

OntarioWineReview Vintages Release Guide

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



OntarioWineReview: Vintages Release Saturday November 26, 2011

I am using a 5-star rating system, which appears at the end of each review; here's the key to the stars:

5 = Outstanding ... 4.5 = Excellent ... 4 = Very Good ... 3.5 = Good ... 3 = Average

This release focuses on the LCBO's Finest (**FINE**). At this time of year the LCBO parades out the good wines for you to buy as gifts or for gatherings you may be having or attending. "Our Finest" also means "no cheap wines", this is the largest selection of over \$100 wines you'll likely see all year, which means you'll have to expand your definition of Best Buys this release - instead of being under \$15 (as is the norm) we'll have to bump it by five bucks this time round. The Other focus is spirits, and regular readers know that's just not my bag.

Argentina ...

Benmarco 2009 Malbec (\$16.95 - #0657601) – spiced coffee, black cherry with hints of sandalwood and bramble notes. (** ½+)

Australia ...

Grant Burge 10 Year Old Tawny (\$30.95 - #0058388) – a really nice tawny with flavours of dried cherries and almonds. (****+)

Kaesler 2008 Stonehorse Shiraz/Grenache/Mourvedre (\$22.95 - #0006551) – sweet fruit with a juicy palate: strawberry, raspberry and anise on the finish. (****)

Ladies Who Shoot Their Lunch Shiraz 2008 (\$34.95 - #0243592) – nice elegant Shiraz, not over the top fruit and with good white pepper notes. (** ½+)

Canada ...

(British Columbia)

Burrowing Owl 2008 Meritage (\$59.95 - #0695148) – smoked red berries on the nose, smoked blackberry, spice, and leather. Let it mellow another year or two. (** ½+) - **FINE**

(Ontario) - visit OntarioWineReview.com for full review

Equifera 2008 Vidal Icewine (\$49.95 - #0258715)

Inniskillin 2008 Riesling Icewine (\$69.95 - #0558288) – **FINE**

Stratus 2009 Gewurztraminer (\$32.20 - #0251447)

13th Street 2010 Gamay Noir (\$19.95 - #0177824)

Calamus 2008 Cosmic Red (\$17.95 - #0258129)

Le Clos Jordanne 2009 Le Grand Clos Pinot Noir (\$75.00 - #0034553) – **FINE**

Stratus 2007 Merlot (\$42.20 - #0131003) - **FINE**

Chile ...

Concha y Toro 2008 Winemaker's Lot 115 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$17.95 - #0030965) – minty dark fruit and very juicy. (** ½+)

Errazuriz 2010 Wild Ferment Pinot Noir (\$19.95 - #0510396) – light in the glass and light on the nose, but there's good flavour here with sour cherry and loads of spice. (** ½+)

France ...

(Alsace)

Lucien Albrecht 2009 Albrecht Gewurztraminer (\$18.95 - #0926931) – nice sweetness along with rose petal and pineapple. (** ½)

(Bordeaux)

Chateau de Monturon 2009 (\$23.95 - #0171017) – shows smoky dark fruit finesse. (**½)

(Burgundy)

Domaine Louis Jadot 2006 Beaune Theurons 1er Cru (\$45.95 - #0042838) – spiced cranberry, sour cherry, juicy thru the mouth with nice earthy finish and some length of sour spiced cherry. (****+) – FINE

(Champagne)

Georges Garnet Brut Cuvee Saint Flavy Champagne (\$39.95 - #0924654) – nice flavour: lemon, biscuit and wild flower honey with a nice mineral aspect. (****)

(Midi)

Cave de Roquebrun 2009 La Grange des Combes Saint-Chinian Roquebrun (\$16.95 - #0155804) – a shy nose but with some lively dark fruit on the palate, nice spiced pepper finish. (**½)

Germany ...

