

## Australia

### **95 Wolf Blass Black Label 2008, South Australia (\$99.95)**

The 08 is a supremely impressive wine! This past autumn, in a blind tasting, it was pitted against other top Cabernet based blends from all over the globe. When the results were tabulated, it was the clear winner, besting all the Bordeaux first growths, as well as top Cali Cabs! Full bodied and distinctly Australian, the explosive nose of jam: blueberry, blackberry, raspberry and cherry, mesh with herbs, spice and cola. There is outstanding length and more than enough ripe and well integrated tannins to allow it to age for two decades. It is a blend of 68% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Shiraz and 5% Malbec. (ES)

### **92 Wolf Blass Grey Label Cabernet Shiraz 2010, Langhorne Creek (\$35)**

This 15% alcohol offering serves up blackberries, plums, cherries, mint, cocoa and spice on a jammy texture. There is excellent length and a tannic backbone, ensuring another 10 years ahead. (ES)

### **92 Wolf Blass Grey Label Shiraz 2010, McLaren Vale (\$30)**

Full bodied, the blackberry, blueberry, raspberry, peanut butter, chocolate, smoke and mint inundate the senses. The palate is jammy with loads of plummy tannins and delicious length. Pair this with some hardy winter fair, such as a braised lamb shank or an herb and pepper encrusted prime rib roast. (ES)

## Canada

### White

#### **89 Tawse Sketches Chardonnay 2010, Niagara (\$19.95)**

The new vintage of Sketches Chardonnay is a mid weight offering with a bouquet of apple, pear, lemon, smoke and vanilla. The palate delivers much of the same, as well fresh acidity and a spicy/creamy dimension. There is very good length and some heat from the warm vintage that was 2010. (ES)

#### **89 Henry of Pelham Cuvée Catherine Estate Carte Blanche 2007, Short Hills Bench (\$44.95)**

This, HOP's first vintage bubbly, is made from 100% Chardonnay. The 54 months of lees aging combined with the warm growing conditions of 2007 has produced a forward offering full of fresh bread, peach, apple, lemon and cinnamon. Pair with seared scallops or grilled shrimp topped with a dash of fresh lemon juice. (ES)

### Rosé

#### **90 Henry of Pelham Cuvée Catherine Rose NV, Niagara (\$29.95)**

Henry has taken this wine to a new level, both in packaging and quality. The new label colour scheme really pops, and for my taste, this is the best rendition of this bubbly to date. This blend of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay spent 30 months on the lees, creating a bouquet of biscuits, yeast, raspberry, cherry and green apple. The finish is long and crisp. Sashimi was made for this wine. (ES)

**87 Tawse Sketches Rosé 2011, Niagara (\$15.95)**

Here you will find a pleasant and easy drinking rosé with a perfume of smoke, roasted nuts, strawberry, raspberry. Medium length and sound acid earmark this wine for charcuterie and cheese plates. (ES)

**Red**

**91 Coyote's Run Rare Vintage Cabernet Sauvignon 2010, Four Mile Creek (\$32)**

When Jeff Aubry opened his winery close to a decade ago, he said that he would never produce a single varietal Cabernet Sauvignon due to the fact that Ontario's climate consistently produces overtly herbaceous/vegetal renditions. This was before Mother Nature handed a perfect (and rare) red wine vintage in 2010. This elegant Cab possesses a dark cherry colour and a perfume of cassis, smoke, violets, cocoa and anise. There is great length and a polished feel to the wine. Drink over the next 5 years. (ES)

**91 Stratus Red Icewine 2011, Niagara (\$39.85)**

This singular blend of 35% Cabernet Franc, 27% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Mourvèdre and 14% Syrah is a layered stickie, chock-full of strawberry jam, guava paste, plum compote, fig jam, kirsch, mocha, spice, coconut and red flowers. There is excellent length as well as a slight bitterness. Break out the fondue pot, melt some chocolate and head to town with your friends. (ES)

**90 Tawse Grower's Blend Cabernet Franc 2010, Niagara (\$26.95)**

This is but one of many impressive 2010 reds from Tawse. Medium body, this Franc explodes with cassis, black cherry jam, spice, dark cocoa, violets, smoke and vanilla. There is very good length, ripe and well integrated tannins, and a long aftertaste. Drink

over the next 7 years. (ES)

**89 Henry of Pelham Reserve Baco Noir 2010, Ontario (\$24.95)**

**This 2010 Baco Reserve is a worthy successor to the great 2009. Medium to full body, the smoke, coffee and mocha qualities from new American barrels combines with the plum, raspberry and dark cherry qualities of the grape. There is great length, crisp acidity (typical for Baco) and medium tannins. Drink over the next 4 years.**

**France**

**93 Château Pontet-Canet 2008, Pauillac (\$129)**

**The 08 Pontet-Canet is one of the stars of the vintage. Full bodied, there is an opaque black colour and a bouquet of toast, smoke, blackcurrants, blackberries, cherries, raspberries and vanilla. Backing it all up are some serious tannins, which necessitates 5 more years of cellaring. Drink over the subsequent 20 years. (ES)**

**92 Chateau Ducru-Beaucaillou 2008, St-Julien (\$169)**

**The opaque colour leads into a spice rack of cinnamon, anise, allspice and clove which meshes with plums, cherries, cocoa and cassis. There is solid extract and weight, but the tannins are dusty, so my suggestion is to hold until 2017 and then drink until 2030. (ES)**

**United States**

**California**

**94 Opus One 2008, Napa (\$189.95)**

**Intense and layered, the plums, blackberries, cherries, vanilla, violets, graphite, spice, cocoa and mint keep on delivering on the long finale. The ample and plummy tannins are buried underneath the extract and richness, allowing the wine to age effortlessly over the next 20 years. (ES)**

**87 Project Paso Cabernet Sauvignon 2009, Paso Robles (\$17.90)**

**The project Paso is a fruit driven and immediately accessible wine from the warm Paso Robles AVA. Medium bodied and smooth, it churns out black cherry, dark plum, toast and cinnamon on the lengthy finale. (ES)**