

OntarioWineReview Vintages Release Guide

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



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You hang around the LCBO long enough and you start seeing recurring themes emerge ... one of the most popular seems to be the annual Australian release. It seems like just yesterday Australia suddenly popped onto the scene emerging as a powerhouse on the world wine stage, but in actuality they have been at this wine making game for over a century – it just took this little thing called marketing and a grape called Shiraz to make us all see the Aussie light. So now without further ado, let's look at what the LCBO has assembled for us to buy from the Land Down Under.

Following the spotlight I'll look at the other parts of the globe starting with Ontario and then alphabetically. As usual the full review of Ontario wines are linked back to my website (www.ontariowinereview.com). Also see the France (Rhône) section for my picks on the mini-Rhône release.

Australia ...

I was mostly unimpressed with the four Australian whites in this release, they were either uninspiring or just plain over-priced; can't blame the producer or agents though, I'm sure the LCBO took their healthy cut of these. The only white worth exploring is the *Mornington Estate 2005 Chardonnay* (\$22.95 - #0072850). And for those who need a reminder of summer check out the *Turkey Flat 2007 Rosé* (\$20.95 - #0068916), which is loaded with red fruit and a dry pleasant finish.

As for the reds, there were a few more inspired choices here, like the always interesting and never disappointing *Elderton Estate 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon* (\$29.95 - #009175), fans of Elderton wines will be impressed by this one. There's the *Gemtree 2006 Uncut Shiraz* (\$27.95 - #0627844) with its big bold and peppery black fruit, herbs and nice use of oak for seasoning, there's also some licorice and chocolate thrown in for good measure – and when I say big, I'm talking alcohol, 14.5%. *Langmeil 2006 Hangin' Snakes Shiraz / Viognier* (\$22.95 - #077685) might seem like a Freudian name wine, and who knows, with the frivolity the Aussies are known for it could have been made by a naked winemaker, but that does not detract from the lovely black fruit and floral notes or the pepper and spice on the palate, another 14.5 wine. I was knocked over (bang bang) by the taste and price of the *Maxwell 2006 Silver Hammer Shiraz* (\$19.95 - #0089599) good pepperiness which mixes well with the deep, rich black fruit. Those looking to spend a few more bucks on their Australian wine should look no further than the *Syan 2005 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon* (\$43.95 - #0072629) – I really liked this one and so will you, great nose, big taste.

A few years ago I bought the first offering of *The Black Chook Shiraz / Viognier* (\$17.95 - #0066738), now this 2007 version follows in the footsteps of the '06 – delicious and tasty with pepper and floral notes on the taste and smell. I'm a fan of the Thorn-Clarke wines I have tried over the years and this *Thorn-Clarke 2005 Terra Barossa* (\$15.95 - #0684357) is no different; first it is an excellent buy for under \$16, subtle flavours and lingering taste it's the pepper and robust black fruit you've come to expect from Australia with a whole lot more.

Three other wines should make your Australian list. Both the sparklings: *Skillogalee Sparkling Riesling* (\$23.95 - #0072868) and the *Wyndham Estate Bin 555 Sparkling Shiraz* (\$18.95 - #0065391) are good value and interesting wines, the shiraz delivers an interesting spiciness and sweetness you don't usually associate with Shiraz, while the Skillogalee has my review attached

to it in the magazine, so you'll know my thoughts. And while on the subject of sweetness, you have got to put your hands on a bottle of the *Penny's Hill Vintage 2004 Fortified Shiraz* (\$37.95 - #0068973 – 500ml), big, ripe, sweet cherry with the pepperiness of Shiraz, too cool.

That wraps up Australia, as for the wines from the rest of the world, here goes:

Ontario ... Dessert ...

[Henry of Pelham 2007 Cabernet Franc Icewine](#) (\$39.95 - #0672402 – 200ml)

[Reif Estate 2005 Vidal Icewine](#) (\$24.95 - #0544791 – 200ml)

Ontario ... Reds ...

[Vineland Estate 2005 Elevation Cabernet Merlot](#) (\$24.95 - #0088880)

Ontario ... Rosé ...

[Henry of Pelham 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé](#) (\$14.95 - #0685610)

Ontario ... Whites ...

[Fielding Estate 2007 Unoaked Chardonnay](#) (\$15.00 - #0078527)

Argentina ... Red ...

Norton 2005 Reserva Malbec (\$17.95 - #0017061) – sweet black cherry, a little bit of blackberry and a touch of chocolate.

Austria ... Dessert ...

Lenz Moser Beerenauslese Prestige 2006 (\$16.95 - #0930255 – 375ml) – succulently sweet wine with honeyed peaches and sweet pears.

Chile ... Red ...

Santa Ema Reserve Merlot 2005 (\$14.95 - #0642538) – minty black fruit, cassis and pepper. Good value too.

Santa Rita Medalla Real Reserva Especial 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.95 - #0275594) – black and red fruit galore, big and bold with a holding potential of 10 years – all for 20 bucks, that's a no brainer.

Chile ... White ...

Cousino-Macul Antigas Reservas Chardonnay 2007 (\$14.95 - #0730044) – peach, over-ripe apple, touches of vanilla, nice use of oak for flavouring. More good value here.

