

## Ontario Wine Review Vintages Release Guide

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



### Ontario Wine Review: Vintages Release Saturday January 10, 2009

For the first release of 2009 the LCBO shows a little class, a little care, and a little concern. They know you're just getting over the holiday season, they know your budget is probably a little tight, they know that they can't get blood from a stone, so the wines they are presenting are those value wines you wish they had last month, which means they were kinda holding out on you ... proving that the LCBO giveth and the LCBO taketh away. These are the wines that are deemed "Smart Buys"; and to follow are my recommendations as to which ones really are. After that we'll get into the selections from the rest of the world ... when we get there you'll find that as per usual full reviews for Ontario wines can be found on my website ([www.ontariowinereview.com](http://www.ontariowinereview.com)) - just click on the link. Now here we go, with whatever money you have left here's what to buy.

#### Smart Buys ...

Plenty of "smart buys" from plenty of countries in this release, we'll start with Argentina: the *Alamos 2007 Chardonnay* (\$13.95 - #0801571), this is a big Chard for not a lot of dough; tropical fruit along with apple, pineapple and banana, and what's more there's a lovely finish. From Australia there's the *D'Arenberg 2007 Stump Jump White* (\$14.95 - #0922203) a blend of 5 grapes where Riesling takes the lion's share (62%) of the workload - the typical Riesling flavours really come through while the other grapes soften it up but there's also a good seam of acidity here. Two reds from Australia also make my Smart Buys picks, including the *Kilikanoon 'The Lackey' Shiraz* (\$17.95 - #0005199) with its peppery, chocolate and blackberry smoothness; and *Pillar Box 2006 Red* (\$17.95 - #0685941), a big 15% red monster that's sweet and juicy on the palate with pepper, blackberry, sweet cherry and strawberry, along with black fruit and firm tannins.

Another white in the smart buy section comes to us via France, *Henri de Villamont 2006 Bourgogne Chardonnay* (\$19.95 - #0525121) with it's good mouthfeel, nice finish, ripe apples and good toastiness. Staying in France for some reds you'll find the *Chateau Pesquie Terrasses 2006* (\$15.95 - #0652313) to be an excellent value with a long spicy finish - but it's the peppered cherries and smoked licorice that'll drag you in long before the finish takes hold. The *Delas Freres Cotes du Rhone Saint-Esprit 2006* (\$15.95 - #0729962) is also good value from the old country with its nice dark fruit, cinnamon and white pepper influences.

It's all reds from here on in. From Canada we get the [Konzelmann 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve](#) (\$13.70 - #0112946) with its spices and herbs, blueberries and tart finish. *Mark West 2006 Pinot Noir* (\$23.95 - #0083329), from California, is considered a smart buy by the LCBO - its over \$20 so a bit of a hardship at this time of year (with all those Christmas bills soon coming due) but it's a lovely wine with lots of black cherry, earthiness, nice pepper notes and good tannins. The home of the good buys, Chile, delivers two in the Smart Buy category: *Montes 2007 Limited Selection Cabernet Sauvignon/Carmenere* (\$14.95 - #0016071) - with pepper, blackberry and mint on both the nose and palate and an exquisite finish of blackberry, white

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pepper and sweet strawberries. The other wine is a straight *Carmenere* (*Vina Tarapaca 2007 Gran Reserva* \$15.00 - #0057513) with mint, blackberry, spices, herbs and predominance of pepper.

My last three Smart Buys come from the old world, two from Italy and one from Spain. Italy delivers the *Illuminati Riparosso Montepulciano D'Abruzzo 2006* (\$14.95 - #0328997) which is a nice blend of red and black fruit along with pepper, spice and a good tannins backbone ... this should be on your list for a multiple purchase, because there is also good ageability here. Something a little simpler from the land shaped like a boot is *Il Passo di Sabina Rosso Veronese 2006* (\$14.95 - #0101402) it's plummy with nice black fruit. Finally, Spain is always good for at least one low priced delicious wine per release. This time it's the *Salinas Mo Monastrell 2006* (\$16.95 - #0095133) - peppery black fruit and a sweet mid-palate will have you screaming out, "Give me some Mo."

