

OntarioWineReview Vintages Release Guide

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



OntarioWineReview: Vintages Release Saturday May 23, 2009

Another double-header from the LCBO's Vintages department – but this time they get a little lazy and focus on their “Essentials” list ... these are wines that are in Vintages all the time. For a complete rundown of what's good in the “Essentials” department [check out my review of the wines from November](#). Unfortunately, not all the good ones are in this focus – something tells me these are the ones that need an extra push. The other focus is New Zealand Reds – there are 9 in this release ... and I think only 2 are worth getting.

As usual, Ontario reviews can be found linked to my website (www.ontariowinereview.com) - the rest can be found right here – starting with the focus: New Zealand Reds ... for the Essentials, [check out my previous report from the fall list of what to get](#).

I have gone to a stars rating system which appears at the end of each review; here's how those stars break down:

5 = Outstanding ... 4.5 = Excellent ... 4 = Very Good ... 3.5 = Good ... 3 = Average

I'm always looking for good values 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.

New Zealand Reds ...

There are only two in this category that are truly worth getting, and they are:

Carrick 2006 Pinot Noir (\$39.95 - #0919837) – a little pricey but it had all the things I was looking for in Pinot. The nose delivers a big hit of cherry bowl: black, red and sour ... the palate was nice and juicy, yet with good structure and drying tannins along with the promise of that cherry fruit from the nose, which definitely comes out in the mouth. The finish is sour and black cherry (****). The other is not something you often see from New Zealand, Syrah: *Elephant Hill 2008 Syrah* (\$23.95 - #0121673) – an interesting wine that brings smoke, white pepper and raspberry to the glass – nice and delicate (** ½).

Ontario ...

Sparkling ... [Henry of Pelham Cuvee Catharine Brut](#) (\$29.95 - #0616441)

White ... [Megalomaniac 2007 Narcissist Riesling](#) (\$17.95 - #0067587)

Argentina – Red ...

Alta Vista 2006 Grande Reserve Terroir Selection Malbec (\$24.95 - #0686626) – this is a stunning wine. Blackberry and other supple black fruit, sweet cherry, vanilla, some spice, licorice whips, lots of elegance and finesse. A delicious wine that has some longevity for your cellar. (****)

Australia – Red ...

Hewitson Miss Harry 2006 (\$19.95 - #0107870) – a blend of 3 grapes that's spicy and peppery with lightly extracted red fruits – more delicate than expected. (****)

Two Hands 2007 Angels Share Shiraz (\$27.95 - #0009480) – a real fruit bomb big and jammy, slightly spicy and delicious with chocolate, black fruit and white pepper, big 15.5% alcohol with little sign of heat ... goes down too easy, so watch out. (**** ½)

Two Hands 2007 Gnarly Dudes Shiraz (\$27.95 - #0660043) – another fruit bomb, but this time with a little less alcohol (14.8%). Smoother and simpler than above: chocolate, big black fruit, raspberry puree and good tannins. (****)

Australia – White ...

Evans & Tate 2006 Chardonnay (\$19.95 - #0677765) – smells of melon and lemon, the taste of citrus, lemon/lime, is very crisp with hardly noticeable oaking – there does seem to be some alcohol heat here though. (****)

Canada – White ...**(British Columbia)**

Quail's Gate 2006 Chardonnay (\$19.95 - #0377770) – a nose of butter, peach and vanilla-caramel; the taste is pretty with a little floral and a bit of perfumyness, there's also butter, almond and good fruit flavours – overall a very pleasant experience. (****½)

Canada – Fruit Wine ...**(Quebec)**

Clos Saint-Denis 2007 Bourg Saint-Denis Cider (\$15.95 - #0089490) – baked mac apple with a hint of cinnamon – quite nice, if not simple. This is good, but there are better eing made in Quebec, we'll call this a primer. (****½)

Chile - Red ...

William Cole 2005 Columbine Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (\$15.95 - #0093856) – the nose is full of coffee grounds, chocolate and mint notes; the palate is earthy with plenty of dark fruit. (****)

Chile – White ...

