

## Highlights hidden on Vintages shelves

**By:** Gord Stimmell, Wine Critic, Published on Thu Apr 11 2013

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It's a Toronto tradition. As a wine lover kicking off your weekend you stroll into your local Vintages store at 9:30 a.m. Saturday to be greeted by a massive wall of new strange offerings.

That Bordeaux red looks intriguing, but the region is a minefield of broken dreams, or overpriced glam, like Burgundy. You know a few must be great, but as a Vintages veteran you also realize not many live up to their fame or price tags.

To add to the confusion, hard working Vintage consultants often attach tasting notes of foreign wine critics, usually from an expert you've never heard of before from the originating country who gives the wine an astounding numerical score.

That's where I come in. I've tasted more than 100 wines in each release and bring you the best. No \$60 wines that taste like \$10. No favouritism. What's in the bottle has to live up to the price tag.

My top five latest release Vintages best buys are shown here with bottle images as usual. This should cut down on your bewildering decisions. Why waste good money drinking drek?

A few other worthy highlights are hidden in this latest outpouring on Vintages shelves.

The special spotlight in the April 13 release is New Zealand, with three merely decent reds, and nine whites. I selected the Oyster Bay as a value bottle review, under \$20.

But two more pricey whites are world class from Kiwi land.

Dog Point Vineyard 2011 Chardonnay (#238568, \$39.95, 92) is a powerhouse heavy oaked white, with huge char, tar and smoke notes in the nose and smoky toasty butterscotch and rich very long flavours from Marlborough,

And Cloudy Bay 2012 Sauvignon Blanc (#304469, \$29.95, 92+) is as always an intense creature, quivering with lovely green peppers, guava and lime aromas and flavours dancing around sage, papaya, guava and pineapple with a green mango finish. It is an amazing wine.

If you want a single giant slayer, we have one, from Napa. Cade 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Cuvée (#296509, \$78.95, 93) drenches the palate with rich black cherry, black olives, cassis and dark chocolate with layers of teak, graphite, roast cashews and lilacs.

But only if you crave utter hedonism. So something for everyone.

Happy wine hunting.

### **Principessa Gavia 2011 Gavi \$19.95 (Italy)**

Gavi always is a white with an exotic touch. Made using cortese grapes, wild flowers, marshmallow and lime sorbet aromas lead into floral pear and mineral flavours with a kiss of peach finish.

LCBO #250696

**Food Suggestion:** Zucchini flowers stuffed with ricotta.

**Rating:** 90

**Rosehall Run Cuvée County 2010 Chardonnay \$21.95 (Ontario)**

This poised and balanced chard has come to Vintages earlier than predicted. Limestone, clay, almonds, and apple aromas lead into apple, peach and lime candy flavours with a buttery finish.

LCBO #132928

**Food Suggestion:** Roast pork loin.

**Rating:** 90

**Brampton 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon \$15.95 (South Africa)**

Forward intense brambleberry, plum and cedar aromas spill into rich vanilla-laced black cherry flavours. The style is overall very supple, with black olives and black plums filling out the finish.

LCBO #315903

**Food Suggestion:** Beef lasagna or manicotti.

**Rating:** 90

**Le Cirque 2011 Carignon/Mourvedre/Syrah \$15.95 (France)**

Remarkable value from the Midi, with sturdy blackberry and violets aromas overlain by cedar. The flavours present layers of smoky blueberry, vanilla pod, lilacs and black currants. A cellar dweller.

LCBO #277079

**Food Suggestion:** Wild game such as venison or boar.

**Rating:** 90+

**Henry's Drive Dead Letter Office 2008 Shiraz \$23.95 (Australia)**

Like a Rhone, this Oz syrah (ie shiraz) shows a whiff of cured meat, with vanilla bean, cedar and black cherry in the aromas. The flavours are rich, with violets, plums, mocha and black cherry layers.

LCBO #243659

**Food Suggestion:** Penne with spicy Italian sausage.

**Rating:** 91