

OntarioWineReview Vintages Release Guide

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



OntarioWineReview: Vintages Release Saturday December 7, 2013

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

Key: Wine colour indicators - Red are red wines, Yellow are whites, etc.

The Foci ... Sparkling wine (**FIZZ**) and "Holiday Gathering" wine (**HG**)

The Skinny ... Never understood these foci, I mean I get the sparkling but what are the criteria for Holiday Gathering wines, it seems so arbitrary. Anyway, this is the last Vintages release of the year, there are some pretty good wines in the release, but there is also some surprising duds – you would think at this time of year the board would pull out all the stops.

Argentina ...

Callejon del Crimen 2008 Gran Reserva Malbec (\$22.95 - #357467) – black cherry and spiced cocoa, this one shows something interesting in a Malbec. (**¹/₂+))

Finca Flichman 2010 Paisaje de Barrancas (\$17.95 - #17129) – nice price for something smooth and tasty with dark berries and slick peppery goodness. (**¹/₂+))

Pascual Toso Barrancas Vineyards 2010 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.95 - #83337) – red fruit dominate, a nice sipper. (**¹/₂+)) - **HG**

Australia ...

Ben Glaetzer 2012 Bishop Shiraz (\$39.95 - #627869) – dark, sweet blackberry and black cherry with a hit of vanilla on the finish. (****)

Saltram 2010 Mamre Brook Shiraz (\$26.95 - #32227) – intensity of blackberry and chocolate with a touch of vanilla-wood on the finish with hearty tannins. (**¹/₂+)) – **HG**

Small Gully 2009 The Formula Robert's Shiraz (\$18.95 - #142935) – just what the doctor ordered with lots of that sweet Aussie fruit. (**¹/₂+))

Austria ...

Brundlmayer 2012 Kamptaler Terrassen Gruner Veltliner (\$21.95 - #979708) – pea pod and grapefruit all with racy acidity. (**¹/₂+))

Canada (British Columbia) ...

Burrowing Owl 2010 Meritage (\$59.95 - #343038) – this one shows some real finesse and elegance, there is nothing over-powering but nothing takes away either: fruit with well-balanced oak and good acidity this wine is dark, brooding and delicious. (**** ¹/₂))

Sperling Vineyards 2011 Old Vines Riesling (\$34.95 - #361204) – apple and a touch of lemonade and peach pit with just the right amount of mineral and acidity on the finish. (****)

Canada (Ontario) ... *click on wine name for full review*

[Cave Spring 2009 Estate Bottled Pinot Noir](#) (\$34.95 - #246561) - **¹/₂+

[Cave Spring 2008 Estate Cabernet Franc](#) (\$24.95 - #72751) - **¹/₂+

[Featherstone 2011 Canadian Oak Chardonnay](#) (\$21.95 - #149302) - ****

[Flat Rock Cellars 2008 Riddled Sparkling Wine](#) (\$24.95 - #187377) – **** (**FIZZ**)

[Henry of Pelham 2009 Estate Pinot Noir](#) (\$24.95 - #268391) - ****

[Inniskillin 2012 Winemaker's Series Montague Vineyard Chardonnay](#) (\$24.95 - #586347) - **¹/₂+ (**HG**)

Chile ...

Vina Casablanca 2010 El Bosque Carmenere (\$15.95 - #199836) – big minty nose with white

pepper, blackberry, black cherry, and a nice toastiness; good value and long finish. (****) - **HG**

France (Alsace) ...

Andre Blanck et ses Fils 2012 Clos Schwendi Pinot Gris (\$18.95 - #686311) – pleasant sweet notes, very easy drinking with good acidity on finish to balance the sweetness. (** ½+) – **HG**

Joseph Cattin 2011 Gewurztraminer (\$17.95 - #224626) – spicy notes on a gentle palate with lots of floral and perfumed notes; doesn't come off too sweet and there's a touch of apricot on the mid-palate. (****)

France (Beaujolais) ...

