

OntarioWineReview Vintages Release Guide

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



OntarioWineReview: Vintages Release Saturday February 14, 2009

The LCBO got lucky this year, the holiday for lovers falls on a Vintages release day, and that means the Valentine's Day release is as authentic as it gets. You'll find pink wines, champagnes and a few odd choices in the wine department (with one shocking omission; one of my picks for best wine of this release is not included as a Valentine's Day selection, and it's pink), ... I pick out four that are worth your time to share before getting down to showing him or her how much you really love them (for that you'll need the drug store, not the liquor store). Also in this release is the annual expedition into South Africa, for some new wines and old favourites ... there are six I thought were worth your palate's while.

As usual full reviews for Ontario wines can be found on my website (www.ontariowinereview.com) - just click on the link. Now it's time to see what Valentine's Day, South Africa and the rest of the world will bring to your table:

Valentine's Day Selections ...

I'm not exactly sure what the criteria were for being chosen a "Valentine's Day" wine – pink, bubbly, good, not sure, so I will be rather erratic with my selections too. The *Deutz Rosé Brut Champagne* (\$63.95 - #0092833) is the best of the French pink bubbly. Nice nose and lots of fun bubbles in the glass. Ontario also has a bubbly in the mix, the *Jackson-Triggs 2003 Proprietors' Grand Reserve Brut* (\$24.95 - #0587691) is a toasty, appley, yeasty and honey concoction of goodness – but to see the best bubble of the release check out the Ontario section below. Italy also serves up a sparkling wine, this one is a sweet for your sweetie with lots of raspberry, strawberry and grapiness: *Castello Del Poggio Brachetto* (\$19.95 - #0101345). Finally, something from the man that brought you Opitz-One, *Willi Opitz 2007 Pink Kiss Rosé* (\$17.95 - #0111633) with light subtle raspberries on the palate – very easy drinking.

South Africa Selection ...

Most South African wines have a certain smell, call it bret, road tar, band-aid or earthiness – it all equals the same thing, dirt. Thankfully over the years those smells have been dissipating, you can still find them in many South African wines but the ratio is lessening, and that's a good thing. The six wines I chose from this release are showing quality of winemaking and little to no of what I call "the South Africa stink". Starting with the *Delheim 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon* (\$16.95 - #0981357) with minty blackfruit and sweet blackberries – this is an easy quaffer without a doubt. *Graham Beck 2003 The Ridge Syrah* (\$25.95 - #0607812) is a wonderful Syrah with all the hallmarks you have come to expect from this grape: spicy, peppery, blackberry, cassis and a little white pepper. *Groenland 2005 Antoinette Marie* (\$17.95 - #0096487) is a nice blend of Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, it too has pepper and spice, along with blackfruit, smokiness and cocoa. *Slowine 2006 Shiraz* (\$14.95 - #0096503) is pretty simple with lots of blackberry and pepper on the tongue, but I like the price of this simple wine, and that's why it's a recommend. Finally, The *Cloof 2005 Cellar Blend* (\$20.95 - #0037408) is an odd mix of Tinta Barocca, Pinotage and Shiraz. Black fruit, pepper, spice, vanilla, cinnamon and a spicy-pepper finish ... this is a recommend because of it's grape-curiosity factor. Speaking of curiosity, check out the Take A Chance On Me section at the bottom of this report for a crazy South African wine for coffee lovers.

Ontario – Red ...

[Henry of Pelham 2006 Merlot](#) (\$19.75 - #0091165)
[Le Clos Jordanne 2006 Claystone Terrace Pinot Noir](#) (\$40.00 - #0033951)
[Le Clos Jordanna 2006 Le Clos Jordanne Vineyard Pinot Noir](#) (\$40.00 - #0033902)

Ontario – Sparkling ...

[Chateau des Charmes 2005 Methode Traditionelle Rosé](#) (\$28.95 - #0078055)

Ontario - White ...

[Inniskillin 2006 Commemorative Edition Vidal Icewine](#) (\$59.85 - #0087775)
[Le Clos Jordanne 2006 Claystone Terrace Chardonnay](#) (\$40.00 - #0056929)

Argentina – Red ...

Domaine Jean Bousquet 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$16.95 - #0678813) – smooth and easy, plummy, cherry with a sweet palate that has a spicy mid-section, very nice with a vanilla cola nuances on the finish.

Argentina – White ...

Alamos 2007 Viognier (\$13.95 - #0507830) – peach and floral notes on the nose which follow on to a palate that's refreshing and mouthfilling – great finish.

Australia ... Red ...

Knapppstein 2005 Cabernet/Merlot (\$19.95 - #0593350) – minty, eucalyptus with blackberries and black cherries, smooth with a bit of spice on the finish.

Magpie Estate 2006 The Schnell Shiraz/Grenache (\$17.95 - #0047662) – floral and blackberry with a bit of pepper in the mouth and a finish containing new leather.

Water Wheel 2007 Memsie (\$13.95 - #0656637) – enjoyable and fruity, a drink now wine at an easy going price.

Chile ... Red ...

Vina Requingua Puerta Viejo Reserve Merlot 2005 (\$12.95 - #0086579) – mint and blackberry followed by chocolate and black fruit ... good value.

