

## OntarioWineReview Vintages Release Guide

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



### OntarioWineReview: Vintages Release Saturday July 5, 2008

The LCBO is dropping us off in Argentina for this release, for a look and taste at Argentina's signature grape, Malbec. Now, Argentina isn't the only place Malbec is grown, nor is it the first place to find success with it. The Cahors region of France has long been considered the home of Malbec, and the Malbec grape is one of the 5 permitted in a Bordeaux blend (Merlot, Petit Verdot, Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc are the others). But it seems that Argentina has grabbed Malbec by the twig and berries and has made it its own. There are plenty of Malbecs in this release, I'll point you in the direction of my top 4 ... after that it's time to check out the rest of the world. As usual full Ontario wine reviews can be linked to on my website [www.ontariowinereview.com](http://www.ontariowinereview.com).

#### Argentinean Malbec

Most Malbecs are under \$20; you'll notice that as you peruse the Vintages magazine, but I thought I'd throw a scare into you right from the get go. The *Cantena Alta Malbec 2004* (\$63.95 - #0982355) is one of the most expensive I've ever seen ... it's smooth as silk, easy drinking and ageable for the next 5 to 10 years, but price seems a little high ... for my wallet anyway. So let's move on. Coming back to earth, you'll find that the *Finca Flichman Gestos Malbec 2007* (\$15.95 - #0068999) is more appropriately priced; it also has a plummy, chocolaty, tannin bite with a touch of floral on the nose. *Finca Sopenia Reserve Malbec 2006* (\$16.95 - #0066837) is an easy drinking Malbec with plenty of red fruit and red licorice, it does have some woody notes to it too, but not overly so ... very tasty. My Malbec of choice is the *Septima Malbec 2006* (\$15.95 - #0686113) this one can best be described in 6 words: blackfruit, chocolate, herb-y, with big bold tannins. Now there's gotta be something in here for you to try – at a price that fits into any and all budgets.

Another slight change in format this week: Reds and whites will appear under their country heading and countries appear alphabetically so you can find your favourite more easily. As always, Ontario will lead the way.

#### Ontario ...

**White** – Flat Rock Cellars 2006 “the Rusty Shed” Chardonnay (\$24.95 - #0001552)

**Red** – [Pillitteri Estates 2002 Family Reserve Merlot](#) (\$39.95 - #0071753)

#### Argentina ... Red ...

*Finca Sopenia Reserve Merlot 2006* (\$17.95 - #0063412) – chocolaty, black and red fruit in the mouth ... quite nice.

*Graffigna 2004 Grand Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon* (\$17.95 - #0060202) – smooth, black fruit oriented and a touch tannic.

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

*Amadio 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon* (\$24.95 - #0063784) – black fruits and chocolate.

*Barossa Valley Estate 2003 Ebenezer Cabernet Sauvignon* (\$39.95 - #0039537) – red fruit, plummy, herbs and spice ... sinfully smooth.

*Chateau Reynella 2005 Basket Pressed Shiraz* (\$34.95 - #0510628) – chocolate, eucalyptus, black fruit, good tannins yet smooth to the tongue-touch – quite nice.

*DeBortoli DB Selection Petite Sirah 2006* (\$14.95 - #0694802) white pepper is added to the chocolaty-black fruit that dominated the previous few wines. Great value.

*Taltami 2003 Shiraz* (\$24.95 - #0937219) – black / herb / spice ... 'nuff said.

#### Chile ... White ...

*Las Lomas 2007 Chardonnay* (\$14.95 - #0663021) – tree fruit driven: peaches, pears, apples, with a touch of lemon acidity poured over top.

*Tiera Del Fuego 2007 Reserva Sauvignon Blanc* (\$13.95 - #0072959) – lingering finish from this grassy,

grapefruit, pleasantly enjoyable summer sipper.

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

(Southwest) – *Chateau Le Raz Cuvee Grand Chene 2005* (\$18.95 - #0718932) – mix of black fruit and raspy-drying tannins.

**France ... Sparkling ...**

(Alsace) – *Domaine Allimant-Laugner Cremant D'Alsace Brut* (\$21.95 - #0030593) – lemon zest freshness, touch of sweetness, very refreshing.

**France ... White ...**

(Midi) – *Michel Gassier Les Piliers Viognier 2007* (\$18.95 - #0669531) – great alternative to Chardonnay – good use of oak for toasty-vanilla notes, pleasant rusty apple taste.

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

(Tuscany) – *Tenuta San Guido Guildalberto 2004* (\$67.95 - #0072439) – this one's lovely, if not a little pricey: black fruit dominated, sweet mid-palate, great finish.

**Italy ... White ...**

(Friuli) – *Attems 2007 Pinot Grigio* (\$19.95 - #0707950) – great summery fruit flavours with a tinge of barrel smoke and a bit weighty, though still very lively.

(Piedmont) – *Batasuolo Bosc Dla Rei Moscato D'Asti 2007* (\$19.95 - #0028175) – grapey, fruity with grapefruit cocktail on the mid-palate and a hint of refreshing fizz.

**New Zealand ... Red ...**

*Oyster Bay 2007 Merlot* (\$18.95 - #0692343) – best Oyster Bay Merlot I have tried in a very long time – good fruit and wood notes ... fans of this winery and Merlot in particular should love the cedary, black fruit character.

**Portugal ... Red ...**

*Adegaborba.PT Reserva 2004* (\$20.95 - #0080606) – fruit and licorice combo, supple in mouth with plum, vanilla, caramel and chocolate notes ... tastes like dessert in dry red form.

**Spain ... Red ...**

*Beronia Tempranillo Elaboracion Espeical 2006* (\$18.95 - #0723643) – smoked meat sandwich in a glass, with a big side of dark chocolate for dessert ... incredibly smooth.

**What's for Dessert? ...**

From Greece, *Commandaria St. Nicolas* (\$17.95 - #0692491) – 15% alcohol with a creamed sherry sweetness, orange and honey on the nose, lemon zest and something sweet ... delicious in the mouth with, amongst other things: vanilla-cream-caramel. Delicious and worth the dollars to pick up one or two.

**Take a Chance on Me ...**

*Bacalhoa Moscatel De Setubal 2001* (\$11.95 - #0996181) – a Portuguese dessert wine that's not too sweet and very tasty. Tastes like dried apricots that are lightly coated with honey ... interesting taste sensation for after dinner.

**Grape Guy's Top Three for July 5, 2008 ...**

*Las Lomas 2007 Chardonnay* (\$14.95 - #0663021) – Chile

*Septima 2006 Malbec* (\$15.95 - #0686113) – Argentina

*Adegaborba.PT Reserva 2004* (\$20.95 - #0080606) – 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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.ontariowinereview.com)