Laurent Gauthier 2011 Grand Cras Vieilles Morgon (\$17.95 - #279059) – delicious and delightful, serious and complex, lots of wild cherry and white pepper with and intense nose and palate. (****+) - **HG**

France (Bordeaux) ...

Chateau Clement Saint-Jean 2010 (\$22.95 - #348771) – smooth with drying tannins, rich blackberry and cassis with cedary-cinnamon backing. (** ½+) – **HG**

Chateau Le Conseiller 2009 (\$23.85 - #191130) – smooth with blueberry skin and mocha. (****)

France (Burgundy) ...

Charles Duret Brut Cremant de Bourgogne (\$18.95 - #185694) – buttered toast complete with the crusts left on and all balanced with that nice acidity. (** ½+) – **FIZZ**

Domaine Jean-Pierre Seve 2011 Terroir Pouilly-Fuisse (\$26.95 - #681056) – nice lemon-lime notes along with hay and green apple. (** ½+)

France (Midi) ...

Domaine des Trois Orris Lhusanes 2009 (\$19.95 - #353515) – lovely bit of red and black fruit; this one is all fruit all the time. (** ½+)

France (Rhone) ...

Domaine Beau Mistral 2010 Vieilles Vignes Rasteau Cotes du Rhone Villages (\$22.95 - #343574) – dark fruited, intense cocoa and spice with tobacco on the finish. (** ½+) – **HG**

Domaine Chante Cigale Tradition Chateauneuf-du-Pape 2010 (\$41.95 - #194993) – supple and almost sweet fruited, a real pleasure. (****+)

Domaine Mucyn 2010 Saint Joseph (\$28.95 - #358614) – smoky, black cherry and spice. (** ½+)

La Ferme du Mont 2010 Cotes Jugunda Gigondas (\$29.95 - #354118) – nice spiced blackberry, dark cherry, vanilla, currants and spice. (****)

Les Vignerons de Visan 2011 Visan Cotes du Rhone-Villages (\$15.95 - #179234) – robust red fruit, a little chalky, but with lovely fruit; good value for everyday drinking. (****)

Italy (Abruzzo) ...

Villa Medoro 2009 Rosso del Duca Montepulciano D'Abruzzo (\$18.95 - #357160) – gentle of fruit yet dark in nature with spiced raspberry and peppered plums. (****) - **HG**

Italy (Alto Adige / Trentino) ...

Ferrari Brut (\$25.95 - #352153) – nice bit of fizz here drier than other Italian bubbles in this release with more focus on acidity and breadiness. (****) - **FIZZ**

Italy (Piedmont) ...

Beni di Batasiolo 2010 Langhe Rosso (\$16.95 - #981019) – wood, smoke and cherry fruit with hints of tobacco on the dry finish. (** ½+)

Italy (Tuscany) ...

La Vite Lucente 2011 (\$34.95 - #747030) – coffee, blueberry and chocolate with a nice plummy mid-palate. (****+)

Le Difese 2011 (\$27.95 - #147876) – plenty of spiced red and black fruit with currants and black cherry taking charge amongst the cinnamon and pepper. (****+) – **HG**

Lornado 2009 Le Bandite Chianti Classico Riserva (\$19.95 - #230672) – rustic tannins with heft and cherry spiced plum. (** ½+) - **HG**

Rocca delle Macie 2008 Chianti Classico Riserva (\$21.95 - #930966) – mixes rustic charm with some juicy fruit and dry tannins. (** ½+)

Italy (Veneto) ...

Allegrini 2010 Palazzo Della Torre (\$24.95 - #672931) – raspberry and cherry with chocolate with ripe plum; very full fruited. (****)

Luigi Righetti Campolieti Ripasso Valpolicella Classico Superiore 2011 (\$17.95 - #695890) – dark chocolate, cherry, plum and spice. (****) – **HG**

Perlage Canah 2012 Brut Prosecco Superiore Conegliano Valdobbiadene (\$20.95 - #358390) –

nice apple and lemon with mac apple sweetness. (** ½) - **FIZZ**

New Zealand ...