#### **Ontario ... Red ...**

[Konzelmann 2006 Shiraz](#) (\$13.20 - #0085118)

[Malivoire 2006 Gamay](#) (\$17.00 - #0591313)

#### **Ontario ... White ...**

*Konzelmann 2006 Reserve Riesling* (\$15.20 - #0200527)

#### **Argentina ... White ...**

*Cristobal 1492 Verdelho 2008* (\$14.95 - 0081182) - green apple, white fruit and a touch of citrus.

#### **Australia ... Red ...**

*Marquee Classic Artisan Wines 2006 GSM* (\$18.95 - #0075010) - big alcohol (14.9%) with an array of smells and flavours that wowed me from start to finish. Black fruit, plum, spice, herbs - I really liked this wine but it defied explanation as to why - all I know is that it was very tasty.

*Zonte's Footstep 2006 Shiraz/Viognier* (\$14.95 - #0072975) - floral, black fruit and white pepper, pleasant and ultimately shippable. Great price too.

#### **France ... Red ...**

##### **(Bordeaux)**

*Chateau L'Escart 2001 Cuvee Prestige* (\$22.95 - #0091363) - peppery, black fruit, woody, still with plenty of life left in it; can be held another 3 years or so but drinks very well right now.

##### **(Midi)**

*Domaine des Aspès 2005 Merlot* (\$14.95 - #0951665) - pretty nose, good fruit, easy drinking, good value.

#### **Germany ... White ...**

*Moselland Insignum Riesling Kabinett 2005* (\$13.95 - #0072355) - bit of sweetness, floral, peach and petrol is beginning to emerge. There's also rusty apple and a touch of honey. The finish is long and lingering.

#### **Italy ... Red ...**

##### **(Piedmont)**

*Marchesi di Barolo Maraia Barbera Monferrato 2006* (\$18.95 - #0748277) - lovely perfumed nose, light red plum and cherry with a slightly herbal quality - nice.

#### **Lebanon ... Red ...**

*Chateau Ksara 2006 Reserve du Couvent* (\$12.95 - 0443721) - very nice spice and blackberry ... sweet start with a dry finish, good light tannins.

### **New Zealand ... White ...**

*Distant Land 2007 Gewurztraminer* (\$19.95 - #0075549) - rose and floral nose there's an oily yet refreshing mouthfeel with the floral continuing in there too.

### **South Africa .... Red ...**

*Blue Cove 2006 Winemaker's Choice Cabernet Sauvignon* (\$13.95 - #0088823) - sweet cherry, plum and chocolate, very drinkable right now; can be held for further ageing.

### **USA ... Red ...**

#### **(California)**

*Cline 2006 Ancient Vines Mourvedre* (\$23.95 - #0066084) - sweet spiced plum, black cherry and chocolate notes.

*Zig Zag Zin 2005 Zinfandel* (\$18.95 - #0039982) - cherry, plum, rum, cola, chocolate, red fruit ... very fruit oriented.

### **USA ... White ...**

#### **(California)**

*Lockwood Vineyard 2006 Chardonnay* (\$18.95 - #0673731) - vanilla and apple with a cinnamon tinge.

### **Ports and Sherries ...**

*Lustau Solera Reserva Dry Amontillado Los Arcos* (\$19.95 - #0671115 - Sherry) - very nutty with orange marmalade and an almond finish.

*Croft 2003 Late Bottled Vintage Port* (\$18.95 - #0087601) - rich and fruity, cherries, plums, chocolate and spicy ... delicious.

### **Grape Guy Top 3 ... what I'll be lining up for on January 10, 2009:**

*Croft 2003 Late Bottled Vintage Port* (\$18.95 - 0087601) - Portugal

*Marquee Classic Artisan Wines 2006 GSM* (\$18.95 - #0075010) - Australia

*Domaine des Aspes 2005 Merlot* (\$14.95 - #0951665) – Chile

Happy Shopping.

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**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](mailto:michael@ontariowinereview.com). I look forward to hearing from you!

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