; orange peel bathed in caramel on the tongue – it really is a treat.

Portugal ...

There are fewer wines on offer from this Iberian country and two that I recommend: *Capela de Sta. Margarida Tinto 2006* (\$18.95 - #082172) soft and red fruit driven with a sweet mid palate and chocolate nuances; and the *Quinta da Fonte do Ouro Reserva 2005* (\$19.95 - #080382), the nose is port like and plummy with sweet wood and cherries, very enjoyable.

Champagne ...

Real champagne is not cheap. I have heard many say, "Champagne is not just a special occasion wine, it is a wine that should be consumed every day." Well as much as I would like that, I can't see myself plopping down the between \$40 and \$225 these bottles are asking for on a nightly basis. So for that special occasion when you do want to lay down a few bucks here are some thoughts. *Heidsieck & Co Monopole Blue Top Champagne Brut* (\$49.95 - #068288), soft, yeasty and fruity (mostly under-ripe apple) very pleasant and enjoyable. I could not decide between the *Moet & Chandon Grand Vintage Rosé Champagne Brut 2000* (\$89.95 - #069831) and the *Grand Vintage Champagne Brut 2000* (\$83.95 - #069773), to put it simply, one is more red fruit and the other more white fruit; I guess it depends on your mood.

And now for the rest of the world, starting with Ontario and then going alphabetically from there. For full reviews of the Ontario wines please follow the wine's individual link to my website, www.ontariowinereview.com.

Ontario ...

Reds:

[Daniel Lenko 2005 Old Vines Merlot](#) - \$51.95 - #075622

Rosé:

Wildass 2006 Rosé - \$18.95 - #071712

Whites:

Creekside 2007 Butler's Grant Riesling - \$15.95 - #080267

[Daniel Lenko 2006 Reserve Riesling](#) - \$19.95 - #075655

[Daniel Lenko 2005 Signature Chardonnay](#) - \$39.95 - #075671

[Lailey Vineyard 2006 Late Harvest Vidal](#) - \$14.95 - #072918

[Mike Weir 2007 Sauvignon Blanc](#) - \$15.95 - #686972

Argentina ...

La Mascota 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$15.95 - #066720) – very appealing nose that contains a beautiful balance of dark fruit, chocolate and cherries that follows through in the mouth.

Australia ... Red ...

Pikes 2006 The Assemblage Shiraz/Mourvedre/Grenache (\$18.95 - #014332) – nice spice, good mouthfeel, well balanced wine and the best Aussie-value of the release.

Australia ... Rosé ...

Trentham Estate 2007 La Famiglia Sangiovese Rosé (\$15.95 - #066811) – big on red berries with a touch of sweetness, chill and enjoy.

Canada ... White ...

(**British Columbia**) – *Ganton & Larsen Prospect Winery 2007 Larch Tree Hill Riesling* (\$16.95 - #070698) – good Riesling character with peach, lime and apple; nice finish with a touch of sweetness.

France ... Red ...

(**Bordeaux**) – *Chateau Pibran 2003* (\$49.95 - #594739) – earthy, black fruit and spice, smooth and delicious – round on the palate.

(**Burgundy**) – *Domaine Henri Delagrange Volnay 2005* (\$42.95 - #069138) – the nose is strawberry, cherry and blackberry, while the taste is red berry with smooth tannins and a black-fruited finish. Lovely.

(**Loire**) – *Domaine de Saint-Just Saumar Champigny Les Terres Rouges 2007* (\$16.95 - #081331) – very black cherry, touch earthy, good value.

(**Midi**) – *Mas Janeil Cotes du Rousillon-Villages 2005* (\$15.95 - #992800) – sweet red fruit nose, rich tannins, solid oaky finish with sweet oak on the mid-palate.

(**Southwest**) – *Chateau les Roques Cahors 2006* (\$14.95 - #948315) – good value Cahors wine with plenty of dark fruit and spice, needs time and the price is right for a multiple purchase.

France ... White ...

(**Alsace**) – *Martin Steimer 2006 Gewurztraminer* (\$18.95 - #709790) – apple, lychee, nice spicy palate.

(**Burgundy**) – *Hautes Cotes de Beaune Blanc Clos de la Chais Dieu 2005* (\$22.95 - #076240) – apple, slightly tropical fruit with some mineral in there for good measure, wonderful mouthfeel, and the subtle use of oak makes this a real gem.

Italy ... White ...

(**Veneto**) – *Mazzolada 2007 Pinot Grigio* (\$16.95 - #746560) – good bit of citrus and apple with nice acidity and very crisp finish.

South Africa ... Red ...

Bellingham 2005 Dragon's Lair (\$19.95 - #068692) – black fruit and earthy, still with a hint of that “typical South Africa” but not enough to be off-putting and I say it'll blow off in a couple of years, plus it will smooth right out.

USA ... Red ...

(**California**) – *Chateau Montelena 2004 The Montelena Estate Cabernet Sauvignon* (\$132.95 - #709881) – big black fruit, cinnamon-filled and tannin-rich, there's also really good spiciness in here. Big price, big wine.

Gnarlier Head 2005 Old Vine Zin (\$27.95 - #067785) – spiced cinnamon, plums, cherries and a touch of sweetness in the mid-palate, should be a tasty one over the next 5 years.

Rosenblum Cellars 2006 Contra Costa Zinfandel (\$26.95 - #070425) – jammy, plummy and the typical cherry cola-ish smell, very plummy in the mouth.

Simi 2005 Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$24.95 - #025221) – black fruit, vanilla, cinnamon, touch of herbs and chocolate with a subtle use of oak.

(**Washington**) - *Waterbrook 2005 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon* (\$27.95 - #090365) – rich and tasty black fruit and chocolaty ... yum.

Take a Chance on Me ...

Not the usual country when you think about tasty wines, but this Uruguay Tannat is probably the best wine I have tried from this country in a long, long time. The price is good too at well under \$15. Give it a shot and let me know what you think: *Ysern Blend of Regions Tannat 2004* (\$13.95 - #068643)

Grape Guy Top 3 ... what I'll be lining up for on August 30, 2008

Mazzolada 2007 Pinot Grigio - \$16.95 - #746560 (Italy – Veneto)

Chateau Les Roques Cahors 2006 - \$14.95 - #948315 (France – Southwest)

La Mascota 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon - \$15.95 - #066720 (Argentina)

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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