France - Red ...

(Beaujolais)

Domaine des Mulins Morgon 2007 (\$18.95 - #0108258) – big cherry nose, earthy, black cherry with some tannin backbone in the mouth.

(Burgundy)

Albert Bichot 2006 Pinot Noir Vieilles Vignes (\$18.95 - #0043331) – very red fruit: strawberry, cherry, cranberry with good tannin backing; flavours of black cherry, earth and a licorice finish.

(Rhône)

Perrin 2006 Cotes du Rhone Nature (\$17.95 - #0948059) – very approachable and tasty, big cherry, spice, good fruit with a touch of drying tannins on the tongue.

France – White ...

(Burgundy)

Maison Champy 2006 Pernand-Vergelesses (\$29.95 - #0008151) – this is a Chardonnay with class ... and what's more, it has an extra long finish.

Germany - White ...

Schmitges 2007 Riesling Kabinett (\$18.95 - #0088047) – what a delicious taste, apple, peach, talc, mineral, and a touch of sweetness – the nose is so closed it hints not at what the palate has; but when it tastes like this, that's okay.

Italy - Red ...

(Campania)

Terradora Lacryma Christi del Vesuvio Rosso 2005 (\$20.95 - #093088) – nose of cinnamon,

sweet cherry and vanilla; palate is smoky and fruity – sour cherry and arid in the mouth ... there's big acidity and fine tannins on the finish.

(Piedmont)

Pio Cesare 2004 Barbaresco (\$73.95 - #0112474) – herbed and spiced, dried red berries, sour cherry and lots of tannins with good holding potential.

Pio Cesare 2006 Barbera D'Alba (\$21.95 - #093886) – spicy, raspberry nose, nicely herbed palate, good tannins and quite a bit of finesse.

(Tuscany)

Barone Ricasoli Casalferro 2004 (\$39.95 - #0469692) – smoky red berries, follows on palate with big red cinnamon and spice ... yummy now, but wait to drink and you will benefit – 5+ years.

Ca'Marcanda Promis 2006 (\$49.95 - #0745638) – tastes herbed encrusted because there is just so much here, lots of red fruit, spice and really tasty ... 7+ years.

(Veneto)

Corte Zovo 2005 Sa'Solin Ripasso (\$17.95 - #0650713) – still good value in a Ripasso, plummy and chocolaty on the nose; plums, black cherries, chocolate with a nice finish there's also a touch of leather before the herbs and black cherries take over.

Italy – White ...

(Umbria)

Tenuta Poggio Lupo Novilunio 2007 (\$17.95 - #0106419) – pineapple and melon on the nose, big hit of pineapple on the palate.

(Veneto)

Zenato Lugana Riserva Sergio Zenato 2006 (\$31.95 - #0928218) – apples, pears and honey notes which go seamlessly from nose to palate and then lingers on the finish.

New Zealand – Sparkling ...

Soljans Fusion Sparkling Muscat (\$16.95 - #0032797) – simple, sweet and bubbly, it's crisp and grapy. Not spectacular but lots of fun, if you're looking to do the bathtub full of bubbly this Valentine's Day this is what you can fill it with.

Spain – Sparkling ...

Castellblanch Brut Zero Cava Reserva (\$15.95 - #0094813) – here's a good bubbly with all the fun you'd expect. Apple, lemon zest and bright acidity – good price too.

USA ... Red ...

(California)

Folie a Deux 2007 Menage a Trois Red (\$19.95 - #0685158) – plummy, jammy, sweet raspberries, cherry cola, sweet herbs, I just adore the intense fruitiness of this wine – the Zinfandel really comes out.

Ridge 2005 Santa Cruz Mountain Estate (\$60.95 - #0089284) – coffee, mocha and blackberry on the nose which follows in the palate along with vanilla, cinnamon and a nice toastiness.

(Oregon)

Sarah Powell 2003 Pinot Noir (\$39.95 - #0076422) – this is a big 15.8% alcohol wine, which is huge for Pinot – so in your face with red fruits and berries.

Sherries and Port ...

Fernando de Castilla Classic Old Medium Amontillado Sherry (\$21.95 - #0721902) – very nutty with orange marmalade and cinnamon/nutmeg notes.

Take a Chance on Me ...

Say what you will about the funky smells and flavours in South African wines, but here's a funny wine that will fulfill your dreams of caffeine. *Café Culture 2008 Pinotage* (\$13.95 - #0072710); made by a producer dedicated to bringing out, or accentuating if you will, the coffee flavours in wine that can be derived from barrel ageing. This one is rather appealing and might just replace your cup of joe in the AM ... or maybe not, but it is a nice thought, right?

Grape Guy Top 3 ... what I'll be lining up for on February 14, 2009:

[Chateau des Charmes 2005 Methode Traditionelle Rosé](#) (\$28.95 - #0078055) - Ontario

[Schmitges 2007 Riesling Kabinett](#) (\$18.95 - #0088047) - Germany

[Graham Beck 2003 The Ridge Syrah](#) (\$25.95 - #0607812) – 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.



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!

© OntarioWineReview.com 2008. All rights reserved.

You may use the content of this newsletter by including full credit to Michael Pinkus, Grape Guy and a link to www.ontariowinereview.com