

Canada

89 Vineland Estates Cabernet Merlot Reserve 2002 (winery, \$40, ON)

Deep ruby with a fuchsia rim. Full bodied with rich flavours of raspberry, chocolate, blackfruits, and tobacco. Hold for a couple of years as the alcohol is a bit dominant at this time. Drink until 2011. (ES)

89 Reif Estate Pinot Noir First Growth (winery, \$50, ON)

A strong offering which reveals coffee, chocolate, plum, raspberry and earthy/toasty aromas. Cherry jam as well as blackberry flavours are on the palate. Tannins do appear on the back end, and as of this moment, the wine still is a bit tight, so hold off until 2005 and drink until 2011. Harvested at 2.5 tons per acre. (ES)

89 Reif Estate First Growth Merlot 2001, Niagara (winery, \$50, ON)

Black fruits, earth, spice, green peas and oak dominate the nose. Length is very good with lots of fruit on the palate, namely blackberry and plums, which coalesce with a spicy finish. Drink until 2009. (ES)

87 Reif Estate Shiraz 2002, Niagara (winery, \$23.95, ON)

A black purple colour wine with ripe loganberry and blackberry flavours. Acid is fresh and tannins are easy. Drink now (ES)

85 Vineland estates Pinot Noir Reserve 2001, Niagara (winery, \$27, ON)

The nose and palate were dominated by alcohol. Beyond that, plums, cherries, vanilla and spice were discernable. Medium bodied. Drink now.

85 Vineland Estates Chardonnay Musque 2002, Niagara (winery, \$18.95, ON)

White gold colour with a nose of peaches, flowers, honey and minerals. Light to medium bodied with medium length.

Chile

94 Don Melchor Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Maipo (726919, \$44.25, PQ)

One hell of a great Chilean red, and at under \$50, it is a pleasant surprise considering the skyrocketing prices of many wines from this country. Concentrated raspberry, blackberry, anise and tobacco flavours. After swallowing, it just lingers and lingers. From 2005 to 2020. (ES)

Hungary

88 Chateau Pajzos Harslevelu 2000, Tokaji (\$22.25, PQ)

A fresh, cleaner style than your typical Tokaji. The wine is made solely from botrytis affected Harslevelu grapes which were cold fermented to produce a fruit driven style. Spiced apples, honey, flowers and bergamot tea flavours are present. Sweet, with very good length and high acid which provides balance. Drink now. (ES)

France

95 Santa Duc Cuvee Prestige des Hautes Garrigues 2000, Gigondas (\$48.25, PQ)

Superb, incredible, fabulous, delicious and "must have" were some of the adjectives that came to mind after tasting this singular win. Full bodied and dense, with 20 years of life ahead. Simply put-buy this, especially if you are a Southern Rhone lover! (ES)

93 Domaine du Pegau Chateauneuf du Pape 2000, Rhone (\$48.75, PQ)

Ahhhh-the joys of great CNP! Ripe cherries, dark chocolate, hazelnuts, pepper and garrigue aromas. Layered and dense, this wine will last 15 years, sans problème Game meats anyone!

92 Chateau Clinet 2000, Pomerol (736124, \$257, PQ)

Not cheap, but then again we are talking about Pomerol from a great vintage. Cassis, cherry, earthy, blackberry and animal scents work together. Full bodied with a long, succulent finish and a minty note which I attribute to the 10% Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend. From 2005 to 2020. (ES)

90 Chateau Montrose 2001, St-Estephe (979880, \$94.95, ON)

The 01 is a powerful wine for the vintage. It serves up a mixture of toasty oak, cassis, vanilla, animal scents and spice. Tannins are present and cellaring is suggested. Hold off until 2008 and drink to 2020. (ES)

87 Perrin Gigondas 2000, Rhone (\$29.90, PQ)

If you like back pepper, black pepper and more black pepper this wine is definitely for you.

Besides the black pepper (did I forget to mention that before?), the wine does offer blackcurrants and provencal herbs. Medium body and length. (ES)

New Zealand

90 Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 2003, Marlborough (\$31.95, ON)

The most famous name is N.Z. Sauv Blanc has produced a medium to full bodied wine with a bouquet of passion fruit, citrus, tomato vine, grapefruit, lime zest white pepper and minerals. Lively acid, as usual is found in the mouth with excellent length. Uncork and serve with goat cheese and scallop stuffed phyllo purses. (ES)

U.S.A.

92 Viader 1999, Napa Valley (904367, \$141, ON)

The 99 Viader is a blend of the 2 Cabs-61% Sauvignon and 39% Franc. Deeply coloured, this concentrated wine seduces with a bouquet of blackberry, black cherries, raspberries, anise, chocolate and smoke. Rich with a long finish and a tannic frame which gives longevity. Now to 2020.