

Aussie

94 D'Arenberg Dead Arm Shiraz 2002, McLaren Vale (\$49.95)

Is it possible that there is such a thing as a bad bottle of Dead Arm? Although, not as massive as last year's gargantuan offering, the 02 is still full bodied, crammed to the hilt with plums, kirsch, vanilla, spice, smoke blackberries and menthol notes. Rich with excellent length and a long life ahead. Now to 2020. (ES)

Canada

White

90 Chateau des Charmes Riesling TBA Paul Bosc Vineyard 2001, Niagara (\$29.95)

CDC always makes one of Ontario's top Late Harvest wines and in 01 climatic conditions conspired to produce a rare noble rot version. Medium bodied with apricot, wax, petrol, lime zest, honey and spice. The mouth is a lovely balance between sweetness and acidity, with a baked apple finish. Now to 2011. (ES)

88 Pillitteri Chardonnay Barrel Fermented 2002, Niagara (\$18)

Thanks to 9 months barrel aging in new french oak, this is a toasty, caramel, pear, fig, cedar and vanilla Chardonnay built on a medium bodied frame. Very good length with a milky texture and fresh acid combining on the palate. Hint of nuttiness on the end. Drink over the next 4 years.

Red

91 Unity Wine Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot 2002, Canada (\$29.95)

The 02 Unity picks up the ball and adds serious yardage from where the inaugural 01 left off. Still closed, the wine is full bodied with milk chocolate, blackberries, mint, dark cherries and earth. Dense and concentrated with excellent length. From 2006 to 2015. (ES)

90 Jackson Triggs Meritage Grand reserve 2002, Niagara (\$23.95)

Cassis, herbs, mint, raspberry, chocolate and spice come together as one in this somewhat closed wine. Tight and puckery right now it could stand to age a year or two in the bottle and be consumed until 2014. (ES)

88 Magnotta Meritage 2002, Niagara (\$19.95)

The 02 is a worthy successor to the 01, which also received 88 points. A deep ruby colour and a nose of blackberry, raspberry, smoke, chocolate and dried herb notes. The palate adds vanilla, cherry and plums. Medium bodied with firm tannins and a lengthy finish. (ES)

87 Pillitteri Cabernet Sauvignon 2002, Niagara (\$18)

This C.S. leans more towards the herbaceous nature of the grape, but with time this will fade away, allowing more of the fruit character to emerge. Bell pepper, raspberry, spice and cassis. A tad bitter now, so hold off until 2006 and drink until 2010. (ES)

New Zealand

91 Kim Crawford Sauvignon Blanc 2004, Marlborough (\$19.95)

Awesome Sauv Blanc, with intense passion fruit, tomato vine, green peaches, asparagus, gooseberry and ammonia aromas. Full bodied, glycerin, long finish and mouth watering acidity. A serious step up from last year's offering and a must buy for SB lovers. (ES)

France

White

92 Chateau Guiraud 2001, Sauternes (\$52/375ml)

The young 01 Guiraud is displays honey, wax, apricot, spice and caramel both on the nose and on the taste buds. Still needs a year or two to before it starts to shine. From 2006 until 2020. (ES)

88 Hugel Gewurtraminer 2002, Alsace (\$19.95)

A shinning glassful of honey, grapefruit, cold cream, spice, flowers and a touch of pineapple. Medium bodied with sound acid and more spice on the palate. Drink up. (ES)

Red

87 Chateau du Tertre 2001, Margaux (\$49)

A well made Bordeaux with cherries, smoke, green tobacco, spice and cedar on the nose. Medium bodied with supple tannins and raspberry/tobacco on the finish. Drink over the next 5 years. (ES)

Germany

94 Egon Muller Riesling Scharzhofberger Spatlese 2003, Mosel Saar Ruwer (NYA)

Fabulous wine, but totally atypical for its appellation. Usually Saar wines are the epitome of austerity, but thanks the insane heat wave which hit Europe in 03, this wine comes across as an Alsatian version. Ripe with peach, citrus, honey, pine nettles flavours and almost outstanding length and some sweetness. A Long life ahead. (ES)

Italy

92 Siepi Castello di Fonterutoli 2001, Tuscany IGT (\$99)

A splendid offering from of Tuscany's great producers. Black/purple with blackberry, plum, spice and chocolate aromas. Black cherry, earth and chocolate swing in on the palate. Long finish with loads of silky tannins. Drink over the next 10 years.(ES)

90 Nemo Vigneto Il Mulino Monsanto 1999, Tuscany IGT (\$68.50)

After spending \$35 on the 97 it is kind to hard to pay double for a wine which albeit is excellent, is still not as good as the offering from the fabled vintage. Cassis, blackberries, wood smoke, green tobacco, vanilla and leather are found in this medium to full bodied wine. Now to 2012. (ES)

Spain

90 Torres Cabernet Sauvignon Mas La Plana 1998, Penedès (\$41.50)

Mint, chocolate, cherries, mushrooms, vanilla and leather are built on a frame of sweet berry fruit. Firm tannins and solid length. Now to 2014.

