

## Special splurges and layaways in Vintages offering

• Dan Kislenko Sat Apr 13 2013

You know we're always looking for value in the wines we choose. And if those selections can come in at a low price, so much the better. The release of new products into Vintages that takes place today has lots of great values, although some of them do carry price tags a tad higher than normal. Still, if you're willing to pry open the wallet a bit, these are well worth the money.

**Kim Crawford 2012 Sauvignon Blanc** (\$18.95, code 35386). A new vintage of a consistently reliable top-notch white from New Zealand. The Crawford style for Sauvignon is fruity and juicy, not as abrupt as some fellow New Zealand wines. I get red grapefruit, orange peel and kiwi fruit flavours here.

**Kim Crawford 2012 East Coast Unoaked Chardonnay** (\$18.95, code 991950). This is all fruit-driven and forward, offering ripe fresh and baked pear and golden apple flavours with a background note of pineapple and even a touch of cardamom.

**GreenLane Estate 2011 Riesling** (\$15.95, code 327247). I mentioned this wine last week in connection with the Get Fresh promotion going on in the Twenty Valley subregion of Niagara. This one is made in an off-dry style, with flavours of fresh apples followed by apple sauce. Vibrant lime juice acidity is backed by mineral notes.

**Deu la Deu 2011 Alvarinho Vinho Verde** (\$19.95, code 40642). With summer coming, Vinho Verde from the north of Portugal is an excellent wine choice, with its fresh approach and slightly lower alcohol. Alvarinho is a marvellous grape, coming across here as a very juicy, lip-smacking drink with flavours of pomelo, a touch of green apple and a flinty mineral finish.

**Rustenberg 2011 Chardonnay** (\$22.95, code 598631). Here's a great varietal from Stellenbosch (South Africa). Loads of extract and good concentration; the overall impression is of ripe citrus - tangerines, Meyer lemons - along with juicy passion fruit and star fruit.

**Domaines Schlumberger 2009 Les Princes Abbes Gewürztraminer** (\$27.95, code 990671). Alsace Gewurz is typically dense and dry, yet the ripeness gives it an oily character. This one actually has some natural residual sugar, so comes across as smooth and big, loaded with green grape, lychee, orange and yellow plum flavours with an edge of white pepper.

**Kendall-Jackson 2010 Grand Reserve Chardonnay** (\$27.95, code 59576). Oh, California can make such opulent Chardonnays. This is one of them. The fruit is ripe and rich, leaning to peach and grilled pineapple, the wood influence is complete yet balanced, lending a toasty/smoky note to the wine, yet the acidity is focused and bright, enlivening the wine.

**Brampton 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon** (\$15.95, code 315903). What a bargain. The wine is beautifully styled and has great elegance, is nicely balanced, and offers flavours of black raspberries, blueberries, mulberries and a touch of very dark chocolate in the finish, with a slight spiciness.

**Beaulieu Vineyard 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon** (\$25.95, code 987420). Let's head over to Napa for the next couple of choices. Beaulieu is one of the legends of the valley, renowned for its rich reds. This is luxurious, concentrated Cab at a great price. The tannin is still a bit tight, but give it a couple of years. Look for classic black currant and mint flavours.

**Black Stallion 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon** (\$29.95, code 256768). Quite a robust, muscular Napa Cab. It needs time, but right now is packed with black fruit - plums, elderberries, olives - and has chewy tannin that is beginning to mesh with the overall wine. Structured and polished.

**Guigal 2009 Gigondas** (\$31.95, code 331900). From a subregion in the southern Rhone Valley, this is a very pretty wine that will drink well over the next couple of summers. It's ripe and has a sweet core, with a speck of tannin the background and touch of fresh leather and tobacco leaf up front.

**Chateau des Charmes 2010 Equuleus** (\$40, code 319525). One to lay away for a couple of years. It's a blend out of Niagara based on Cabernet Sauvignon and is quite mellow and rounded already, with tight blackberry fruit and a juicy pomegranate accent, followed by a spicy finish.

**Cade 2009 Napa Cuvée Cabernet Sauvignon** (\$79.95, code 296509). The winery is not well known here, but it among California's best, perched high atop Howell Mountain where the altitude allows wines of finesse and style. It's a baby yet, needing at least another half dozen years, but will reward patience with silky character and beautiful black current and mocha flavours. A splurge, yes, but worth the investment.