



# Time to seek out those *bargains*

These choices are low in price, high in value

By Michael Pinkus

**Welcome to** a new year. Welcome to bill season. And, of course, welcome to our annual look at value wines at the LCBO.

Just because you're paying off the holidays, doesn't mean you can't continue to enjoy good wine.

I'm always excited to find wines that over-deliver for their price, and I know that plenty of people I meet feel the same way – they're always asking me to recommend my favourite wine.

And when they say "favourite," they really mean something relatively inexpensive that is also good quality.

This does not in any way make you "cheap," no matter what your Uncle Charlie says. I say, if you find an everyday great bottle of wine that costs a mere \$8, then why not buy it by the case and turn it into your house wine?

Across the border, they pay considerably less for booze and even have sales that make our occasional "few bucks off" look like chicken feed. Imagine getting a three-for-\$10



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offer on your favourite, or finding a \$40 bottle for \$16 – these are the kinds of things that happen in wine stores owned by our neighbours to the south (and I have the stories to prove it).

The point of that last little sidebar is to tell you not to be afraid that your wine is too cheap for company – if you like it, own it.

As somebody who has close to 2,200 bottles in his cellar, I can tell you I have made a living out of finding great wine at reasonable prices. I can count on one hand the bottles I have that cost more than \$25, and it would take both hands and both feet to count those over \$20.

The rest were great priced (for Ontario) wines that over-deliver, and I look forward to trying them over the next few years. I also won't be too disappointed if one of the bottles is "off;" after all, I did not pay an arm and a leg for it.

I also get asked about aging wine: "Does all wine age? And should I be aging my

wines?" To those people I say this: not all wine is meant to age nor does it need to age, and not all aged wine is better – because it comes down to your personal palate. Do you like fresh fruit or dried fruit; primary flavours of fruit and spice, or tertiary flavours of smoke and forest floor?

Here's an interesting little experiment to test your palate to see if you dig older fermented grape juice. Find yourself a bottle you enjoy for about \$10 to \$12 and buy six to 12 bottles.

Then every six to eight months, open one and try it. If you no longer like the wine after four years or so, you should not invest your time in aging wine. On the other hand, if you enjoy those "older" flavours and smells, then aging is definitely for you.

Keep in mind that all wines age differently, but a good rule of >>



>> thumb for this experiment is that a simple and less expensive wine will age quicker.

OK, the focus is on value this month and here are some of my favourites that won't break the bank. In some cases (unless otherwise noted), they could take some aging as well – so feel free to stock up.

### old World Wines

• **E. Guigal 2010 Côtes du Rhône (French red, \$17.95, #259721).** This is always a great value red, but the 2010 kicks it up a notch. It ages very well for seven-plus years.

• **Farnese Negroamaro (Italian red, \$8.95, #143735).** Simplicity never tasted so good. This is purely a drink-now wine.

• **Banfi 2011 Centine (Italian red, \$15.95, #323725).** From a house known for great reds, this base model is delicious and tastes like a wine twice its price.

• **Galevan Paroles de Femme (French red, \$14.25, #293472).** The new vintage is due in at the LCBO anytime; it's definitely a wine that over-delivers.

• **Pasqua 2010 Villa Borghetti Passimento Rosso (Italian red, \$15.45, #141952).** For those who dig rich-flavoured wines, this one's for sipping or to be enjoyed with dinner.


### neW World Wines

• **Ghost Pines 2010 Winemaker's Blend Chardonnay (U.S.A. white, \$19.95, #308122)** A lovely balanced Chardonnay for any time enjoyment.

• **Thirty Bench 2012 Winemaker's Riesling (Canadian red - \$18.95, #24133).** This Ontario winery specializes in Riesling and this three-vineyard blend is always a treat.

• **Malivoire 2012 Gamay Noir (Canadian red - \$17.95, #591313).** Speaking of treats, this Gamay is intensely cherry. Give it a slight chill to pump up that fruit.

• **Cono Sur 2012 Shiraz (Chilean red - \$9.95, #64295).** Give this one a chance to show its fruitier side; it needs a few minutes in the glass to get rid of its bottle funk.

• **Reif 2012 Cabernet Merlot (Canadian red - \$13.95, #565713)** Reif did not scrimp on this one. The great 2012 vintage shows through in all its rich fruit glory. 



Photography • Alisha Townsend

## Where to get it

### Quick guide to some of the products and organizations featured in this issue

#### style features:

**Model:** Meaghan Scott is with Expressions Model & Talent Agency, 21 George St. S., Cambridge; 519-622-2360; [www.expressionsmodels.ca](http://www.expressionsmodels.ca).

**contents: Page 14:** Cardigan, pants, scarf and necklace, all from Spanner, 334 Manitou Dr., Kitchener, 519-742-4700. For other local stores carrying Spanner fashions, follow the Store Locator tab from [www.spanner.ca](http://www.spanner.ca). Bikini top: Fitness + Swim, 4 King St. S., Waterloo, 519-747-1424; [www.fitnessandswim.ca](http://www.fitnessandswim.ca)

#### Winter escape: Pages 79 to 84

**Page 79:** Adventure Guide, 225 The Boardwalk, (Ira Needles Blvd. and University Avenue), Kitchener; 519-886-3121; [www.advguide.com](http://www.advguide.com)

**Page 80:** Adventure Guide, 225 The Boardwalk, (Ira Needles Blvd. and University Avenue), Kitchener; 519-886-3121; [www.advguide.com](http://www.advguide.com)

**Page 81:** Spanner, 334 Manitou Dr., Kitchener, 519-742-4700. For other local stores carrying Spanner fashions, follow the Store Locator tab from [www.spanner.ca](http://www.spanner.ca)

**Page 82:** Fitness + Swim, 4 King St. S., Waterloo, 519-747-1424; [www.fitnessandswim.ca](http://www.fitnessandswim.ca)

**Page 83:** Fitness + Swim, 4 King St.

S., Waterloo, 519-747-1424; [www.fitnessandswim.ca](http://www.fitnessandswim.ca)

**Page 84:** Adventure Guide, 225 The Boardwalk, (Ira Needles Blvd. and University Avenue), Kitchener; 519-886-3121; [www.advguide.com](http://www.advguide.com)

#### other features:

**couples: Page 28:** Globe Studios, 141 Whitney Place, Kitchener; 519-743-4252;

[www.facebook.com/globestudios](http://www.facebook.com/globestudios)

**cover profile: age 36:** Langdon Hall, 1 Langdon Dr., Cambridge; 519-740-2100; [www.langdonhall.ca](http://www.langdonhall.ca)

Chef Jason Bangerter on Twitter:

@chefbangerter

**change makers: Page 42:** Momentum Developments: [www.momentumdevelopments.ca](http://www.momentumdevelopments.ca)

**Page 56:** Jazz Room, in Huether Hotel, 59 King St. N., Waterloo; [www.kwjazzroom.com](http://www.kwjazzroom.com)

**Page 66:** Lost and Found Theatre, performing in various venues: [www.lostandfoundtheatre.com](http://www.lostandfoundtheatre.com)

**Page 86:** Mary Maxim: 75 Scott Ave., Paris, Ont. 1-888-442-2266; [www.marymaximretail.ca](http://www.marymaximretail.ca)

**Page 114:** Momcilo Simic, Gallery Momo, 1441 King St. N., St. Jacobs; [www.gallerymomo.net](http://www.gallerymomo.net).



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