

OntarioWineReview Vintages Release Guide

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



OntarioWineReview: Vintages Release Saturday January 9, 2010

I have gone to a stars rating system which appears at the end of each review; here's the key to those 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.

Vintages always likes to show their good will towards their customers in the first release of the year, with this Value Wines and Under \$20 release.

Value Wines ...

It's after the holidays, the credit card bills are starting to come in and your wine collection is down a few bottles because of the dinners and gifts you've been dealing with. Good thing the LCBO Vintages branch feels your plight, time to stock up on those under 20-dollars wines. Starting off the "Smart Buy" wines is home of value priced wines, Chile: *Anakena 2009 Single Vineyard Viognier* (\$12.95 - #0045138), if you have not tried Viognier this is a great place to start. This version tastes like a cross between Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc with nice citrusy-grapefruit and mac apple all with a touch of honey (****). If you're looking for a delightful Chardonnay that won't break the bank check out the *D'Arenberg 2008 The Stump Jump Lightly Wooded Chardonnay* (\$14.95 - #0147520), pineapple, peach, pear, lovely fruit with just a tinge of vanilla, which comes from that light wooding - delicious (****½). Fans of New Zealand Sauv Blanc should look into a few bottles of *Rapaura Springs 2008 Sauvignon Blanc* (\$14.95 - #0142919) – this is the grape that made NZ famous and its here in all its classic glory: grassy and grapefruit with tropical notes, this one is not over the top, shows a lot of restraint and elegance (****). Moving onto the reds we'll start in the good ol' US of A with their signature grape: Zinfandel. *Gnarly Head 2007 Old Vines Zinfandel* (\$15.00 - #0678698) – cherry-raspberry pie on the nose with soft spice. Easy drinking Zin in which taste follows nose, simple but lots of fun; this wine has finally come back into form as a good value and good example of a wine made from the Zinfandel grape (****½). From Argentina comes the *Santa Julia 2008 Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon* (\$13.95 - #0093781), good blackberry on the nose with a juicy palate, and I'm going to go so far as to give an extra half mark for the price (****½) – a real must buy. Ending my "Smart Buy" picks is this *Giordano 2005 Vespero* (\$16.95 - #0072421) from Italy, a nice mix of red and black fruit, slightly jammy along the mid-palate but ends with a long plumy-cinnamony taste (****).

Australia – Red ...

Chapel Hill 2007 Shiraz (\$22.95 - #0743989) – one of the few wines above \$20 in this release, but it's a good one. Blackberry, spice, vanilla and woody notes on the finish. (****)

Mitolo 2008 Jester Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.95 - #0043224) – I like this better than the Shiraz that sits on the Essentials shelves. This Cab is incredibly juicy with big black fruit, a touch of herbs, some chocolate and a really nice spiced chocolate finish. (****½)

St. Hallett 2008 Shiraz/Grenache (\$14.95 - #0024117) – the price is nice for this dark chocolate, strawberry, cherry wine with rich fruit flavours and a lovely juiciness on the palate, there's also a little floral-spice thrown in for good measure; great value. (****½)

Canada – Red ...

(Ontario)

[Malivoire 2008 Gamay](#) (\$17.95 - #0091140)

Canada – White ...

(Ontario)

[Fielding Estate 2008 Pinot Gris](#) (\$18.95 - #0078519)

Chile – Red ...

Montgras 2007 Quatro (\$15.95 - #0050641) – aromas of black fruit with lots of nice spices and herbs, there's even a touch of cinnamon here, good fruit, spice and acid balance on the tongue. (****)

Chile – White ...

Casa Silva 2008 Reserva Sauvignon Blanc (\$13.95 - #0024216) – the nose is floral, tropical, and pineapple with bubblegum nuances, while the palate is floral, buckwheat honey, grapefruit with a grassy finish. (****)

Italy – Red ...

(Puglia)

Doppio Passo 2007 Primitivo (\$13.95 - #0134627) – it's back, one of my favourites from a couple of years ago; different vintage, same great taste. Plummy and slightly sweet on the palate, this wine has great Zinfandel qualities, easy quaffing, fresh and very fruit driven. (****½)

Italy – White ...

(Veneto)

Maculan 2009 Pinot Grigio (\$15.95 - #0734921) – refreshing and easy drinking, nice citrus and pineapple core notes with a touch of bite from the acidity on the back end. (****)

Portugal – Red ...

Mimo 2005 (\$17.95 - #0147918) – a typical 4 grape indigenous blend of Portuguese varietals, the fruit is red and tinged with vanilla and a touch of smoke on the nose; the palate is black fruit with lots of spices and herbs, all combine to make it very delicious. (****½)

Portugal – White ...

Quinta de Azevedo 2008 Vinho Verde (\$11.95 - #0727115) – nice price on this lovely lemony aromated wine with a hit of spritz on the zesty lime laden palate. (****)

Spain – White ...

Baron de Ley 2008 Blanco (\$12.95 - #0145995) – fresh citrus, green apple, up front fruit in a New World style, quite lovely and with a good finish, nice price too. (****)

United States – Red ...

(California)

Liberty School 2007 Syrah (\$18.95 - #0942383) – It's back and as delicious as ever. A floral-raspberry nose that offers some delicacy to the palate, all bathed in raspberry with a delightfully fresh finish. (****)

Paso Creek 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.95 - #0161141) – The fruit here has a "wow"-factor, with lots of it on the palate along with some spice and vanilla from the oak. (****)

United States – White ...

(California)

Menage a Trois 2008 Chardonnay (\$19.95 - #058592) – a very smooth and clean Chardonnay with fruity flavours of pear and pineapple, creamy vanilla, a touch of spice and really yummy fruit on the palate with a honeyed note on the finish; a little pricey in this market, but very nice. (****)

Grape Guy Top 3 ... what I'll be lining up for on January 9, 2010:

Santa Julia 2008 Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (\$13.95 - #0093781) – Argentina

Mitolo 2008 Jester Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.95 - #0043224) – Australia

Mimo 2005 (\$17.95 - #0147918) – Portugal

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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