

OntarioWineReview Vintages Release Guide

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



OntarioWineReview: Vintages Release Saturday September 27, 2008

Another double bill at the LCBO this release with Burgundy taking the lion's share and Santa Barbara (California) picking up some crumbs. I'll look at the wines from each region and tell you what is good to buy, good to hold and, well, the rest is up to you. There are also reviews of Champagne, Sake, Port and 25 other wines from around the world. As usual the full review of Ontario wines are linked back to my website (www.ontariowinereview.com).

Burgundy (France) ... White ...

The land of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay takes center stage this week at the LCBO and as you might know this region is not known for value, it is known for high prices ... so my job is to cut through the expensive stuff and give you some value (if there are some to be found) or tell you the one worth all that extra money. I start with the *Chateau de la Cree Chassagne-Montrachet Morgeot 2006* (\$79.95 - #0087163), I never look at a wine's price until the very end, and with this one it was no different ... but it stood out amongst all the others ... buttery, oaky, but not overpowering as there was also plenty of peaches and apples coming through too – it's also very yummy and full on the palate. As they say, "go big or go home" – this is the one to get if you have some extra bucks burning a hole in your pocket. Value seekers should look for the *Moillard Macon-Aze 2006* (\$16.95 - #0084632) with its touch of floral and slightly sweet finish – this one also has plenty of pineapple core and under-ripe apple to boot. Delicious. There is also a sparkling on the list: *Bailly Lapierre Cremant de Bourgogne Pinot Noir Brut 2005* (\$19.95 - #0045831), fruity and seemingly sweet on the palate, this bubbly is apple driven from start to finish.

Burgundy (France) ... Red ...

Once again we have to balance value with big taste and longevity of flavour. The best value in the Burgundy wines is *Alain Geoffrey Bourgogne Pinot Noir 2006* (\$17.95 – 0084475) with its strawberry nose and earthy-red fruit palate, slight tannins on the tongue and well priced for the region. Next up the ladder is the *Domaine Chanson Beaune Teurons 2005* (\$52.95 - #0084426) with lovely red fruit, mainly strawberry, and earth – good rich tannins and the prettiest nose you'll ever smell ... excellent finish that holds for a good long time. Finally there's the *Raphael Dubois Nuits-Saint-Georges 2006* (\$53.95 - #0084608) with more subtle fruit flavours and smells; the earthy nuances are not so in-your-face and a smooth palate pleasing flavour. All of these wines are hold-worthy, though the last two are longer keepers than the first.

Santa Barbara (California) ...

It's a small release of Santa Barbara wines of which two caught my palatal interest: *Belle Gros Clark & Telephone Vineyard 2006 Pinot Noir* (\$47.95 - #0652883), the difference between Cali-Pinot and Burg-Pinot is usually night and day, this one is soft, supple, and earthy on the finish; the palate reminds me of fresh raspberries right off the vine, with a touch of tartness. The other wine comes from *Santa Barbara Winery, the 2005 Syrah* (\$20.95 - #0630616), what a beautiful nose this one has: white pepper, mocha, some dried fruits – the palate has mouth clearing acidity and good tannins structure with lots of herbs and spices. Less alcohol than the [2001 Syrah](#) I tried a few months ago from the same producer, so this one's got a track record for aging potential.

As far as the wine from the rest of the world goes, I'll start with Ontario and then go in alphabetical order:

Ontario ... Dessert ...

[Chateau des Charmes 2006 Late Harvest Riesling](#) (\$19.95 - #0432930)

[Birchwood Estate 2006 Cabernet Franc Icewine](#) (\$64.95 - #0086355)

Ontario ... Reds ...

[Ridgepoint 2005 Meritage](#) (\$22.95 - #0088963)

Ontario ... Whites ...

[Flat Rock Cellars 2007 Twisted](#) (\$17.15 - #0001578)

[Henry of Pelham 2007 Off-Dry Reserve Riesling](#) (\$15.95 - #0557165)

[Ridgepoint 2006 Medium Dry Riesling](#) (\$15.00 - #0088864)

Argentina ... Red ...

Navarro Correas Coleccion Privada 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot/Malbec (\$14.95 - #0064485) – blackberry and cassis with some chocolate and a spicy finish that leaves you scratching your tongue. Good price too.

Australia ... Red ...

Oddfellows Svengali 2005 Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon (\$21.95 - #0072611) – cherries, chocolate and pepper, this tasty wine has a fair bit of bite.

Thorn-Clarke 2005 Shotfire Quartage (\$23.95 - #0024091) – five grape combination with a nice nose and pleasant taste, good balanced between the dark fruit, pepper, spice, herbs, sweet tobacco and cherry oak.

