

France

95 Chateau de Beaucastel 2001, Chateauneuf du Pape (520189,\$78, PQ)

After three sub-par wines in 98, 99 and 00, Beaucastel has returned to form in 2001. This is a fat, in your face wine, with loads of spice, pepper, chocolate, herbs, kirsch and black fruit jam. There are abundant tannins, but they are paved over by the concentration. Drinking now, but will continue to improve with time- until to 2025. Tasted at last year's Vinexpo in France.

Canada

93 Malivoire Moira Vineyard Chardonnay 2002, Niagara (573154, \$36, ON)

Aged in French oak of which 20% was new. Pear, spice, vanilla, honeyed white flowers and cream on the nose. Full bodied, yet oh so Ann Sperling elegant with cream, spice, olive, and vanilla on the long finish, which also shows palate cleansing acid. Balanced, refined and a class act! (ES)

92 Malivoire Riesling Icewine 2002, Niagara (591321, \$36, ON)

With over 275 grams/liter of sugar this is a super rich and intense Icewine- yet is light in the mouth due to the cleansing acidity. Honey macerated peaches, flowers, apricots and spice are in the mix with a long finish. (ES)

90 Stoney Ridge Charlotte's Chardonnay 2003, Niagara (winery, \$24.95, ON)

The "Best White of Show" at this year's Cuvee awards and a worthy successor to the 02. This unoaked Chardonnay definitely contains a good proportion of the Chardonnay Musque clone as witnessed by the peachy/orange blossom/ floral nose. In the mouth it fills out with green apples and citrus flavours. Very good, almost excellent length. (ES)

87 Malivoire Chardonnay Musque "Spritz", Niagara (winery, \$18, ON)

With 5% residual sugar and slight effervescence, this is Canada's answer to an Italian Molcato d'Asti. Orange blossom and flowers leap out of the glass and into the mouth. Very refreshing with a clean finish. (ES)

85 Malivoire Traminer 2002, Niagara (699967, \$14.95, ON)

This pale, almost water coloured wine is a blend of 95% Gewurz and 5% Riesling. Lite aromas of peach, citrus, lime and mineral. Clean in the mouth with good length and a dab of sweetness on the end, but the wine is considered dry. (ES)

91 Kacaba Syrah 2002, Niagara (winery, \$50 approx., ON)

By far this is Ontario's best Syrah to date! Cropped at 3/4 tons/acre and harvested at 25 Brix, the wine is black coloured, super ripe, dense, firmly tannic and full bodied. Tastes of plums, spice, raspberry, chocolate and vanilla. Having no point of reference for this type of Syrah, I can't clearly predict its lifespan, but 10 years of aging seems reasonable, possibly even more. (ES)

90 Reif Estate Cabernet Sauvignon First Growth 2001, Niagara (winery, \$50, ON)

Blackcurrant, black cherry, chocolate, smoke and spice are found in this, the winner of Cuvee's best Cabernet Sauvignon. Long finish with good depth of fruit and good tannins. Drink over the next 7 to 8 years. (ES)

90 Henry of Pelham Pinot Noir Speck Family Reserve 2002, Niagara (winery, \$50, ON)

The first ever Speck Family Pinot Noir is a concentrated offering with a perfumed nose of black cherries, vanilla and earth. Length is excellent with blueberries, blackberries and plums developing in the mouth and on the finish. Tannic structure will allow the wine to age gracefully. (ES)

90 Henry of Pelham Baco Noir Reserve 2002, Niagara (461699, \$24.95, ON)

The extra hang time afforded by the long, hot growing season of 2002 has reduced acid levels to the point where this is the softest, least sauvage Henry Baco I have ever tasted. Black fruits, spice, vanilla and light game cross the nose and the mouth. Elegant with a lasting finish. (ES)

90 Pillitteri Estate Cabernet Franc Family Reserve 2002, Niagara (winery, \$43, ON)

Winemaker Sue Ann Staf has produced a wine to rival her 1998 Gold Medal winner. Full bodied with serious structure and flavours of black raspberries, cassis, tobacco, smoke, chocolate and coffee. Sturdy tannins make for a wine that will age well. From 2006 to 2015. (ES)

89 Malivoire Single Block Gamay 2002, Niagara (winery, \$25, ON)

Malivoire is the newest entrant into the Ontario world of low yield Gamay. Harvested at 22 hl/ha, only 70 cases were made of this wine. Medium ruby/purple colour with a intense nose of blackberry, raspberry, spice , vanilla and violets. Ripe and juicy in the mouth with lots of dark and red fruits, excellent length and supple tannins. If you can procure any, do so! (ES)

88 Inniskillin Pinot Noir Montague Vineyard, Niagara (633819, \$24.95, ON)

At a recent tasting of Canadian Pinot vs. Burgundy, this wine stood out as a favorite by many of the tasters. Light ruby with a pink rim and a perfumed nose of black cherries, blackfruits, violets, orange peel and vanilla. Medium bodied with raspberry and cherry flavours. (ES)

88 Niagara College Merlot Barrel Fermented 2002, Niagara (winery, \$16.95, ON)

The students of Niagara College and their guru Jim Warren have done it again in 2002. An overlay of oak provides chocolate covered coffee bean aromas, which weaves nicely with the plums and cherries. Lots of up front richness with a smooth finish. Drink over the next 5 years. (ES)

89 Lailey Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon Canadian Oak 2002 (winery, \$45, ON)

Watch out Bordeaux, you have some serious competition at half the price. Blackberries, black cherries, mint and vanilla swirl out of the glass. The wine is ripe with a sweet attack in the mouth with good amounts of fine grained tannins and great length. From 2005 to 2012. (ES)

88 Lailey Vineyard Cabernet Franc 2002 (winery, \$29, ON)

Dark cherry colour with a nose of pain grille, tobacco, blackcurrant, raspberries, coffee and herbs. Medium to full bodied with liquorice, vanilla and weedy notes on the palate adding complexity. Now to 2011. (ES)

87 Cave Springs Pinot Noir Reserve 2002, Niagara (winery, \$17.95, ON)

Medium ruby colour with a nose of vanilla, cherries, earth, liquorice and uniquely enough-buckwheat honey. Supple with very good length and present tannins. Now to 2009. (ES)

87 Lakeview Cellars Butlers Grant Pinot Noir 2002 (winery, \$11.95, ON)

A surreal value in Pinot Noir and one which mandates a case purchase for your home. Although pale in colour, it is very much new world with a jammy texture and a nose of sweet cherries and blackberries. Very good length. Drink now. (ES)

86 Featherstone Gamay Noir Unfiltered 2002, Niagara (winery, \$18.95, ON)

A raspberry, plummy, black pepper and yeasty offering with medium length and some heat on the finish. (ES)