No. 1 Family Estate Cuvee No. 1 Blanc de Blancs (\$34.95 - #56358) – lots of biting acidity and plenty of apple and toasty character with hints of almondine. (****+) - **FIZZ**

Portugal ...

Churchill's Estates 2009 Touriga Nacional (\$30.95 - #351643) – nice rich dark fruit with a chocolate finish and linger. (****+)

Newman's Celebrated Port (\$15.95 - #134908) – sweet cherries abound with a pleasant, easy drinking finish. (** ½+)

South Africa ...

KWV 2010 The Mentors Canvas (\$24.95 - #348839) – nice mix of chocolate and vanilla with plum, lots of white pepper and a good finish. (****)

Pecan Stream 2012 Chenin Blanc (\$14.95 - #34512) – lanolin and grapefruit rind with nice acidity for balance. (** ½+)

Simonsig 2011 Kaapse Vonkel Brut Classique (\$19.95 - #342758) – peach, apple and toasty with good acidity for balance. (** ½+) - **FIZZ**

Spain ...

Juan Gil 2012 White Label de Cepas Viejas Monastrell (\$15.95 - #13656) – lots and lots of raspberry and cherry, plum, hints of vanilla and a touch of floral; good value. (** ½+)

Valsacro Dioro 2005 (\$32.95 - #345694) – blackberry, smoke, vanilla and plum with hints of chocolate/mocha. (****)

United States (California) ...

Belle Glos 2012 Meiomi Pinot Noir (\$24.95 - #130138) – rich cherry fruit, silky smooth and easy drinking, there's also a nice chalkiness to the finish; but seriously, it's hard to believe this is Pinot. (****) – **HG**

Bonny Doon 2008 Le Cigare Volant (\$48.95 - #975847) – smoky with white pepper, plum, blackberry and floral; really supple tannins. (****+)

Cannonball 2011 Merlot (\$22.95 - #342824) – juicy with sweet blueberry and chocolate. (** ½+)

Chandon Rosé (\$32.95 - #56341) – pretty and delicate with hits of raspberry and citrus and a nice biscuity finish; there's also strawberry jam and apple nuances but this one is not sweet the acid kicks in at the right time. (****) – **FIZZ**

Decoy 2011 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$31.95 - #186171) – touched with cedar and vanilla along with intense cherry and blackberry. (** ½+) – **HG**

Frei Brothers 2011 Reserve Zinfandel (\$24.95 - #281758) – plum and vanilla are smeared all over this with nice cherry and chocolate; comes off a little sweet. (** ½+)

Mer Soleil 2010 Barrel Fermented Chardonnay (\$34.95 - #958975) – butterscotch, toffee and vanilla; big oak, sweet fruit. (** ½+) - **HG**

If You Can Afford It – wines worth their high price ...

Chateau Barde-Haut 2009 (\$57.95 - #197244) – Bordeaux - ****+

Chateau La Confession 2009 (\$57.85 - #198564) – Bordeaux - ****+

Citation 2003 Pinot Noir (\$59.95 - #677146) – Oregon - ** ½+

Henriot Souverain Brut Champagne (\$59.95 - #959643) – Champagne - ****+ (**FIZZ**)

Le Vieux Donjon 2011 Chateauneuf-du-Pape (\$57.95 - #700922) – Rhone - ****

Michele Castellani 2008 Cinque Stelle Amarone della Valpolicella Classico (\$53.95 - #75127) – Veneto - **** (**HG**)

Shafer 2011 Merlot (\$67.95 - #346262) – California - ****

Stag's Leap Winery 2010 Artemis Cabernet Sauvignon (\$59.95 - #708982) – California - **** (**HG**)

Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 2004 Vintage Rosé (\$97.99 - #588475) – Champagne - **** (**FIZZ**)

What I'll Be Lining Up For – December 7, 2013 ...

Laurent Gauthier 2011 Grand Cras Vieilles Morgon (\$17.95 - #279059) – Beaujolais, France

Happy Shopping

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