

White

93 Stratus Chardonnay 2002, Niagara (\$55)

Stratus, Ontario's newest high end winery has delivered the goods with its first vintage. This is world class caliber Chardonnay with melon, honey, apple and vanilla on the nose. The palate is dense with a wonderful mid palate and a long finish, endowed with caramel, citrus and honey. It is not cheap, but then again the same can be said of 1re Cru Burgundy. Drink over the next 5 years. (ES)

88 Niagara Training College Chardonnay Warren Classic 2003, Niagara (\$27.95)

Of the two Chardonnay's produced by NTC, this is my favorite. The wine displays caramel, nuts, buttered popcorn and hints of tropical fruit on the nose. The palate delivers pineapple, citrus and nuts with very good length. Drink now. (ES)

87 Chateau des Charmes Riesling Estate 2003, Niagara (\$15.95)

This is the inaugural vintage of this wine, as CDC has decided to enter the higher end Riesling market. Mineral and lime all the way with a touch of powdered candy on the finish. Drink over the next 2 years. (ES)

87 Chateau des Charmes Sec NV, Niagara (\$16.95)

Here is a buy for those who like a mature side to their sparklers. Three years on the lees (yeast cells) has produced a yeasty/caramel nose, while the palate displays much of the same, with a crisp green apple flavour thrown in for good measure. (ES)

87 Creekside Sauvignon Blanc 2002, Niagara (\$15.95)

Young and crisp with a nose of gooseberry, fresh figs, citrus, mineral and grass. Nectarine flavours appear in the mouth. Try with asparagus and goat cheese wrapped in prosciutto

85 Pelee Island Pinot Blanc 2003, (\$11.95).

Pelee's first shot with Pinot Blanc. Moderately aromatic with melon and citrus on the nose. Light and crisp with a touch of heat on the finish. Drink now with fresh water fish in a lemon sauce. (ES)

Red

91 Stratus Cabernet Franc 2002, Niagara (\$32)

Of all of Stratus' reds, my preference right now is for their Cabernet Franc, as it is the most open and complete. Aromatic, with a superb nose of cassis, bell pepper, red currant, smoke, chocolate and pain grille. Balanced, elegant, well integrated tannins and a long finish. Now to 2013. (ES)

90 Stratus Merlot 2002, Niagara (\$55)

I feel like I am doing an advertisement for Stratus in this issue, but I can't impress upon you enough the quality of these wines. Backwards, the Merlot was still somewhat compressed when tasted. Like all of Stratus' wines, it was aged 24 months in new French barrels. An ensemble of plum, vanilla, chocolate and pain grille with solid tannins on the finish. Hold for a year and drink until 2015. (ES)

89 Pillitteri Cabernet Sauvignon Family Reserve 2002, Niagara (\$50)

A firmly tannic wine with pain grille, blackberries, cured olives and plum on the nose. The palate shows green tobacco, spice, vanilla and blackberries. Still young, so hold until 2006 and drink until 2014. (ES)

88 Henry of Pelham Cabernet Merlot Unfiltered 2002, Niagara (\$29.95)

If I were to use one word to describe the quality of Henry's wines, it would be "consistency". Year in, year out the quality is solid. This coupled with the great 02 vintage, has produced reds

which are money in the bank. The wine possesses a deep cherry colour with a nose of green tobacco, smoke, cassis, cherries and chocolate. The palate echoes vanilla and spice on the finish. Great length with some serious tannins. Hold until 2006 and drink until 2013. (ES)

88 Creekside Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 2001 Reserve, Niagara (\$29.95)

Creekside has leaped back into the spotlight after a few years in the doldrums- this, the winner of the best Cabernet Sauvignon at this year's Cuvee demonstrates why. Blackberry, tobacco, spice and cassis aromas work in tandem with the smoke, cherry and blackberry on the palate. Medium plus bodied, with a ripe mid palate and a lengthy finish. Now to 2009. (ES)

88 Creekside Estate Pinot Noir Reserve 2001, Niagara (\$24.95)

Another winner for Creekside at this year's Cuvee, this time for best Pinot Noir. Medium cherry colour with a touch of evolution on the rim. Cherries, vanilla, black fruit and earth are both on the nose and the ripe palate. Nice length, drink now. (ES)

87 Niagara Training College Meritage 2003, Niagara (\$21.95)

This vintage of Meritage contains 75% Cabernet Franc, as the vintage was conducive to growing this grape. Tell tale aromas of tobacco, herbs, cherries and cassis. In the mouth there is smoke, vanilla, cassis and red currant that are built on a medium bodied frame and a soft finish. Now to 2007. (ES)