

OntarioWineReview Vintages Release Guide

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



OntarioWineReview: Vintages Release Saturday December 6, 2008

Last release Vintages had their "Premium Product" selection, this time out they raise the bar even further with the Icons release – wines every wine lover or casual wine drinker would have heard of (or heard whispers about). Wines with big price tags and make exceptional gifts; there's also a bunch of sparkling wines and Champagne's for the holidays.

This is the LCBO's last Vintages release of the year and it's a big one. I missed the regular media tasting a few weeks back so I had to sit in with the in-store consultants and because of the enormity, and limited amount of time, I had to pick and chose my way through the room (over 140 wines alone). Below you'll find my selections from the 'So Fine' section of the catalogue, including the bubbly and Niagara Stars. As usual full reviews for Ontario wines can be found on my website (www.ontariowinereview.com) - just click on the link. What comes next is not for the feint of heart when it comes to wine prices. Now, on with the show:

So Fine – Sparkling Wine ...

There are plenty of bubbles to choose from, 13 in total, including a fizzy icewine from *Inniskillin* (2006 Sparkling Icewine - \$69.95 – #086884); but if you're looking for something bubbly from the region that made it famous there's the *Pol Roger Extra Cuvee de Reserve Champagne Brut 1999* (\$82.95 - #989137), you don't see a lot of vintage Champagne's because they're only made in the really good years and this is really good, with a slightly sweet note and lengthy finish - crisp citrus, apple and quite the buttered toast note ... great for, you know, toasting the moment.

As you can see, paging through the LCBO guide, Champagne can get incredibly pricey, why not go for the local alternative with the always impressive and delicious [Henry of Pelham Cuvee Catharine Sparkling Brut](#) (\$29.95 - #616441).

So Fine – Niagara ...

The LCBO has chosen to recognize Niagara as a fine wine producer, and good for them, shining the light where it rightfully belongs, in our own backyard. Some of the wines the LCBO chose to highlight (and that I agree with) are:

[Chateau des Charmes 2005 Equuleus](#) (\$40.00 – #319525)

[Fielding Estate 2005 Meritage](#) (\$35.20 - #085050)

[Inniskillin 2007 Riesling Icewine](#) (\$69.95 - #558288)

[Le Clos Jordanne 2006 Village Reserve Chardonnay](#) (\$30.00 - #033936)

[Le Clos Jordanne 2006 Village Reserve Pinot Noir](#) (\$30 - #033894)

[Tawse 2006 Pinot Noir](#) (\$32.20 - #054809)

So Fine – The Icons ...

These are the labels you long for:

(California)

Shafer "One Point Five" 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$77.95 - #045476) – big spicy nose, sweet licorice and blackberries on the palate.

Far Niente 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$140 - #539098) – sweet nose, lush palate, big price.

(Australia)

Elderton "Command" Single Vineyard Shiraz 2004 (\$96.95 - #716142) – sweet fruit, cherries and

chocolate, this one's lush and lovely and meant to age.

(Italy)

Ornellaia 2005 (\$158.95 - #722470) – great wine... peppery, herby, spicy, black fruit oriented, smooth and silky with tons of time ahead of it.

Masi 2003 Serego Alighieri Vaio Amaron (\$77.95 - #462812) – of the three Amaroni this one had it all, for less ... smooth chocolate and black fruit with lots of cherry.

Ontario ... White ...

[Malivoire 2006 Gewurztraminer](#) (\$26.00 - #542522)

Australia ... Red ...

Kilikanoon 2006 Killerman's Run Shiraz/Grenache (\$20.95 - #009225) – peppery on the nose, sweet fruit on the palate.

Taltarni 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$24.95 - #940692) – very black fruit oriented, juicy and tasty.

Wallace by Ben Glaetzer 2006 Shiraz/Grenache (\$26.95 - #047605) – the LCBO breaks the under-twenty ceiling with this "Wine of the Month". This big (15.8%) alcohol wine keeps the alcohol smell at bay. Look ahead to the Fess Parker (USA) in this report; I think their taste profiles are similar but this one is scaled back and less in your face, and at half the price that's okay.

Chile ... Red ...

Estampa 2004 Gold (\$17.95 - #047522) – the nose has heavy mint notes with blackberry and strawberry backing it up; on the palate it's mostly black fruit while the tannins are silky and smooth.

Vina Tarapaca 2005 Gran Reserve Black Label Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.95 - #081190) – juicy fruits with minty notes on both the smell and taste.

France ... Red ...

(Bordeaux)

Chateau D'Aiguilhe 2005 (\$47.95 - #501205) – a real treat of herbs, spice and blackberries, this one tastes fresh and lively with tannins that'll last 10 years plus.

(Rhône)

Ortas Rasteau Tradition 2007 (\$16.95 - #998716) – Red fruit and light nose, raspberry taste with a touch of tannins and licorice.

Germany ... White ...

Wegeler 2007 Riesling Spatlese (\$33.95 - #087452) – fresh and sweet.

Schloss Schonborn 2001 Riesling (\$15.95 - #081836) – big on petrol and talc on the nose with peach and apricot in the mouth.

Italy ... Red ...

(Veneto)

Bertani Villa Novare Valpolicella Classico Superiore Ripasso 2005 (\$25.95 - #095810) – plum, chocolate and blackberry with good tannins and a lingering finish.

Zonin 2005 Amarone Della Valpolicella (\$54.95 - #086207) – plum and chocolate with a black cherry liqueur note; great on the palate.

USA ... Red ...

(California)

Fess Parker 2004 The Big Easy Syrah (\$40.95 - #083212) – you can smell the alcohol coming from this one (15.9%) and also the pepper, which accosts the nose head on; follows up in the mouth with some big and bold fruit flavours a surprising chocolate mid-palate and smooth finish.

Ridge 2006 Three Valley (\$29.95 - #652875) – easy on the palate with plums and juicy blackberries.

Silverado Vineyards 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$50.95 - #111880) – big juicy blackberries with

chocolate, plums and herbs.

St. Francis 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$29.95 - #671164) – good value for this juicy black fruit number, which also has good vanilla notes.

Grape Guy Top 3 ... what I'll be lining up for on December 6, 2008:

Fess Parker 2004 The Big Easy Syrah (\$40.95 - #083212) – USA, California

Wallace by Ben Glaetzer 2006 Shiraz/Grenache (\$26.95 - #047605) - Australia

Vina Tarapaca 2005 Gran Reserve Black Label Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.95 - #081190) – Chile

If I had the money – without a doubt:

Ornellaia 2005 (\$158.95 - #722470)

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.



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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