

## Canada

### **90 13th Street Wine Corp. Sandstone Gamay Reserve 2001, Niagara (winery, \$25, ON)**

The top billing for Ontario's best Gamay continues to belong to 13th Street. Full bodied with lots of earthy, dark fruits, spice, vanilla and animal qualities on the nose. The palate is the same with raspberry and hazelnuts thrown in for good measure. Excellent length, drink from 2004 to 2011. (ES)

### **88 Chateau des Charmes Cabernet-Merlot Estate Bottled 1999, Niagara (222372, \$18.95, ON)**

The wine enters the palate with a good burst of cassis, raspberry, tobacco leaf, spice and vanilla flavors, eventually turning slim on the lengthy finish. Built on a solid backbone of tannin, my preference would be to drink it over the next 5 years to take full advantage of the fruit. (ES)

### **86 13th Street Wine Corp. Erv's Burger Blend 2001, Niagara (winery, \$15, ON)**

Always looking to have fun with labeling, the good ol' boys at 13th Street have created this easy drinking red blend of 50% Merlot, 40% Gamay and 10% Syrah. Medium bodied with a fruity core of raspberry surrounded by chocolate and pepper. Drink over the next year or two. (ES)

**86 Lakeview Gamay Noir 2002, Niagara (433672, \$11.95, ON)**

Vanilla infused cherries, plums and spice greet you as you swirl your glass. Sweet red fruits on the tongue with fresh acidity and a suprisingly nutty finish. Very interesting stuff! Ready to drink

**White**

**91 Jackson Triggs Grand Reserve Riesling Icewine 2002, Niagara (593970, \$62.95, ON)**

Honey drenched white flowers, super ripe peaches, apricots and vanilla poached pears all vie for dominance in this wine. Full bodied, with lots of flavor, power and sweetness to spare. Long finish with great acid balance, which provides release from any heaviness.

**91 Crown Bench Vintners Select Vidal Icewine 2000, Niagara (winery, \$79.95, ON)**

This is a super duper icewine, with a hefty price tag to go along with it. The nose is that of dried apricot, honeycomb, raisins and pear. The taste buds entice you with much of the same. Fresh acidity offsets the richness of the wine. Full bodied with a long finish-a definite winner! (ES)

**90 Crown Bench Barrel Fermented Vidal Icewine 2000, Niagara (winery, \$79.95, ON)**

This the same wine as the Vintners Select except that it has spent time in oak. By doing so the wine's acidity has softened and it has become thick textured, with hints of oxidized fruit. Full bodied with honey, peach, figs, and caramel. Excellent length, but I prefer the VS as it has better balance. (ES)

**88 Crown Bench Livia's Gold 2000 (winery, \$24.95/ 375 ml, ON)**

This stickie is made from Chardonnay, which has been affected by botrytis. A rarity on two fronts-first that Chardonnay does not take easily to botrytis and second it is Canadian! Mid weight with flowers, pear, citrus, spicy/ noble rot flavors and hints of oxidation. A discovery which is ready to drink.(ES)

**89 Jackson Triggs Grand Reserve Chardonnay 2002 (winery, \$17.95, ON)**

Medium yellow colour, with a nose of caramel cream, banana, green apple and roasted nuts. Medium to full bodied, elegant, with fresh acid and lots of caramel, citrus and green apple

flavors rounding out the finish. (ES)

**87 Birchwood Select Late Harvest Vidal 2001, Niagara (winery, \$11.95, ON)**

At under \$12 , this bottle represents one of Niagara's best deals in Late Harvest. Medium bodied with aromas of peach, honey and flowers. The 120 g/l of sugar is nicely offset by fresh acidity, while the finish lingers, with a hint of bitterness at the end. (ES)

**87 Chateau des Charmes Gewürztraminer St David's Bench 2002, Niagara (453472, \$14.95, ON)**

Very Alsatian in style with a bouquet of lychee, spice, orange peel and tropical undertones. Medium bodied and dry with a good core of fruit, very good length and fresh acidity, which rounds out the mouthfeel. (ES)

**87 Konzelmann Gewürztraminer Late Harvest 2002 , Niagara (200550, \$13.95, ON)**

Crack the bottle and the first thing you will smell is rose water, followed by aromas of honey, peach and clove. Medium bodied with very good length with some sweetness on the finish.

**86 Konzelmann Riesling Traminer Late Harvest 2002, Niagara (605360, \$22.50, ON)**

Moderate aromas of flowers, peach, citrus, peach and honey show themselves on the nose. The palate is dry with lots of lime, citrus and minerals. Very refreshing. (ES)

**85 Jackson-Triggs Gewurztraminer Delaine Vineyard 2002, Niagara (winery, \$22.95, ON)**

JT's first kick at the Gewurz can from the Delaine Vineyard. Made from 3 year old vines the wine has moderate aromatics of lychee, flowers, peach and honey. Medium length with a hint of bitterness on the finish and fresh acidity. Solid potential as the vines mature.

**85 Lakeview Cellars Chardonnay 2002, Niagara (307165, \$9.95, ON)**

A flavorful little wine for under a purple banknote. With a good dash oak, this bottling offers cream, straw, banana, green apple and tutti frutti. Light bodied with a fresh center and a creamy textured finish, with some alcohol showing through. (ES)

**86 Chateau des Charmes Aligoté 2001, Niagara (028495, \$10.95, ON)**

After an absence from the LCBO's general list, CDC's Aligoté is back. This is a great aperitif wine or as a match with fresh water fish cooked with fresh lemon and herbs. Light bodied with a nose of citrus and green apple. Easy drinking, unpretentious and priced cheaper than the French competition. (ES)

**France**

**94 Chateau Gruaud Larose 2000, St Julien (951178, \$109, ON)**

Majestic stuff! Big yet refined with a multi layered nose of smoke, cassis, chocolate, vanilla, black cherries and animal scents. Fills the mouth with loads of fruit, extract and tannins. Hold of until 2008 and drink until 2028.

**91 Chateau Charmail 2000, Haut Medoc (981886, \$43, ON)**

One of the values in the insanely priced world of 2000 Bordeaux. Full bodied with cherry, black fruits, green tobacco and Indian spice. Sweet core of ripe fruit lives long on the palate. Wait until 2004 and drink over a decade.

**88 Chateau Figeac 2000, St Emilion (942631, \$169, ON)**

Smells and tastes like an Ontario Cabernet Franc, and for 1/5 the price you are better off buying a well made OCF, as it will not cause ruination to your bank account.