

OntarioWineReview Vintages Release Guide

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



OntarioWineReview: Vintages Release Saturday May 26, 2007

This release focuses on New Zealand ... probably because the New Zealand wine fair was just in town to promote all things Kiwi. The other focus is Roses, especially those from Ontario, so those two ports of call is where the first part of my review will be stopping. After that we'll tour the globe for other values.

New Zealand (Red) ... is known primarily for their whites (most notably Sauvignon Blanc), I thought I'd buck the trend and kick things off with a red, a blend you wouldn't normally see from the Zealanders: Cabernet Sauvignon (40%), Merlot (39%) and Malbec (21%) ... I thought this *CJ Pask Gimblett Road Cabernet/Merlot/Malbec 2004* (#032862 - \$19.95) was a tasty little sucker – soft on the front palate with black currant and raspberry on the nose, it got a little more aggressive near the end as the tannins showed up late to the party already started at the front of your mouth, but the black cherry and spicy flavours steal most of this show.

New Zealand (White) ... here's where the Wi's really shine: Sauvignon Blanc, and I picked out 3 of the 6 released as good value – 4 of 7 if you count the sparkling. Yes New Zealand makes a playfully fun *Sparkling Sauvignon Blanc 2006 from Mount Riley* (#032326 - \$22.95). The wine is made in the traditional method, but does not remain on the lees for too long, that way it retains the typical crisp taste of Sauvignon Blanc – this'll be something to yank out and serve on the patio or at a dinner party to surprise your friends with.

As for the still wines I started my tasting with the Oyster Bay at \$18.15, but found 3 better values and remarked on my favourite "a buck more and a buck better". Let's start with number three: the *Spy Valley Sauvignon Blanc 2006* (#686675 - \$19.95) with an in-your-face nose of pink grapefruit, grassy and citrus notes ... the taste is much the same, good acidity and crispness. Number two: for \$20.95 you can get something a little more elegant: *Jackson Estate Sauvignon Blanc 2006* (#963124) softer than the Spy Valley – not as much in-your-face-ness – but with all the good qualities you'd expect from a Sauv Blanc from this part of the world ... just a softer palate and nicer cleaner taste; depends on how up-front or subdued you like your Sauv. While the two previous are wonderful values for the money, my winner of the Sauv Blanc competition in this release is the *St. Clair Sauvignon Blanc 2006* (#554196) at \$18.95 it's a steal. A perfect nose that will have you sniffing the glass for hours, (if the wine stays around that long): limey, grapefruit and grassy. The balancing acidity in the mouth helps the passionfruit, gooseberry and lime travel all the way through ... ending in a tasty substantial grapefruit finish. Pick this one up for sure.

Ontario (Rose) ... there are four coming out May 26, my choice: *Strewn Cabernet Rose 2006* (#467753 - \$11.95), raspberry and strawberry nose, dry on the palate with peppered raspberries ... chill it up and drink it down.

Argentina (Red) ... two ready to drink Argentineans are available this Saturday: *Chakana Reserve 2004 Malbec* (#018671 - \$15.95) a taste treat of blackberry and cherry with subtle hints of white pepper; while *Del Fin del Mundo 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserva* (#031179 - \$13.55) offers great value, smooth and lush in the mouth with a sweet fruit core of red cherries ... the nose of chocolate with a hint of mint helps too.

Chile (Red) ... Chilean wine fans should pick up the *Carmen Reserve Syrah/Cabernet Sauvignon 2004* (#983106 - \$19.95) with eucalyptus, black fruit and spice on the nose and chocolate and black cherry through the mouth ... the start was a little soft but the mid-palate through to the finish is wonderful.

Italy (Red) ... the Italians are coming, the Italians are coming! No less than 25 Italian wines will be hitting Vintage shelves this weekend, here are two of my recommendations: the \$17.95 *Travaglini Nebbiolo 2004* (#030353) has good flavours, nice tannin structure, dry finish and is good value to boot. Here you'll find lots of pepperyness along with some black and red fruits. Want to spend a little more? The \$29.95 *Loredan Gasparini Capo Di Stato 2003* from Veneto (#356295) a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon (65%), Cabernet Franc (20%), Merlot (10%) and Malbec (5%) has plum, pepper, cinnamon and black fruit on the nose, but that is

only half of what you'll find as it passes the lips. Lush mouthfeel and late breaking tannins makes this a tasty number for now or later (recommended for up to 5 years in the cellar). Very Enjoyable.

Italian (White) ... end the day/meal with "something sweet", as my mom used to say (until I started gaining too much weight for her liking); *Villa Giada Ceirola Moscato d'Asti 2005* (#699900 - \$15.95) has some fizz that'll put the pop back in your step at the end of a heavy dinner. Peaches, pears, apples, fresh lime – it's all in there for the sniffing ... the tongue will pick up, amongst other things, sweet honeyed pears, "absolutely lovely" and the long finish keeps it hanging around ... yummy. Ciao, till next time.

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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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