Kurt Darting 2008 Riesling Spatlese (\$19.95 - #0963207) – great sweetness here with the right amount of mineral and acidity to balance it out: peachy, passion-fruit with quite the tang sensation. (**½)

Reichsrat Von Buhl 2008 Pinot Noir (\$19.95 - #0249649) – not just a good German Pinot but a good Pinot alround: earthy, mushroomy, cranberry and sour cherry; it's all there. (****+)

Italy ...

(Abruzzo)

Ulisce Unico Pecorino 2010 (\$17.95 - #0249128) – ripe pineapple, pear, golden plums and a nice little floral note. (**½)

(Calabria)

Du Cropio Don Giuva Ciro Rosso Classico Superiore 2005 (\$17.95 - #0250829) – red berry and spice with good acidity on the finish. (**½+)

(Sicily)

Duca di Salaparuta Passo delle Mule Nero D'Avola (\$19.95 - #0250928) – the cocoa raspberry finish makes this one, the rest is gravy. (**½+)

(Trentino)

Istituto Agrario San Michele All'Adige Pinot Grigio 2010 (\$18.95 - #0249540) – nice texture, lemon lime pith with clean minerality and good herbal notes. (**½)

(Tuscany)

La Vite 2009 Lucente (\$39.95 - #0747030) – floral, cassis and spice. (**½+)

Ruffino 2006 Ducale Oro Chianti Classico Riserva (\$43.95 - #0353201) – this one has all the goods to make it pleasureable, plus leather notes, dark fruit and smoke. (****+)

(Veneto)

Belcanto di Bellussi Extra Dry Prosecco di Valdobbiadene Superiore (\$17.95 - #0053215) – crisp, clean and fresh with hints of green apple and lemon. (**½)

Villa Girardi 2007 Amarone della Valpocella Classico (\$39.95 - #0159913) – sweet fruit of plums and melting chocolate, good spiced-chocolate finish, (****)

New Zealand ...

Ata Rangi 2009 Petrie Chardonnay (\$33.95 - #0247270) - nice peach and pear notes but it is not over the top with fruit, there's a mellowness that's ultimately sippable. Nice spicy character mid-palate to finish. (****+)

Momo 2010 Pinot Gris (\$18.95 - #0163535) – interesting grapefruit zest that mixes with hints of pear; quite the character. (**½+)

Kim Crawford 2008 Small Parcel Corner 50 Merlot (\$29.95 - #0252320) – blackberry and leather follows on the palate with some smoked vanilla, this is not your mellow Merlot (****)

South Africa ...

Amani 2009 Chardonnay (\$17.95 - #0687442) – nice palate, stone fruit, butter, spice, butterscotch and mineral; lots of flavour. (**½)

Mooiplaas 2010 The Bean Coffee Pinotage (\$13.95 - #0251165) – this one is pure coffee bean, an acquired taste. (**½)

Viljoensdrift 2005 Serenity (\$23.95 - #0037523) – older wine with some older characteristics, but with enough fruit and spice to hold up. (** ½)

Spain ...

Emilio Lustau East India Solera Sherry (\$16.95 - #0713636) – nuts, spice and creamy caramel all blend together to make a sweet (beginning) spicy (finish) after dinner bevy. (****+)

Diego Zamora Licor 43 (\$37.95 - #0263780) – I don't usually do liqueur but this is too good to pass up. Vanilla, toasted marshmallow and burnt almond chocolate with a wow finish ... if you can figure out how to make "little beers" (it's a shot you can find the recipe for on the internet) you'll have a bang up get-together. (**** ½)

Miguel Torres 2007 Mas La Plana Cabernet Sauvignon (\$46.95 - 0129676) – this is a delicious cellar dweller, a keeper for all its spice, dark fruit, mocha and oak notes. (****)

Prado Rey 2006 Crianza (\$20.95 - #0725820) – starts off slow on the nose but seems to come alive on the palate. (** ½+)

United States ...