Concha Y Toro 2007 Marques de Casa Concha Chardonnay (\$17.95 - #0342857) – lovely fruit nose; in the mouth it's juicy yet crisp with citrus, vanilla and good acidity on the tongue. (****)

France – Red ...**(Bordeaux)**

Chateau Destieux 2005 (\$69.00 - #0503011) – not your usual elegance from Bordeaux here: minty, tarry and blackberry on the nose with a touch of cedar; juicy palate that's got tons of holdability. (**** ½)

Chateau Rauzan-Gassies 2005 (\$73.00 - #0505693) – big blackberries and powerful tannins, very drying tannins, another Bordelais cellar dweller that's atypical. (****)

Clos Les Lunelles 2005 (\$69.00 - #0501718) – chocolate and blackberry, big wood tannins, black cherry, pencil lead, one to hold-hold-hold, and be ready for dark as pitch colour. (**** ½)

(Rhône)

Domaine Grand Veneur Chateauneuf-du-Pape 2006 (\$47.95 - #0989061) – minty / eucalyptus on the nose; juicy in the mouth with beautiful sweet blackberries, great finish; very new world in style but shows French elegance. (**** ½)

France – Rosé ...

Perrin Reserve Rosé 2008 (\$15.95 - #0719062) – serious rosé for serious rosé fans. Nice red berry nose with dry a strawberry bubblegum mouth – don't let that description fool you into thinking sweet it's a dry wine with heavy duty acidity and a raspberry finish. (****)

France – White ...**(Bordeaux)**

Chateau Nairac 2005 (\$49.00 - #0500777) – sweet vanilla chai tea on the nose; the palate develops a touch of spice, peach, lanolin and baked apples and pears – tasty and great to smell. (****)

Italy - Red ...**(Veneto)**

Monte Zovo 2006 Valpolicella Superiore Ripasso (\$19.95 - #0023523) – here's a beauty of a Ripasso, juicy blackberries, black cherry, plum, chocolate, nice tannins and fairly big alcohol

(14.5%); priced for a multi-buy, and ageable for at least 5-years. (****)

Italy – White ...

(Alto Adige)

Cantina Tramin Gewurztraminer 2007 (\$19.95 - #0117028) – a fun fruity Gewurzt from Italy that offers summertime up in the glass. The nose is light and spicy, the palate is rosy and spicy, the finish has a great spicy cinnamon quality. You see a pattern here? (**** ½)

(Sicily)

Duca di Castelmonte Tripudium Bianco 2007 (\$18.95 - #0117531) – lemony, citrus and crisp; touch of melon in the mouth and a lime-citrus finish. (*** ½)

New Zealand – White ...

Spy Valley 2008 Sauvignon Blanc (\$14.95 - #0686675) – big tropical fruit nose with gooseberry, grapefruit on the tongue – this is a four star wine but with the excellent price it offers great affordable value for those who like New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc – so I'll slip it a half mark for that. (**** ½)

South Africa – Red ...

Linton Park 2004 Shiraz (\$15.95 - #0910844) – nice fruit without the typical South African smell, in fact it's full of fruit with a little pepper and oak. Good price for this wine. (*** ½)

Spain – Red ...

Baron de Ley Reserva 2004 (\$21.95 - #0958868) – nice spice and herbs, blackberry and pencil lead and there's even some pleasant leather notes. (****)

United States – Red ...

(California)

Clos Lachance Estate 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$44.95 - #0104703) – I'm not knocking this wine in any way, it has juicy fruit, blackberries and cherries, great easy drinking style, but it is fairly standard fare; so I feel I have to ding it half a star for the price. (*** ½)

Cuvaison 2006 Pinot Noir (\$42.95 - #0714519) – this is what Cali-Pinot is all about, right down to the price; juicy sweet cherries, strawberries and raspberries, nice acidity that cleanses the palate. (****)

Liberty School 2005 Syrah (\$17.95 - #0942383) – now this is a good value Syrah from the US of A, nice smooth, rich fruited wine with a touch of white pepper, and juicy black fruit, just a light tap of tannins on the tongue. (****)

Ridgeline 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$39.95 - #0054072) - lots of red berries (strawberry / raspberry), just a lovely taste treat. Juicy and elegant Cab with some spice, cinnamon, vanilla and herbs. (**** ½)

(Oregon)

Next 2006 Pinot Noir (\$29.95 - #0070599) – the nose is violets and cherry; palate has a nice mineral note with sour cherry, a bit woody and earthy with a strawberry finish. (**** ½)

Grape Guy Top 3 ... what I'll be lining up for on May 23, 2009:

Monte Zovo 2006 Valpolicella Superiore Ripasso (\$19.95 - #0023523) – Italy

Alta Vista 2006 Grande Reserve Terroir Selection Malbec (\$24.95 - #0686626) - Argentina

Spy Valley 2008 Sauvignon Blanc (\$14.95 - #0686675) – New Zealand

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.



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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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