France ... Red ...

(Bordeaux) – *Chateau Brehat 2001* (\$22.95 - #0043828) – nicely aged with still a touch of tannins, dried fruit, leather. This is a good deal for a pre-aged Bordeaux.

Chateau D'Argadens 2004 (\$18.95 - #0681643) – big tannic punch, cedar, oak and black fruit flavours.

(Rhone) – A mini Rhone release of six wines of which 4 offered bang for the buck ...

Domaine Deforge Cotes du Rhone-Villages 2005 (\$17.95 - #0079053) – black fruit, licorice and big tannins.

E. Guigal Cote-Rotie Brune et Blonde 2004 (\$69.95 - #0352534) – lighter than expected red fruit, cherries and berries, good tannin structure, dries out the tongue to desert status, but very palatable none the less.

La Ferme du Mont Cotes Capelan Chateauneuf-du-Pape 2005 (\$45.95 - #0078857) – chocolate, black cherry, lengthy finish and a cellaring potential of 10 years plus.

Montirius Vacqueyra Le Clos 2005 (\$28.95 - #0076547) – beautifully smooth, black fruit, licorice, chocolate, bit of oak flavour. Just a delicious complex and enjoyable wine.

(Southwest) – *Chateau du Cedre Cahors le Prestige 2005* (\$25.95 - #0969212) – inky black

colour, blackberry, sweet oak, cherry with a dark chocolate mid-palate.

France ... White ...

(Alsace) – *Anne Boecklin 2005 Pinot Gris Furstentum* (\$25.95 - #0080507) – sweet peach, floral and perfume; there's also a little bit of developing petrol notes.

Germany ... White ...

Lingenfelder 2007 Riesling Bird Label (\$14.95 - #0568634) – great price, great taste, delicious smell; consistently good value in an everyday Riesling.

Domdechant Werner Riesling Spatlese 2003 (\$25.95 - #0654830) – beautiful nose of tropical fruit, peach and a hint of petrol; sure it's sweet but with good balancing acidity.

Italy ... Red ...

(Tuscany) – *Antinori Badia a Passignano Chianti Classico Riserva 2004* (\$39.95 - #0384552) – plums and chocolate, silky smooth, great mouthfeel.

Capezzana Barco Reale di Carmignano 2006 (\$17.95 - #0508531) – cedar, dark fruit, leather, rich mouthfeel, good tannins.

Castello Vicchiomaggio Ripa Delle More 2004 (\$38.95 - #0983775) – red berry, very fruit forward, soft dusty tannins.

(Veneto) – *Cchia Amarone Della Valpolicella 2005* (\$39.95 - #0084087) – well worth it's \$40 price tag – sweet vanilla and cherries and plenty more.

Italy ... White ...

(Piedmont) – *Principessa Gavia Gavi 2007* (\$21.95 - #0250696) – fresh with mineral-stoniness, dry apple, lemon and other citrus, very refreshing.

New Zealand ... Red ...

Allan Scott 2007 Pinot Noir (\$24.95 - #0068437) – earthy, cranberry and sour cherry, good dry slightly leathery finish.

New Zealand ... White ...

Distant Land 2007 Sauvignon Blanc (\$19.95 - #0677542) – great fruitiness that makes it taste sweet, good grapefruit smell and taste, nice even acidity.

South Africa ... Red ...

Graham Beck 2006 Gamekeeper Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.95 - #0002519) – Spices, herbs, blackberry, smooth and lush in the mouth. A real winner.

Spain ... Red ...

Paso a Paso Tempranillo 2006 (\$14.95 - #0082206) – big cherry, big plum, big colour, big taste – good price.

Tinto Pesquera Reserva 2004 (\$47.95 - #0323345) – smooth yet robust, very ageable with lingering dry tannins on the tongue.

USA ... Red ...

Clos la Chance Ruby-Throated Cabernet Sauvignon 2005 (\$17.95 - #0966069) – chocolate, blackberry, cherry, pepper and spice, with sweet herbs on the mid-palate. Very nice.

Ports and Sherries ...

Spain – *Osborne Pedro Ximenez 1827 Sweet Sherry* (\$17.95 - #0047944) – think raisin pie or pecan pie filling, tasty sweet and yummy, there's a touch of brown sugar and caramel. Those with a sweet tooth will really dig it.

Take a Chance on Me ...

This wine has that typical South Africa smell that I find a bit off-putting but then I tasted it; there

are good earthy notes with lots and lots of dark fruit and something else that brings out the intensity of flavours in the wine and suppresses any kind of funk. I have learned that time will, sooner or later, dissipate that smell so buy a couple of these and wait 5 years before opening: *Darling Cellars Onyx Kroon 2003* (\$17.95 - #0900639).

Grape Guy Top 3 ... what I'll be lining up for on October 11, 2008

Thorn-Clarke 2005 Terra Barossa (\$15.95 - #0684357)– Australia

Montirius Vacqueyra Le Clos 2005 (\$28.95 - #0076547) – France

Lenz Moser Beerenauslese Prestige 2006 (\$16.95 - #0930255 – 375ml) - Austria

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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