

OntarioWineReview Vintages Release Guide

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



OntarioWineReview: Vintages Release Saturday November 21, 2009

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.

Today's release focuses on the high end wines you all know and love, wines from houses like Moët & Chandon, Chateau Montelena, Krug, Antinori, Opus One and plenty more. I figure you're gonna buy the big names anyway so my recommendation isn't gonna make or break the sales of those wines; but what I will be telling you about are those more obscure wine and ones under the \$50 mark ...

Premium Products for the Holiday ...

I'll start with this beauty of a Chardonnay from La Crema, 2007 Russian River Chardonnay (\$38.95 - #0067231), great balance and wonderful mouth feel here, a mix of fruit and oak with a nice lengthy finish; it's a Chardonnay that puts a smile on your face (****½). Another good Chardonnay is this one from New Zealand: Craggy Range 2007 Single Vineyard Chardonnay (\$41.95 - #0132043), good balance, pretty yet ballsy, with butterscotch and oak notes that mingle with pear, kiwi and quince; on the finish, plus there's some buttery-vanilla length. That's it for the whites, so we turn our attention to the reds. We start right here at home with the [Tawse 2007 Laundry Vineyard Cabernet Franc](#) (\$29.95 - #0130997). Next up, it's the Francis Ford Diamond Collection 2007 Blue Label Merlot (\$25.95 - #0595686), a very fruit forward Merlot with firm black fruit and a nice tannin backbone (****). Off to Veneto, Italy for the Monte del Fra Lena di Mezzo 2006 Amarone della Valpolicella (\$44.95 - #0134528), a nice wine with plum, black cherry and dark chocolate; rich, deep and delicious (****). The real bargain of this premium product release can be found in Spain: Atalaya 2007 Almansa (\$21.95 - #0132605) the nose is cherry fruit and blackberry, the palate is very appealing with spice, plummy, juicy fruit and nice tannins, the price is incredibly appealing too (*****).

Argentina – Red ...

Chakana Yaguarete Collection 2009 Malbec (\$12.95 - #0003509) – juicy black fruit on both the nose and palate all at a great price, an extra half mark for value. (****½)

Kaiken 2006 Ultra Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.95 - #0135202) – what Kaiken did with their Ultra Malbec they've done with Cab Sauv, this wine is a real pleasure to drink with lots of chocolate and black fruit, big alcohol – 14.5%. (****)

Canada – Red ...

(British Columbia)

[Mission Hill 2007 SLC Syrah](#) (\$36.95 - #0068379) – huge chocolate smells with plenty of tannin heartiness on the palate along with black pepper and blackberries. (****)

(Ontario)

[Stonechurch 2007 Reserve Syrah](#) (\$19.95 - #0131300)

Chile – Red ...

Santa Carolina 2007 Reserva de Familia Carmenere (\$19.95 - #0034942) – minty black fruit, creamy in the mouth with nice spice on the finish. (****)

France – Red ...

(Rhone)

Les Vignerons de Roquemaure Lirac 2007 (\$16.95 - #0142737) – smooth blackberry with enough tannins to make them noticeable but not overpowering. (****)

Perrin & Fils 2007 Cotes du Rhone-Villages L'Andeol Rasteau (\$19.95 - #0976845) – this wine will last 10 or so years so buying it now will seem like a bargain in years to come; raspberry, strawberry and cherry with chocolate and some nifty tannins. Half mark for its value to ageability ratio. (****½)

(Southwest)

Chateau de Gaudon Tradition Cahors 2006 (\$13.95 - #0104935) – the nose is licorice and smoky; the flavours are smoky blackberry and cassia all quite juicy, which is surprising for a region known for big tannins; but the value is still there. (****½)

France – White ...

(Loire)

Gilles Blanchet 2008 Fouilly-Fume (\$21.95 - #0141747) – light and delicate with floral and orange blossom. (****)

Germany – White ...

Kurt Darting 2007 Riesling Kabinett (\$16.95 - #0950212) – peach and dried apricot with wild flower honey notes on the nose; honeyed apricots on the palate with pear nectar and a hint of sweetness that wraps it all together nicely – good length on the finish. (****½)

Italy – Red ...

