OntarioWineReview: Vintages Release Saturday July 19, 2014

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 … BBQ Wines (**BBQ**) and Cool Climate Chardonnay (**CCC**)
The Skinny … It is with a heavy heart that I report that the BBQ wines are a disappointment but there are some real standouts in the Chardonnays; there are also some real bargains from Spain and the Rhone Valley.

Argentina …
Vina Cobos 2012 Felino Malbec ($19.95 - #118067) – over the years I have enjoyed the Cobos Malbec, this one is pretty nice with its smoky, blackberry with hints of mocha and silky tannins; up to the standards but not the best. (*** ½+)

Australia …
Two Hands 2012 Sexy Beast Cabernet Sauvignon ($25.95 - #219469) – dark fruit with a lush middle, lots of flavour in this plum, vanilla department with a smoky toasty finish. (****+)

Austria …
Rabl 2012 Lengenlos Gruner Veltliner ($16.95 - #377457) – very pea-pod-esque with pith and zest of the grapefruit. (*** ½)

Canada *(British Columbia) …*
Gray Monk 2012 Pinot Blanc ($20.95 - #321612) – nice mix of pear and grapefruit pulp; a yin and yang of sweet and sour. (*** ½+)
Canada *(Ontario) … click on wine name for full review*
13th Street 2012 June's Vineyard Chardonnay ($21.95 - #236745) - *** ½+ - **CCC**
Featherstone 2013 Sauvignon Blanc ($17.95 - #89011) - ****+ - **BBQ**
Stratus 2011 Kabang Red ($19.95 - #380022) - *** ½+
Le Clos Jordanne 2011 Village Reserve Chardonnay ($30.00 - #33936) - ****+ - **CCC**
Pondview 2010 Bella Terra Cabernet Sauvignon ($34.95 - #373100) - ****

France *(Bordeaux) …*
Chateau Teyssier 2009 ($23.95 - #226035) – very drinkable and well-balanced with mocha, smoky notes, dark fruit plays possum for a while so I would age a few years or definitely decant before drinking. (****)
France *(Burgundy) …*
Decelle-Villa 2012 Savigny-Les-Beaune Blanc ($40.95 - #378208) – tangy with lime meringue nuances, good citrus pulp to pith ratio and gentle use of barrel for seasoning. (****) – **CCC**
Nadine Ferrand Lise-Marie 2011 Pouilly-Fuisse ($29.95 - #87114) – it's the peach pit and mineral core of this wine that really gets me. (*** ½+)
France *(Loire) …*
Domaine Bellevue 2012 Touraine Sauvignon Blanc ($13.95 - #82305) – the anti-New Zealand but still with sweet grassy and grapefruit pulp and some peach to round it out. (*** ½+)
France *(Rhone) …*
Alain Jaume & Fils 2012 Grande Garrigue Vacqueyras ($24.95 - #233916) – nice balance of fruit and oak: red and black layered with vanilla and gentle spice. (****)

Chateau de Nages 2011 Vieilles Vignes ($19.95 - #40964) – rich, opulent yet not over the top; good dark fruit with a hint of chocolate and spice for balance. (****+)
Perrin 2011 L'Andeol Rasteau ($19.95 - #976845) – very red and blue berry, a tasty little treat, very easy drinking. (*** ½+)

Germany …
Beck Hedesheimer Hof 2012 Grauer Burgunder Kabinett Trocken ($20.95 - #378349) – seemingly sweet and quite fruity with peach, pear and apple balanced by good acidity backing. (*** ½+)

Italy *(Abruzzo) …*
Talamonti 2011 Tre Saggi Montepulciano D'Abruzzo ($15.95 - #204016) – sweet yet smoky with hints of dark chocolate and clove. (*** ½+) - **BBQ**
Italy *(Tuscany) …*
Castello di Gabbiano 2009 Chianti Classico Riserva ($22.95 - #216309) – smoky dark fruit with full on tannins plus a leathery-spiciness; you gotta like 'em big. (*** ½+)
De Vino 2010 Nobile di Montepulciano ($27.95 - #285510) – herbal, sweet spice, good dark versus red fruit on the palate. (****)
Italy *(Veneto) …*
Valpantena 2010 Torre del Falasco Amarone della Valpolicella ($44.95 - #922161) – shows both power and balance while restraining itself, nice place to start for Amarone novices; aficionados will like it too. (****+)

New Zealand …
Mount Nelson 2012 Sauvignon Blanc ($21.95 - #694752) – typically New Zealand Savvy B with all the grassy, grapefruit intensity you're looking for. (*** ½+)

Spain …
Convento 2005 San Francisco ($21.95 - #206409) – new leather, black raspberry and plum along with nice smoky notes. (*** ½+)
Miguel Torres 2012 Gran Vina Sol Chardonnay ($15.95 - #171660) – Spanish Chardonnay, really? This one is pretty good, nice bitter first which helps to balance the fruity mid. (****) – **CCC**
Tamaral 2011 Roble Tempranillo ($16.95 - #375766) – robust and big fruited while still showing a little restraint with nice dry finish. (****)
Vina Real Plata 2009 Crianza ($18.95 - #657411) – smooth and very plummy with a black cherry base. (*** ½+)

United States *(California) …*
Black Stallion 2011 Cabernet Sauvignon ($29.95 - #256768) – good stuffing, silky tannins, black and blue fruit with vanilla notes. (*** ½+)
Brazin 2011 (B)old Vine Zinfandel ($19.95 - #256750) – vanilla, and cherry-cola; this is the best of a mediocre lot of Zins. (*** ½+)
Hahn 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon ($18.95 - #57877) – mocha-blackberry that delivers on the yum factor. (*** ½+)
Hess Select 2011 Cabernet Sauvignon ($23.95 - #25080) – enough smoke and cocoa to make it enjoyable. (*** ½+) – BBQ
Le Crema 2012 Chardonnay ($25.95 - #158683) – nice white fruit and citrus with great acidity and the right amount of weight from the barrel. (****) – BBQ
MacMurray Ranch 2011 Pinot Noir ($24.95 - #48207) – puts a little muscle behind the fruit and tannins. (*** ½+) - BBQ
Mer Soleil 2011 Reserve Chardonnay ($34.95 - #958975) – really creamy buttered caramel sensation in the mouth, tropical fruit notes with pineapple and honey; rich and full yet balanced. (****+) – CCC
Souverain 2008 Winemaker's Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon ($41.95 - #718197) – sweet and smoky with nice dark, chalky fruit and decent tannins. (*** ½+)

In-Store Discoveries – wines that appear on the shelves of your local Vintages outlet …
Chateau Rieussec 2010 ($61.95 / 375ml - #263012) – France - ****+

Paul Autard 2010 Chateauneuf-du-Pape ($49.95 - #380667) – France - ****
Stonestreet 2011 Broken Road Chardonnay ($49.95 - #329474) – USA - ****
Trimbach 2011 Reserve Pinot Gris ($23.95 - #971762) – France - *** ½+

What I'll Be Lining Up For – July 19, 2014 …
Chateau de Nages 2011 Vieilles Vignes ($19.95 - #40964) – France
Tamaral 2011 Roble Tempranillo ($16.95 - #375766) – Spain
Two Hands 2012 Sexy Beast Cabernet Sauvignon ($25.95 - #219469) – Australia

Happy Shopping

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