Chile ... Red ...

Casa Lapostolle 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$15.95 - \$0398800) – two Lapostolles in this release – go with the cheaper so you can buy more – this one's very tasty with lots of black fruit. The flavours and finish is all chocolate, cassis and spice driven, big alcohol too at 15%.

Santa Carolina Reserva de Familia 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.95 - #0684597) – another good wine from Chile with chocolate smoothness along with cassis, blue and black berries. Tasty.

Chile ... White ...

Baron Philippe de Rothschild 2007 Reserve Chardonnay (\$13.95 - #0081257) – okay and smoky with vanilla and plenty of white fruit. Good value.

France ... Sparkling ...

Taittinger Brut reserve Champagne (\$63.95 - #0814723) – yeasty and toasty with lots of bubbles and fizz ... great baked apple flavour.

France ... Rosé ...

Domaine Sorin Terra Amata Cotes de Provence Rosé 2007 (\$16.95 - #0071191) – pink wine on the dry side with strawberry-raspberry smells and flavours ... no sweetness here.

Italy ... Red ...

(Veneto) – *Masi Brolo Di Campofiorin 2004* (\$24.95 - #0976092) – black fruit, chocolate, definite hit of black cherry and good tannins ... the kind of quality wine you expect from Masi.

Japan ... Sake ...

Tenzan Junmai Genshu Jizake Sake (\$30.95 - #0741637) – never claimed to be an expert on sake, or a fan, so take this review with a grain of rice ... very smooth and delicious, had a banana-like taste in the mouth along with the flavour of glassine noodles. Tasted at room temperature.

New Zealand ... Red ...

Omaka Springs Estates 2006 Falveys Pinot Noir (\$23.95 - #0061085) – a good Pinot for non-Pinot drinkers. Tasty strawberry, cranberry, red currant on the palate, seemed sweet through the mid-

palate before drying up at the end.

New Zealand ... White ...

Kim Crawford SP Park-Lands Vineyard 2005 Gewurztraminer (\$24.95 - #0069237) – a little pricey for a Gewurzt, but this one delivers the goods with a great nose and terrific Gewurzt fruit: apple, pear, lychee, this one's more sweet than spicy.

Portugal ... Red ...

Falcoaria Reserva 2005 (\$23.95 - #0080390) – smooth, supple and tasty, a good black fruit bomb.

South Africa ... Red ...

Porcupine Ridge 2007 Syrah (\$14.95 - #0595280) – a nose of brambly black fruit, with a palate full of leather, cassia and blackberry; a touch of typical South Africa's tarry flavour, but nothing offputting about it.

Spain ... Red ...

Beronia Gran Reserva 1996 (\$30.95 - #0940965) – not a misprint, it does say 1996. Lots of dried fruit, cranberry and a smooth easy going palate ... recommend to drink now and over the next couple of years.

Spain ... White ...

Albarino D Fefinanes 2006 (\$21.95 - #0673574) – very nice fruitiness with pear, apple and a pleasant lime finish.

USA ... Red ...

(California) - *McManis Family Vineyard 2006 Syrah* (\$17.95 - #0658104) – great value from the sunshine state with this smooth delicious wine, there's a touch of pepper and spice while chocolate nuances seem to linger on the tongue.

NHL Alumni Doug Gilmour Signature Cabernet Sauvignon 2005 (\$17.95 - #0094516) – if it's red wine and hockey then Dougie gets the first star, Wendel just wasn't up to snuff.

Thomas Fogarty 2006 Pinot Noir (\$29.95 - #0075994) – sweet cherries and mocha notes, big 14.5% alcohol, tasty and easy quaffer, not your typical Pinot.

USA ... White ...

(California) – *NHL Alumni Darryl Sittler Signature Chardonnay 2007* (\$17.95 - #0094508) – as a hockey fan who loves wine this just might be your way out of drinking beer on nights you watch the game.

Ports and Sherries ...

Portugal – *Messias 10 Anos Tawny Port* (\$23.95 - #0087205) – cherry pit, strawberry, bittersweet chocolate almond bark, a little bitterness on the finish adds to the enjoyment.

Take a Chance on Me ...

Nothing to offer this time out.

Grape Guy Top 3 ... what I'll be lining up for on September 27, 2008

Oddfellows Svengali 2005 Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon (\$21.95 - #0072611) – Australia

Masi Brolo Di Campofiorin 2004 (\$24.95 - #0976092) – Italy

Casa Lapostolle 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$15.95 - #0398800) - Chile

Happy Shopping.

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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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