

**85** PELEE ISLAND WINERY 2005  
Chardonnay Premium Select  
POINTS Pelee Island, Ontario  
ON \$11.95



Another ripe 2005 from Ontario's hot spot and Canada's most southerly point. Nicely balanced in a fleshy, rounded style with ripe yellow pear-peach fruit and a dusting of oak spice and vanilla. Medium bodied with some alcohol heat on the finish. Just a touch of resin as well. Good length. Good value sipping chardonnay. (DL)

**85** VIEWPOINTE 2002 Balance Point  
Cabernet Merlot  
POINTS Lake Erie North Shore, Ontario  
ON \$29.95 winery

Good colour, complexity and some finesse here but like other Viewpointe reds there is tail end volatility that sours the overall effect. Considerable tannin as well. Smoky, leathery, raspberry aromas with some herbaceous character. Very good length. It's tempting to recommend further ageing but not sure the fruit will last. (DL)

## INTERNATIONAL WHITES

**94** HIGHLAND ESTATES 2004  
Camelot Highlands Chardonnay  
POINTS Santa Maria Valley, Santa Barbara County, California, United States  
BC \$48.95 specialty listing, AB \$36.00 fine wine boutiques



Another first rate release from KJ's Highland Estate series this time from Santa Maria Valley, Santa Barbara County. Stunningly rich and sophisticated, it's 100 per cent barrel fermented but by using only 35 per cent new French oak it has both power and elegance wrapped about a tropical fruit tour de force of pineapple, mango, baked apple pie and spicy vanilla. This is the full meal deal without being over the top. One of the best California chardonnay in the market at a highly attractive price. Think crab cakes with a sweet cherry tomato and corn relish. (AC)

**89** 2004 CONUNDRUM  
California  
POINTS BC \$32.99, ON \$28.95 Vintages, QC \$28.75



A Caymus label that has spawned a brand in its own right, this is a truly opulent barrel aged composite of several white grape varieties. Perfumed pineapple-banana, licorice, tobacco and butter-scotch flavours set in a full, smooth satiny, sweetish texture. Excellent to outstanding length.

**89** LOUIS JADOT 2003  
Bourgogne Chardonnay  
POINTS Burgundy, France  
ON \$19.95 Vintages Essential



Always a vintage behind other labels, with a longer aged, rich style. Complex, butter cream cookie, spiced apple, lightly smoky nose. Mid-weight, elegant and firm but not austere, with a very long lemon, spice, mineral finish. (DL)

**89** LAURENZ V. CHARMING  
Grüner Veltliner 2004  
POINTS Kamptal, Austria  
BC \$29.99 speculative listing - Authentic Wines and Spirits, AB \$21.99 fine wine boutiques



Nutty, mineral, matchstick, lees, floral, pear skin aromas. Rich, round, fresh and crisp with smoky, lees, mineral, citrus rind, pear and butter flavours. Quite fresh and succulent with a perfume citrus finish. Very Chablis-like at half the price. (AC)

**89** STAETE LANDT PINOT GRIS 2005  
Marlborough, South Island,  
POINTS New Zealand  
BC \$27.75 specialty listing

White peach, vanilla, earthy, green apple skin, floral, buttery lees nose. Rich, round, elegant and fresh but dry. Butter, pear, lees, mineral, earthy, quince flavours with some citrus and honey on the finish. Very nice balance and freshness. Drink now and over the next two years. (ST)

## INTERNATIONAL REDS

**92** BELLE GLOS 2004 Pinot Noir Clark and Telephone Vineyard  
POINTS Santa Maria Valley, Santa Barbara County, California, United States  
BC \$48.99 specialty listing

Belle Glos Wagner lends her name to this Santa Barbara pinot from the folks at Caymus. Smoky, vanilla, cherry jam, leesy, tea leaf, spicy, compost nose with a touch of licorice, rubber and orange. Soft, round, supple

## WINE ACCESS ESSENTIAL ACQUISITIONS

EASY-TO-FIND BOTTLES THAT OVER-DELIVER

**89** DELICATO FAMILY VINEYARDS 2005 Merlot  
California, United States  
POINTS BC \$13.99, AB \$11.95, MB \$11.99, ON \$11.95, QC \$14.60, NF \$13.91

Since being launched earlier this decade, Delicato Merlot has won way more than its share of North American gold medals, combining ripeness, smoothness and richness. It is simply delicious, and as easy to drink with dinner as it is to appreciate in a blind tasting. This young vintage shows very ripe cherry-berry fruit, tea, mocha and considerable char from highly toasted barrels. Length is excellent for the money. (DL)

**90** MARCHESI DE' FRESCOBALDI 2004 Tenuta di Castiglioni  
Tuscany, Italy  
POINTS BC \$26.99, AB \$23, ON \$19.95, QC \$26.75

Tenuta di Castiglioni is the oldest Frescobaldi Estate, with roots that date back to 1092. The altitude of the 115-hectare vineyard is 200 meters; the blend of grapes is 45 per cent sangiovese, 45 per cent cabernet sauvignon and 10 per cent merlot and petit verdot. The wine is exceedingly rich and well structured with fruity jammy chocolate overtures and plenty of finesse. A terrific bottle and certainly a real bargain in Ontario. (AC)

