

W4 etc.

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WINES & SPIRITS

Ritzy taste at reasonable

There's an interesting challenge in the lineup of wines in today's new release of Vintages products to wrap up April.

If price is not an object, your choices are relatively easy especially in the featured Tour of France wines. There are the likes of Les Pies de Lagrange, the "second" wine of Chateau Lagrange, at \$77.95. Or Guigal Chateau de la Pape at \$49.95. Or the E&F Black Pepper Shiraz from Australia at \$66.95.

These are good wines and not unfairly priced given what they are, but let's face it — very few of us pay that kind of money for a bottle of anything. The challenge today is to pick out those that have everyday price tags but taste like those that cost much more.

Here are ones I've identified:

■ **Balthasar Röss 2005 Hattenheimer Schutzenhaus Riesling Kabinett** (\$17.95, code 733241). Röss is a much-respected winery in Germany's Rheingau, making Riesling of great finesse. This one is young and pretty, the fruit remarkably fresh and, while there is some natural residual sugar in it, the wine does not seem overly sweet. The secret is the racy acidity that adds a splash of lime impression to the gentle peach, kumquat and creamy banana flavours.

■ **Katnook Estate 2004 Estate Chardonnay** (\$24.95, code 734858). Coonawarra is better known for its Cabernets, but the South Australia growing area offers good Chardonnays as well. Katnook knows how to get extract and balance, so here we have ripe tropical flavours of mango, passion fruit and grilled pineapple, playing nicely off a bright and tongue-tingling orange juice acidity and creamy vanilla nuances.

■ **Pontanafredda 2005 Moncuoco Moscato d'Asti** (\$19.95, code 674277). A great choice for when local fruit season rolls around, Moscatos are charming, low-alcohol sweet wines from northern Italy that are ideal chilled for summer sipping. The nature of the Muscat grape used im-



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parts an inescapably green grape flavour that is quite delicious, finished with slightly tart acidity.

■ **Vina Tarapaca 2006 Gran Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon** (\$14.95, code 18721). After I tasted this one, I figured the price was a typo. More like \$14.95, I thought, but it's not. This is an impressive, rich red, filling your sense with thoughts of ripe blackberries and showing excellent weight in the mouth. Vark a bit more, and the subtleties emerge — spice, toasty oak, sweet vanilla.

■ **Chateau de Trevis 2005 Corbieres** (\$14.95, code 670505). A blend of mostly Syrah with a percentage of Grenache made in typical Corbieres (south of France) style. It has bright flavours but some elegance as well. The chateau is a relatively young one, but its focus is on quality. The wine has flavours of dark plums, elderberry, blueberry, perhaps a touch of tart cranberry, with inherent gravel stoniness to it.

■ **Rocca delle Macie 2005 Rabizzo Sangiovese di Toscana** (\$14.95, code 913780). One of my favourite Tuscan wineries, here offering a lovely varietal Sangiovese that comes across with flavours of strawberries, redcurrants and plums overlying an appealing dryness and tangy mineral notes.

■ **Concha y Turo 2004 Marques de Casa Concha Syrah** (\$19.95, code 19042). A consistent winner from Chile's biggest producer. A restrained and refined approach to Syrah here. Good tannic structure supports ripe but not overly lush fruit, showing off spicy peppery red cherry and black fruit flavours.

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