(Puglia)

Surani Costarossa 2007 Primitivo di Manduria (\$19.95 - #0134593) – plummy, chocolaty, red fruit, vanilla, a touch of spice and good weight in the mouth, this one's a treat for Zinfandel fans. (****)

(Tuscany)

Argiano NC Non Confunditur 2006 (\$24.95 - #0072397) – fresh and fruity with nice heft from those tannins; it opens fruity, ends ballsy and the middle is where this wine shines with plum, cherry and smoke. The observant amongst you will notice this is a screwcap wine, from Tuscany; the world is a-changin'. (****½)

Santa Margherita 2006 Chianti Classico (\$19.95 - #0091694) – good flavour, very commercial with herbs, sour cherry and cranberry notes, there's a delicate use of oak here. (****)

Selvapiana 2006 Chianti Rufina (\$24.95 - #0121202) – juicy red cranberries and sour cherries, herbs and spice all mingle with cocoa powder dryness. (****)

(Veneto)

Masi 2004 Grandarella (\$28.95 – 0606921) – a unique blend of Refosco and Carmenere made in the Amarone style of drying the grapes. Big, black and spicy with vanilla and leathery flavours on the finish. (****)

Italy – White ...

(Abruzzo)

Cantina Tollo Aldiano Trebbiano D'Abruzzo 2008 (\$14.95 - #0134502) – this one starts with nice acidity and builds from there, pretty floral and apple notes with a touch of lemonade on the medium length finish. (****)

New Zealand – Red ...

Torlese 2008 Pinot Noir (\$20.95 - #0699330) – blackberry and black cherry nose; dark fruit palate with good acidity and oak. (****)

New Zealand – White ...

Mount Riley 2008 Sauvignon Blanc (\$15.95 - #0981670) – bright fruit aromas with gooseberry, grassy all over but not the usual slap in the olfactories that is typical New Zealand Sauv Blanc, this one shows delicious restraint, still with good acidity and all at a good price. (****½)

Portugal – Dessert ...

Messias 2004 Late Bottled Vintage Port (\$16.95 - #0140863) – this one takes a few sips to get into but once there it's delicious. Cherry marmalade on the nose with a plethora of flavours including black cherry, chocolate, spice, raisins, dried cherries and much more. (****)

Portugal – Red ...

Sogrape 2003 Reserva Douro (\$10.75 - #0335208) – this wine tastes as fresh as any wine, and it's already 6 years old. Plumy, strawberry, very fruity and very sippable; this one gets an extra value mark for sure, \$10.75, this is one you should have on hand for the holidays. (****½)

Portugal – White ...

Aveleda Follies Vinho Verde Alvarinho 2008 (\$15.95 - #0059048) – lemon-lime on the nose, good citrus notes with tropical and tangerine and grapefruit cocktail in the mouth. (****)

Spain – Red ...

Cuatro Pasos Mencía 2007 (\$16.95 - #0039313) – every year I wanna like this wine (cause I love animals – there's a big paw print on the label) and every year it falls short of expectations – this year it finally delivers: smoky, blackberry, cassis with a dusty fruit finale; finally this wine comes into the fold of the recommendable. (****)

Palacios Remondo La Vendimia 2008 (\$15.95 - #0674564) – plums, cherries, chocolate with a very attractive nose; the palate is sweet on fruit with vanilla and a mixture of red and black cherries. (****½)

United States – Red ...

(California)

Hahn Estates 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$17.95 - #0057877) – great value in a Cali-cab: black fruit, spice, plum, vanilla and cinnamon, nice complexity at a good price point. (****)

Kenwood 2007 Pinot Noir (\$21.95 - #0943225) – a new world style Pinot with fresh dark fruit, black cherry, cranberry and tannins on the palate; dry and quite hefty on the tongue. (****)

Grape Guy Top 3 ... what I'll be lining up for on November 21, 2009:

Atalaya 2007 Almansa (\$21.95 - #0132605) – Spain

Kaiken 2006 Ultra Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.95 - #0135202) – Argentina

Sogrape 2003 Reserva Douro (\$10.75 - #0335208) – 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!

© 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