

OntarioWineReview Vintages Release Guide

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



OntarioWineReview: Vintages Release Saturday October 13, 2007

The first Vintages release of October takes us to Bordeaux and Scotland ... now in truth I am not much of a scotch drinker, no matter how much water I cut the stuff with I still can't get it down the throat, so unfortunately you scotch drinkers are on your own – though I must tell you there are some interesting Cask Strength Arran Malts coming out, ranging in alcohol strength of 46 to 57.8% ... enough to set fire to your mouth ... if that's your thing - enjoy.

As for the Bordeauxs being released, there are a few good values on some excellent tasting wines; and although the French are getting their arses kicked by the Aussies worldwide as far as who's buying what from where ... French wine still remains the benchmark by which all others gauge themselves. So, without further ado, I present to you some of the wine, if you dare, by which all others are compared.

Bordeaux ... When most people think of Bordeaux they think red wine, but Bordeaux also makes quite a few tasty whites – the Chateau de Cruzeau Blanc 2004 (\$22.95 - #966010) is just such a creature. The nose has oaky and vanilla notes, while the flavours are all over the map: vanilla, soft apple, floral and tree fruit, quite satisfying and delicious. Now it's onto what most people know Bordeaux for ... red.

Red wines from Bordeaux come in all price categories. I tried to stay under \$40 for this report ... I have 2 under \$20, 2 under \$30 and one for \$37.95, that would be the Chateau Colombier-Monpelou 2003 (#43851) with its lush red fruit in the mouth, with good cherry and plum nuances – my notes say “very tasty”, and that should suffice. Dropping down the price-ladder by \$10 is the Chateau Pont de Guitres 2003 (\$27.95 - #45666). Cherries, chocolate and great red fruit with a tannin backbone – delicious now but definitely something to hold onto for another few years. At \$21.95 Chateau Bellevue 2004 (#45708) is a tasty treat that keeps you coming back for more; never mind that funky off-putting nose, once you get it past the lips its delicious. Domaine de Contemerle Grains de Terroir 2003 (\$18.95 - #47217) is a wine at a price many of us can afford. Plumy, cassis, black cherry nose; good mouthfeel, rich tannins and black fruit dominate past the gums. Finally, the Chateau Haut-Colombier 2005 (\$17.95 - #47217) needs to be opened in advance or decanted, but once it is you'll find cherries, raspberries, chocolate and coffee rule the roost ... there are also some definite oaky flavours but they dissipate with some time open, leaving you with dried black fruits.

Italy (Sparkling) ... Italy will kick off the rest of the world for us with this Santa Margherita Prosecco Di Valdobbiadene Brut (\$18.95 - #687582). A nose of green apple, a little pear and some citrus, culminating in the mouth with toasted apple chips and a dusting of lemon juice.

Germany (White) ... Staying in the old world of wine we get this German Riesling from Langwerth Von Simmern 2004 Kabinett (\$22.95 - #49890) with its peachy, minerally nose – peach beginning and petrol notes mid-palate; very tasty. If you have your heart set on a Riesling this release, this is the one to get.

Spain (Red) ... Spain is known for good wines and good value; this Juan Gil Tinto 2005 (\$21.95 - #1677) may be a little pricier than you're used to from Spain, but then again it really is worth it. In my effort to put descriptors on this wine I found myself lost in the beautiful aromas and luscious flavours. This wine defies description, it truly is one to just sip and enjoy – with or without a slab of meat.

France (Red) ... I have this wine listed as my “Holy Crap Selection” – partly due to its price and partly due to its flavours. From Burgundy comes Vigne de L'Enfant Jesus Beaune Premier Cru 2005 (#43257) – a delicious lush Pinot that must be what “they” talk about when “they” talk about a sublime Pinot. The earthiness is suppressed by the plums, strawberries, raspberries and cherries – but it's there nonetheless; good tannin and excellent length. And all this could be yours if the price of \$104.95 is right. Waiter, I'll have two, and he's paying.

