

## Canada

### Whites

#### **90 Peninsula Ridge Chardonnay Vintners Reserve 2003, Niagara (\$42)**

Put this in a blind tasting of Puligny/Chassagne Montrachets and you will be amazed at the quality and hard pressed to tell the difference. Multi layered and powerful, with hazelnuts, yeast, green apple and caramel. Long finish showcasing caramel, green apple and cream. Now to 2011. (ES)

#### **89 Peninsula Ridge Fume Blanc 2004, Niagara (\$24.95)**

“I like the oak to honour the grape, not overwhelm it,” says winemaker Jean-Pierre Colas of his Fume. True to his word, the caramel flavours act as a backdrop to the citrus, honey, passion fruit, gooseberry and mineral flavours. Excellent length with a refreshing tang. (ES)

#### **87 Henry of Pelham Reserve Riesling Reserve 2004, Niagara (\$14.95)**

Pale white gold colour with a bouquet of honey, lime, bubble gum and peach. It displays a crisp personality with loads of mineral, lime and lemon in the mouth. Lingering finish. Drink over the next 6 to 7 years. (ES)

**86 Henry of Pelham Chardonnay Reserve 2004, Niagara (\$13.95)**

Banana custard, vanilla, citrus and green apple on the nose. The palate starts out with caramel flavours, then dips a bit and returns with green apple and cream. Medium length. (ES)

Reds

**92 Pillitteri Cabernet Franc Family Reserve 2002, Niagara (\$50)**

This offering won the best red wine category at this year Cuvee Gala. Rightfully so considering the concentration, length and power it offers. Thirty months aging in a combination of French and American oak has given the wine a nice smothering of cocoa, vanilla and spice to compliment the cassis, violets, raspberries and herbs. Still a pup and somewhat closed, so age for 1 year and drink until 2015. As a side note, winemaker Sue-Ann Staff told me that the 2002 Family Reserve Merlot is still in barrel and won't be released until next Cuvee, due its youthfulness. If the Cab Franc is any measure of the quality, hold on to your hats folks. (ES)

**90 Henry of Pelham Cabernet Merlot Speck Family Reserve 2002, Niagara (\$50)**

This wine is only made in top years (made only once before in 1998) and from yields under 2

tons per acre. Backwards and still puckery, this is an elegant and structured offering with menthol, cassis, vanilla and tobacco on the nose. Forget about this wine in a dark corner of your cellar until 2009 and consume until 2020. (ES)

**89 Creekside Merlot Reserve 2002, Niagara (\$25)**

Some may call it great business savvy, others providence, but whatever descriptor you prefer, Barry Katzman, president of Creekside has done one hell of a job of re-asserting Creekside as a serious producer, like he did for Stoney Ridge a few years back. Of course it doesn't hurt matters when you have the talented Canadian-Aussie winemaking duo of Rob Powers and Craig McDonald. Take for example this which is loaded with plums, raspberries, mint, pistachio, spice and chocolate. Very good length and drink until 2011. (ES)

**88 Niagara College Teaching Winery Pinot Noir Reserve 2004, Niagara (\$27.95)**

Ontario winemaking patriarch Jim Warren and his protégé Jordan Harris continue to churn out quality wines at Niagara College. This, the top point getter in the Pinot Noir category at Cuvee delivers cherry, plums, vanilla and earth on the nose and palate. Solid length with a touch of bitterness at the end. Now to 2010. (ES)

**86 Pillitteri Cabernet Franc 2002, Niagara (\$18)**

A modest Cab Franc which greets the nose with aromas of fresh dill, cassis and raspberry. Soft texture with medium length and fresh acid. (ES)

**U.S.A. - California**

Reds

**92 Merryvale Clone 6 Cabernet Sauvignon 2002, Rutherford (\$152.95)**

A recent trip to Napa valley allowed me to try the entire portfolio of this highly respected producer. The Clone 6 was the star, displaying a somewhat thick personality as well as having a serious backbone of tannin. Cassis, raspberry and smoke on the nose with a mouthful of plums, cherries, plums and licorice. Superb length, still young and 15 years ahead of it. (ES)

**91 Merryvale Profile 2001, Napa (\$135.95)**

Profile is one of Merryvale's top tier wines, and this coupled with the great 01 vintage has produced an excellent offering. Stylish, with a fragrance of cocoa, plums, tobacco, raspberry and vanilla. Lots of sweet berry fruit in the mouth and a lengthy finish. Drink over the next 10 years. Mostly Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot with a sprinkle of Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. (ES)

**90 Merryvale Profile 2002, Napa (\$140.80)**

Compared to the 01, the 02 is a touch more pronounced on the nose, while the prior is riper and has a touch more length. Once again lots of cocoa, raspberry and black fruit flavours. Now to

2011. Merryvale wines are represented in Ontario and Quebec by Barrique Wine Imports/Vino Wine Merchants. (ES)

**90 Merryvale Vineyard X Cabernet Sauvignon 2001, Oakville (\$113.95)**

Plums, raspberry jam, vanilla, chocolate and a certain animal quality. The mouth is coated with much of the same. Finishes long with a solid vertebra of tannin. Age for two years then drink until 2015. (ES)

**88 Merryvale Merlot Las Amigas 2002, Carneros (\$62.95)**

From the cool Carneros region comes this wine with a lifted nose of cherry, plums, cloves and smoke. Raspberry, tobacco, earth and spice on the taste buds add to the wine's mojo. Crack it open over the next 3 years. (ES)

Whites

**87 Mayacamas Chardonnay Reserve 2002, Carneros (\$51.55)**

Greets you with a huge oaky nose of caramel, this thanks to the 17 months in oak, of which 54% was new. On the lips the wine is somewhat lean, but shows very good length with more of the caramel coating the pear and apple. Even though there is 14.5% alcohol, the wine is balanced with a crisp personality. (ES)