(California)

Chappellet 2009 Chardonnay (\$39.95 - #0186577) – more fleshy than fruity with some vanilla notes that liven up the palate and a nice wood spice. (** ½+)

Scott Family Estate 2010 Dijon Clone Chardonnay (\$23.95 - #0099051) – good fruit, good flavour, nicely balanced with wood and fruit. Good finish. (** ½+)

Acacia 2007 Pinot Noir (\$29.95 - #0235960) – sweet fruit, red and black cherry, some raspberry on the finish with a slight mocha note. (** ½+)

Cuvaison 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$49.95 - #0944827) – sweet licorice, coffee liqueur and chocolate. (****)

J. Lohr 2006 Carol's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (\$27.95 - #0246918) – sweet fruit, very Californian cab. (****+)

Kenwood 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$21.95 - #0990440) – has a lively juiciness with gentle spice. Drinks well now. (** ½+)

Stags' Leap Winery 2007 Merlot (\$44.95 - #0655399) – dark fruit and spice on the finish with hints of coffee and cocoa; maybe a little too much oak, will time bring out the fruit? (** ½)

(Oregon)

Erath Willamette Valley Estate 2008 Selection Pinot Noir (\$41.95 - #0984625) – nice juicy core with cranberry, cherry and vanilla; good finesse here. (****+)

(Washington)

Bombing Range Red 2007 (\$19.95 - #0233460) – and interesting blend of grapes; a delicious wine full of red fruit, herbal notes and spice with just the merest hint of oak and a finish that bombards the tongue with flavour again and again. (****+)

If You Can Afford It (they're pricey but worth it) ...

Dow's 1985 Vintage Port (\$91.95 - #0745836) - Portugal ... **FINE**

Dunn Vineyards 2007 Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon (\$96.95 - #0193763) - USA ... **FINE**

Far Niente Estate 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$132.95 - #0539098) - USA ... **FINE**

Jonata 2007 El Alma de Jonata (\$143.95 - #0218925) - USA ... **FINE**

L'Aventure Estate 2009 Cuvee (\$94.95 - #0249375) - USA ... **FINE**

Pahlmeyer 2007 Proprietary Red (\$132.95 - #0967992) - USA ... **FINE**

Peter Michael 2006 L'Esprit des Pavots (\$144.95 - #0154732) - USA ... **FINE**

Catena Zapata 2007 Nicasia Vineyard Altamira Malbec (\$79.95 - #0132357) - Argentina ... **FINE**

Barossa Valley Estate 2005 E & E Black Pepper Shiraz (\$89.95 - #0731620) – Australia ... **FINE**

Henschke 2005 Mount Edelstone Vineyard Shiraz (\$99.95 - #0718601) - Australia ... **FINE**

Chateau Pontet Canet 2008 (\$129.00 - #0137323) - France ... **FINE**

Chateau de Beaucastel 2009 Chateaneuf du Pape (\$89.95 - #0711317) - France ... **FINE**

Gaja 2005 Dagromis Barolo (\$64.95 - #0092742) - Italy ... **FINE**

Tenuta San Guido 2008 Sassicaia (\$186.95 - # 0480533) - Italy ... **FINE**

Masi 2004 Campolongo di Torbe Amarone della Valpolicella Classico (\$99.95 - #0548677) - Italy ... **FINE**

Masi 2004 Mazzano Amarone della Valpolicella Classico (\$99.95 - #0215764) - Italy ... **FINE**
Quintarelli 2002 Rosso ca'del Merlo (\$84.95 - #0958595) - Italy ... **FINE**

Best Buys (wine that over delivers for its price) ...

Bird in the Hand Two in the Bush Shiraz (\$17.95 - #0243634) – Australia
Flagstone 2009 Writer's Block Pinotage (\$19.95 - #0243337) – South Africa
Reichsrat Von Buhl 2008 Pinot Noir (\$19.95 - #0249649) – Germany

Grape Guy Top 3 ... what I'll be lining up for on November 26, 2011:

Bombing Range Red 2007 (\$19.95 - #0233460) – United States
Errazuriz 2010 Wild Ferment Pinot Noir (\$19.95 - #0510396) – Chile
Diego Zamora Licor 43 (\$37.95 - #0263780) – Spain

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.



Socially Speaking ...

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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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