Australia (White) ... From the old world to the new world in one easy step. We'll kick off our tour of the

wines outside Europe with a trip through Australia. D'Arenberg 2006 The Hermit Crab Viognier/Marsanne (\$16.95 - #662775) is quite a treat with apples and pears dominating the nose with a little pineapple back-up and a "fizzy" smell. The mouth exhibits lots of tropical fruits and is quite yummy.

Australia (Red) ... Long names can either detract from a wine's appeal or enhance it. Last release Elderton brought out "Friends"; – this time out we get a specific friend: Lorraine. Elderton Barossa Ode to Lorraine Cabernet Sauvignon/Shiraz/Merlot 2002 (\$39.95 - #976423) – this is one heck of a good friend. Cinnamon, cedar and spice are the most powerful smells on the nose with lots more subtler ones in the background. On the tongue I picked up quite a bit of sweet fruit with a niggling of tannin and a port-like finish ... very yummy and very enjoyable; a friend well-worth spending time with.

California (Red) – A few weeks back Cline brought us an Ancient Vines Mouvedre, which I quite enjoyed, in my review I hinted at a 2005 Ancient Vines Zinfandel (\$18.95 - #719211) I had tried not too long ago. Well it seems I was ahead of the LCBO a U.S.-based friend of mine knew my love of Zin and brought me a few bottles, so I know this wine intimately. This is a supple and enjoyable Zin right from the get-go. Lots of cherry, rum, cola and sweet fruit on the nose. A sweet mid-palate turns tannic on the finish with a zing; this one's age-worthy for a few more years easy. This release also brings a re-issue of the Cline 2004 Red Truck (\$15.95 - #693903), this is a fruit bomb loaded with cherries and plums in a vanilla wash. And Toasted Head brings back its Shiraz to LCBO shelves (\$19.95 – 42937 – Vintage 2004); lovely red fruit and spice – this one also dabbles with vanilla nuances.

Argentina (Red) ... More value from Argentina in the form of these wines, which are each \$14.95. The Alamos 2006 Malbec (#467951) – plummy, jammy and black fruit nose with smooth, easy-going plum-rich tastes, plus there's some aging years ahead. Jacques & Francois Lurton bring us their 2005 Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (#591735) another easy drinking pick with dark fruit all over it.

Chile (Red) ... I have always loved the name "Valdivieso", it just sounds so foreign yet rolls off the tongue: Val-Di-Vie-So. Said right it sounds like a sentence all it's own, or a girl named Val from a city called Vieso. Anyway, it's been awhile since I've seen a Valdivieso wine on the shelves at the Lick-Bo, so wasn't I happy to see a 2005 Syrah (\$17.95 - #45153) just so I could pronounce the name again. But you're probably wondering how it tastes: rich and delicious with chocolate, eucalyptus, herbs and spice – that's what little Val's are made of.

South Africa (Red) ... South Africa is one of those country's where I find the wines lacking ... well actually that's not exactly true, it's not what they lack that I find off-putting, it's what they have; a funky road tar, earthy, galvanized rubber smell in many of their reds especially; it's something I just can't get passed. So wasn't I happy to find two in this release that toned the typical down to give us something tasty and pleasant. Coleraine 2005 Fire Engine Red (\$16.95 - #663237) a 50/50 Merlot/Shiraz blend that foregoes the heavy-handed road tar aromas for more subtle flavours and smells. Coffee, mocha and sour cherry greet the nose; the road tar shows up only slightly on the tongue, but is masked by sweeter fruit flavours and a big lip smacking "yum". There's also Raka'a 2003 Spliced (\$17.95 - #37457) a blend of four grapes: cab, merlot, ruby cab and Shiraz, which has some pleasant dark chocolate, integrated into it. There again is the South Africa smell, but the taste is so appealing and the finish so delicious you forgive its shortcomings on the nose.

What's for Dessert ... A sweetie from Cyprus called Keo Commandaria St. John (\$11.95 - #101451). Sweet sherry nuances on the nose; raisins and almonds, honey, dried apricots, peaches and chocolate notes all kick around on the palate. A delicious sweetie, that'll warm you up in front of the fire, for those cold nights to come.

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 2007. 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